



REPORT

SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

**South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme
(SACEP)**

**21 JANUARY 2003
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**

**Report of the Special Session of
the Governing Council of
South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme
(SACEP)**

**21 January 2003
Colombo, Sri Lanka**



REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Special Session of the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) was held at Hilton Colombo, Sri Lanka on 21 January 2003.

2. ATTENDANCE

The Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP was attended by delegates from the member countries viz: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Representatives from the United Nations agencies and International Organisations attended the meeting as Observers. These included United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNEP-GPA, United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Centre for Environmental Education-India and Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (APFEJ).

The members of the Review Panel of SACEP were also present.

List of Participants is in Annex I.

3. INAUGURATION

Hon. Mr. Tyrone Fernando, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka formally inaugurated the Special Session of the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme. He welcomed the Environment Ministers and high level officers of the SACEP countries and stated that two of the highest priorities in all these countries are poverty alleviation and environmentally sound and sustainable development.

Hon. Mr. Tyrone Fernando also emphasised that SACEP and other similar organisations, such as South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Thailand Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC), Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN), Indian Ocean Rim Association of Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC) should closely work together to optimise the benefits for the people of this region. He also complimented SACEP in its endeavour to promote and support the protection, management and enhancement of the environment, both natural and human, of the countries of South Asia, individually, collectively and co-operatively.

The text of his Address is in Annex II.

The Welcome Address was given by Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme. In his welcome address he said that the United Nations Millennium Declaration, Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development, Mexico and World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, South Africa have stressed the importance

of "integrated and holistic approach" to development, with environmental protection constituting important link of any response scenario. The Political Declaration of WSSD and its Plan of Implementation has, therefore, strongly endorsed the need of a regional focus for achieving the goals of environmental protection and sustainable development with a multi-level (international, regional, sub-regional and national) approach.

So far, however, share of SACEP as the sub-regional environmental programme of South Asian countries does not commensurate the huge needs of the region. It, by and large remains to be countries' driven with a relatively small support from the UN and other international organisations. There may be handicaps on capacity and capability of SACEP. But in this competitive world, we have to be proactive. Even donors are getting organised to closely work with each other. It is now for us to get organised both at the national and sub-regional level to create legitimate demand on the global systems for help and support in the realisation of our expressed priorities and shared concerns.

The text of his Address is in Annex III.

Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka and Chairman, GC/SACEP in his address stated that SACEP is a recognised international organisation. It has a history of significant achievements in respect of regional co-operation towards the environmental issues of the countries in the region. Sri Lanka has the honour being the host country of this Programme since its inception. It was a pioneer step towards regional co-operation in the field of environment. SACEP has been able to build partnerships with various donors and international organisations such as NORAD, IMO, SIDA and UNEP.

SAARC being a premier regional organisation for South Asia, works not only as a political bridge amongst the countries but also provides greater understanding in the economic, environmental, social and cultural spheres. In the fifth SAARC Environment Ministers' Meeting held in August last year in Thimphu, Bhutan, the Ministers jointly agreed that SACEP would focus on environmental issues, while SAARC would engage primarily in the socio-political arena and providing political guidance to SACEP in its endeavours. This recommendation was forwarded for approval to the SAARC Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Kathmandu in 2002, and understands it was duly endorsed.

SACEP and the SAARC Technical Committee on Environment, Meteorology and Forest both deal directly with regional environmental issues and promote several sustainable development and environmental initiatives. SAARC and SACEP should help the region by promoting common approaches in international forums. The establishment of working arrangements with SAARC, which is the apex policy-making body for regional co-operation in South Asia, will further strengthen this partnership.

He recommended that SACEP should develop projects and programmes to help mobilise international support. The Minister suggested that during the forthcoming meeting, the recommendations made in the report of the External Review of SACEP activities by the review panel could be determined. This is a 20-year review of the work of SACEP. By taking these recommendations into account in a consultative manner, the Minister said that 'I hope we will be able to make some changes in the SACEP activities'.

The text of his Address is in Annex IV.

Mr. Surendra Shrestha, Director, UNEP-RRCAAP in his statement said that promotion of regional co-operation and development of partnerships are important outcomes of the WSSD and its Plan of Implementation. UNEP, like many other organisations has done some 'soul searching' to look at its implication on UNEP's Programme of Work. In this regard UNEP already had some consultations with governments and other partners. The following were the initiatives proposed for South Asia:

- (a) Regional co-operation would be overall goal of UNEP for environmental protection and sustainable development
- (b) Implement the recommendations of International Environmental Governance (IEG) on capacity building. Some of the areas include strengthening information base/data, indicators, environmental assessment, State of Environment Reporting and National Sustainable Development Strategy
- (c) Enhance Early Warning and Science Capacity in the region to respond to natural disasters
- (d) Enhance capacity of environmental professionals for policy response (both legal and economic)

Mr. Surendra Shrestha commended efforts of the Chairman, Governing Council of SACEP in addressing various challenges of regional co-operation for environment. He specially mentioned the efforts made in this regard for (a) strengthening SACEP as a sub-regional environmental organisation of South Asia and (b) co-operation and partnership arrangements between SAARC and SACEP. He hoped that UNEP in collaboration with ESCAP, UNDP will further enhance the institutional mechanism for the implementation of programmes for regional co-operation under SACEP.

The text of his Address is in Annex V.

The Vote of Thanks on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka was given by Mr. Thosapala Hewage, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

4. AGENDA AND COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING

The meeting of the Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP commenced under the Chairmanship of Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka and with Mr. Tandi Dorji from Bhutan as the Rapporteur.

Hon. Mr. Kamal Prasad Chaulagain, Minister for Population and Environment, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Vice Chairman, GC/SACEP chaired the 3rd session of the meeting after the Ministers call on Hon. Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe, Prime Minister of the Government of Sri Lanka.

The Agenda of the Meeting adopted by SS2.GC is at Annex VI.

The Report of the Preparatory Meeting of the Senior Officers (Annex XIV) were the basis of consideration of the Governing Council under each Agenda Item.

5. STATEMENTS OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

The Heads of Delegations from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan presented their country statements to SS2.GC.

These statements covered initiatives taken by the countries in the area of environmental protection and management. It was stated that the SACEP meeting is very timely as it gives us opportunity to discuss outcome of WSSD and issues of common concern to this region. It was, therefore, up to the member countries of SACEP to define the future work programme of SACEP, which then must be supported at all levels. The guidance provided to SACEP by Mr. Rukman Senanayake, the present Chairman of the Governing Council of SACEP was appreciated. The other areas recommended for consideration and follow up by SACEP included:

- (a) SACEP's assistance to the member countries through appropriate capacity building for meeting obligations of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
- (b) Developing common position on environmental agreements and conventions
- (c) Consistency between the Work Programme of SACEP, and international environmental agencies and efforts at the national level
- (d) Forging alliances for environmental protection and sustainable development in the region
- (e) Need for enhanced co-operation and relationship between UNEP and SACEP for optimum benefits to the region
- (f) Development of mix of instruments, mechanisms and voluntary agreements to promote environmental compliance and enforcement at the national/regional level
- (g) Need for enhanced SAARC-SACEP co-operation on environmental matters in the region
- (h) Addressing response mechanisms on linkages between poverty and environment

The Country Statements clearly highlighted the very crucial and pivotal role played by SACEP in the promotion of environmental management in the South Asian region and noted that it needs to be further strengthened.

The Country Statements are in Annexes VII to XI.

6. OTHER STATEMENTS

The representatives of UNEP-Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP-Global Programme of Action (GPA) Co-ordination Office and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and Pacific also made statements at the Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP.

7. FOLLOW UP ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF WSSD AT SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL

It was pointed out that the present Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP was very timely as most of the governments are considering follow up actions on the recommendations of WSSD as well as the 22nd Session of the Governing Council of

UNEP, which is scheduled for the first week of February 2003. The latter provides an excellent opportunity for SACEP to present its priority programme and needs relevant to UNEP.

It was also observed that follow up actions in South Asia should not be necessarily based entirely from decisions and recommendations of WSSD. The national State of Environment Reports and the Position paper of South Asia developed for WSSD can be utilised for this purpose.

The meeting approved the following guidelines and recommendations:

- Identification of few priority areas for regional co-operation
- Member Governments to provide SACEP Secretariat with details of follow up actions of WSSD at national level enabling SACEP to incorporate them into actions at regional level
- Develop the capacity within the governments to implement the projects
- Plan of Implementation should provide guidelines with regard to the funding mechanisms
- Organise a side event during GC. UNEP for South Asia where further discussions can take place

8. CO-OPERATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL/SUB-REGIONAL ENTITIES IN SOUTH ASIA FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(i) Technical Co-operation between SAARC-SACEP in the Field of Environment

The delegates from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan stated that their governments have approved signing of the MOU on co-operation between SAARC and SACEP in environmental matters. The delegate from Nepal stated that the proposed MOU is under active consideration by the Government and a formal decision in this regard will be conveyed to the SACEP Secretariat.

The Secretary General of SAARC stated that the matter is receiving their active consideration and MOU on SAARC-SACEP Co-operation in the Field of Environment will be concluded in the near future.

(ii) UNEP-SACEP Collaboration

All the delegates appreciated the existing state of active collaboration between UNEP and SACEP and recommended that the substance of this co-operation should be broadened and deepened wherever possible.

It was also decided that SACEP should enter into a MOU on co-operation with UNEP, which can be announced at the GC.22/UNEP. The MOU will be a vehicle to firm up partnership between UNEP and SACEP.

(iii) Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan in South Asian Seas

Delegates appreciated the development of Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan for South Asia and a broader agreement by the marine member states of the region for signing the MOU. It was quoted as one of the most tangible activity maturing under the auspices of SACEP/SAS. One delegate emphasised the importance of training in the implementation of oil spill contingency plan. SACEP Secretariat assured that it would be kept in view while deciding various activities under the contingency plan.

(iv) SACEP-ICRAN Partnership

The effort of SACEP in initiating this partnership with ICRAN was appreciated as a positive development. The project will be further developed for identifying demonstration projects for coral reef protection, utilising expertise and financial resources of ICRAN. The member governments will be kept informed of further developments.

(v) Collaboration between ESCAP and SACEP

The Governing Council noted the co-operative activities that have been undertaken by ESCAP and SACEP to promote sustainable development in South Asia. Both the organisations were requested to work in collaboration with each other and further strengthen the co-operation.

9. EXTERNAL REVIEW OF SACEP: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE REVIEW PANEL

Mr. Rajamani, Member, SACEP External Review Panel presented salient features of the report on behalf of the Panel.

The Panel has come to the conclusion that SACEP is a bold, visionary initiative for regional co-operation in South Asia and needs to be revitalised and enable to move forward, helping all member countries. It has inherent and latent dynamism and potential to do better if some corrective measures are taken. He outlined, four pillars on which SACEP' performance and image can be enhanced. These included:

- (a) Member Country Support
- (b) Secretariat Efficiency
- (c) Donors' Support
- (d) Help of People through NGOs, Academia, Scientific Institutions etc.

It was agreed that the country governments would communicate their final response to all these recommendations to the SACEP Secretariat within one month.

After the receipt of comments from the member Governments the Consultative Committee of SACEP will finalise its recommendation for approval.

10. FINALIZATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME OF SACEP FOR THE BIENNIUM 2003-2004

Recommendations of the Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials were considered and discussed. Following areas for work programme of SACEP for the Biennium 2003-2004 were approved for further development in consultation with the

member governments and in association and in collaboration with UN agencies and other donors (UNEP, ESCAP, CIDA, SIDA, NORAD etc.):

- a. Development of Regional Strategy for implementation of WSSD outcomes including Plan of Implementation and WEHAB framework in conformity with the National Plans of Implementation
- b. Compliance and enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
- c. Development of common legislative framework and delivery mechanism at regional level relating to the following areas:
 - a. coastal zone management
 - b. environmental impact assessments
 - c. assessment and documentation of bio-diversity
- d. Preparation of Regional Activity Centre for South Asian Seas in consultation with member governments
- e. Conservation and Management of Water Resources
- f. Implementation of Programme for Water and Sanitation Delivery and Efficiency including Sewage Management
- g. Environment- Energy, Health, livelihood, linkage for the poor who depend mainly on natural resources
- h. Initiation of environmentally sound management programme for dismantling of ships in the South Asian region

11. APPROVAL OF THE SOUTH ASIA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTION PLAN (2003-2007)

The Action Plan and the Strategy were approved.

Based on this Action Plan, specific pilot projects will be formulated for implementation in the region in consultation with the country governments.

12. STATUS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MALÉ DECLARATION ON CONTROL & PREVENTION OF AIR POLLUTION AND ITS LIKELY TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS FOR SOUTH ASIA (PHASE 2)

The status of implementation of the Phase II of the project, which is under implementation in association with the National Implementation Agencies/National Focal Points of the member countries, was noted.

13. STATUS OF THE COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS

All member countries of SACEP/SASP were requested to clear their outstanding contributions at the agreed rates at an early date to enable the organisation to carry out its functions.

The member countries were also requested that all future contributions be paid in the beginning of the calendar year to minimise cash-flow problems.

The delegates present in the meeting indicated that the matter is already receiving their attention.

14. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The Governing Council considered and adopted this Report on 21st January 2003.

15. CONCLUDING SESSION

The Chairman, Hon Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka in his concluding remarks thanked all delegates and the Director General and the SACEP Secretariat for their wholehearted co-operation in ensuring the success of this meeting.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a joint ministerial press conference on enhanced regional co-operation for protecting the South Asian Environment was held.

The Environment Ministers of the Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the heads of delegations from India and Maldives and Secretary General, SAARC formally launched the State of Environment Report for South Asia, one targeting the policy makers and other targeting the youth, prepared in collaboration with UNEP, SACEP and NORAD.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS **MEMBER GOVERNMENTS (GC MEETING)**

BANGLADESH

Hon. Jafrul Islam Chowdhury
State Minister of Environment & Forests
 Ministry of Environment & Forests
 Building – 6, Room - 1307
 Bangladesh Secretariat
 Dhaka - 1000
 Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 8610551
 Fax: (880 2) 8619210
 E-mail: jsef@sdnbd.org

Mr. Ashud Ahmad
Acting High Commissioner
 Bangladesh High Commission
 Colombo 7
 Sri Lanka

Tel : (94 1) 681310 -12
 Fax : (94 1) 681309
 E-mail : bdootlanka@eureka.lk

Mr. S.M. Luthfullah
Joint Secretary
 Ministry of Environment & Forests
 Building – 6, Room – 1307
 Bangladesh Secretariat
 Dhaka – 1000
 Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 8619621
 Fax: (880 2) 8619210
 E-mail: jsef@sdnbd.org

BHUTAN

H.E. Dasho Nado Rinchen
Deputy Minister
 National Environment Commission Secretariat
 Post Box No. 466
 Thimphu
 Bhutan

Tel: (975 2) 323384/324323/325856/326993
 Fax: (975 2) 323385
 E-mail: admnecc@druknet.net.bt

Mr. Tandi Dorji
Communications Officer
 National Environment Commission Secretariat
 Post Box No. 466
 Thimphu
 Bhutan

Tel: (975 2) 323384/324323/325856/326993
 Fax: (975 2) 323385
 E-mail: canec@druknet.net.bt

INDIA

Mr. K. C. Misra
Secretary
 Ministry of Environment & Forests
 Government of India
 Paryavaran Bhawan
 CGO Complex, Lodhi Road
 New Delhi - 110003
 India

Tel: (91 11) 24360721/24361896
 Fax: (91 11) 24362746/24364791
 E-mail: kemisra35@hotmail.com

Mr. V. Ashok
Counsellor-Economic and Commercial
 High Commission of India
 36-38, Galle Road
 Colombo 3
 Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 421605/422788- 9/439560 (Direct)
 Fax: (94 1) 446403/448166
 E-mail: slecomind@sri.lanka.net
hicomind@sri.lanka.net

MALDIVES

H.E. Mrs. Raashida Yoosuf
High Commissioner
 High Commission of the Republic of Maldives
 No. 23, Kavirathne Place
 Colombo 6
 Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 586762/500943/587827
 Fax: (94 1) 851200
 E-mail: maldheg@isplanka.lk

Mr. Mohamed Inaz
Senior Environment Analyst
 Ministry of Home Affairs, Housing and
 Environment
 Huraree Building
 Malé, Republic of Maldives

Tel: (960) 324 861
 Fax: (960) 322 286
 E-mail: env@environment.gov.mv

NEPAL

Hon. Kamal Prasad Chaulagain
Minister
 Ministry of Population and Environment
 Singh Durbar
 Kathmandu
 Nepal

Tel: (977 1) 245 369 / 241 588
 Fax: (977 1) 242 138

Mr. Madan Singh Mahat
Under Secretary
 Ministry of Population and Environment
 Singh Durbar
 Kathmandu
 Nepal

Tel: (977 1) 245367
 Fax: (977 1) 245138
 E-mail: msmahat@mope.gov.np

Mr. Sudhir Bhattarai
First Secretary
Royal Nepalese Embassy
153 Kynsey Road
Colombo 8
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 689 656/7
Fax: (94 1) 689 655
E-mail: S_bhattarai45@hotmail.com

Hon. Major (Rtd) Tahir Iqbal
Minister of State for Environment (Incharge)
Ministry of Environment
Government of Pakistan
Civic Centre, G-6
Islamabad
Pakistan

Tel: (92 51) 922 4578/922 4291
Fax: (92 51) 922 4890

Mr. Jawed Ali Khan
Director General
Ministry of Environment, Local Government &
Rural Development
Civic Centre, G-6
Islamabad
Pakistan

Tel: (92 51) 920 2574
Fax: (92 51) 920 2211
E-mail: jawedalikhani@hotmail.com

Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake
Minister
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
82, Sampathpaya
Rajamalwatta Rd, Battaramulla
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 866617/8
Fax: (94 1) 877 281

H. E. Mr. Ashraf Qureshi
High Commissioner
High Commission of the Islamic Republic of
Pakistan
211, De Saram Place
Colombo 10
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 696 301/3
Fax: (94 1) 695 780
E-mail: hcpak1@setnet.lk

Mr. Tanveer A. Khaskheli
Counsellor
High Commission of the Islamic Republic of
Pakistan
211, De Saram Place
Colombo 10
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 696 301/2
Fax: (94 1) 695 780
E-mail: hcpak1@sltnet.lk

Mr. Thosapala Hewage
Secretary
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
82, Sampathpaya
Rajamalwatta Rd, Battaramulla
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 887 291
Fax: (94 1) 887 290
E-mail: thosapalahewage@hotmail.com

PAKISTAN

SRI LANKA

Mr. W. R. M. Sarath Wickramasinghe
Additional Secretary
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
82, Sampathpaya
Rajamalwatta Rd, Battaramulla
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 875327
Fax: (94 1) 879 834
E-mail: addsecnr@sltnet.lk

Dr. B. M. S. Batagoda
Director-Economic and Global Affairs
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
104, Robert Gunawardane Mawatha
Battaramulla
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 887452 / 410234
Fax: (94 74) 410234
E-mail: envecon@sltnet.lk / airmac@sltnet.lk

MEMBERS OF SACEP REVIEW PANEL

Mr. R. Rajamani
Ex-Secretary
Ministry of Environment and Forest-India
8-2-585 / Aji, Road 9
Bajara Hills
Hydrabad,
India

Tel : 040 - 23358320
Fax : 040 - 23355480
E mail : rraja9@vsnl.net

Dr. A. Atiq Rahman
Executive Director
Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
House # 23, Road # 10A
Dhanmondi R/A
Dhaka-1209
Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 811 5829 / 811 3977 / 911 3682
Fax: (880 2) 811 1344 / 811 8206
E-mail: atiq.r@bdcom.com / atiq.rahman@bacas.net

SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATION (SAARC)

H.E. Mr. Q. A. M. A. Rahim
Secretary General
South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation
(SAARC)
Post Box No. 4222
Kathmandu
Nepal

Tel: (977 1) 2-21785
Fax: (977 1) 227 033 / 223 991
E-mail: saarc@saarc-sec.org

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

Mr Surendra Shrestha

Director

UNEP-Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the
Pacific (UNEP-RRC.AP)
Outreach Building
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
PO Box 4, Klongluang
Pathumthani 12120
Bangkok
Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 516 2124

Fax: (66 2) 516 2125

E-mail: surenda@ait.ac.th

Mr. Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty

**Senior Programme Officer/Head Environment
Assessment and Reporting**

UNEP-Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the
Pacific (UNEP-RRC.AP)
Room 304, Outreach Building
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
PO Box 4, Klongluang
Pathumthani 12120
Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 524 6240 (direct)/516 2124

Fax: (66 2) 516 2125/2524 6233

E-mail: mohyng@ait.ac.th

Dr. Anjan Datta

Programme Officer

(UNEP) Global Programme of Action Coordination
Office (UNEP-GPA)

The Hague
The Netherlands

Tel: (31 70) 311 4468

E-mail: a.datta@unep.nl

OTHER UN REPRESENTATIONS

Ms. Shireen Samarasuriya

Co-ordinator, GEF/SGP

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
No. 202-204
Buddhaloka Mawatha
Colombo 7
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 580 691 (Ex.314)

Fax: (94 1) 580 611

E-mail: shireen.samarasuriya@undp.org

Dr. M. A. Khan

Chief, Environment Section

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the
Pacific (ESCAP)
UN Building
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200
Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 1691

Fax: (66 2) 288 1025

E-mail: khan.unescap@un.org

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. M. A. Kumaradasa

Development Officer

Canadian International Development Agency
(CIDA)
Amarasekara Mawatha
Colombo 5
Sri Lanka

Ms. Meena Raghunathan

Programme Co-ordinator

Centre for Environment Education
Ahmadabad-380054
India

Tel.: (91 79) 685 8002

Fax: (91 79) 685 8010

E-mail:

Mr. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury

Chairman

Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental
Journalists (APEJ)
42/1/Kha Segun Bagicha
Dhaka - 1000
Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 933 5987 mobile - (880) 171 591792

Fax: (880 2) 861 9210

E-mail: apfej@bdcom.com

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP)

10 Anderson Road, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

Mr. Mahboob Elahi

Director General

Tel: (94 1) 589 376 / 589 787

Fax: (94 1) 589 369

E-mail: melahi@eureka.lk

Mr. Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene

**Interim Coordinator-South Asian Seas
Programme**

Tel: (94 1) 596 442, 589 787

Fax: (94 1) 589 369

E-mail: pd_sacep@eureka.lk

Mr. Pradyumna Kumar Kotta
Project Coordinator SENRIC

Tel: (94 1) 596 443, 589 787
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: pk_sacep@eureka.lk

Ms. Jacintha Tissera
Administrative Officer

Tel: (94 1) 504 708, 589 787
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: sacep@eureka.lk

Ms. Nishanthi Perera
Programme Officer - SAS

Tel: (94 1) 552 761
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: np-sas@eureka.lk

Ms. Nilani de Andrado
Secretary

Tel: (94 1) 589787
Fax: (94 1) 589369

Ms. Anjana D. Madanayake
Secretary, SAS

Tel: (94 1) 589787
Fax: (94 1) 589369

Ms. Teruni Walaliyadde
Secretary

Tel: (94 1) 589787
Fax: (94 1) 589369

Annex II

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY HON. MR. TYRONE FERNANDO, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

Hon. Ministers

Excellencies

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank the Chairman, Hon. Rukman Senanayake, Minister of Environment for the privilege extended to me, to officially inaugurate today's opening ceremony of the meeting of the Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP).

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the Environment Ministers of SACEP and other officials and would like to wish you a pleasant stay in Sri Lanka and productive deliberations.

The South Asia covers 5% of the world land area and carries 20% of the population - 35% of which live below the poverty line. You have a vital role in addressing poverty.

The most important agenda item of this meeting is to finalise a work programme to follow up recommendations of the recently held World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) at the South Asian sub-regional level, with special focus on five thematic areas: Water, Sanitation, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Bio-diversity (WEHAB).

The ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (which we have done) by more developed countries will be a positive step forward. I may point out that Bio-diversity is declining at an unprecedented rate. About 75 percent of marine fisheries have been fished to capacity, 70 percent of coral reefs are endangered. Therefore action is vital to reserve this process. Our region has extensive system of diverse Marine and Coastal habitats such as mangroves, sea grass beds and Coral reefs, which supports some of the richest concentrations of bio-diversity in the world. Among the endangered species, which inhabit these unique habitats, are the Royal Bengal tiger, marine turtles, whales, dolphins and dugongs.

Global warming and the associated sea level rise is a major threat to the region and the Maldives has become an endangered nation due to this phenomenon. One-meter rise in sea level will inundate 23,000 km of major populated area of Bangladesh.

Even though food production has increased dramatically in the last five decades, there have been widespread deforestation, soil erosion, land degradation and depletion and pollution of water resources. Over-cropping, over-irrigation, grazing, wood gathering, timber extraction, marginal and dry lands farming have exerted unbearable pressure on fragile terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Environmental concerns resulting from economic growth and urbanisation include traffic congestion and air, water soil pollution, growth of slums and shanties and the overloading of the basic infrastructure.

The social and economic problems of the countries of the South Asian sub-region are important. In per capita GNP terms all of them belong to the lowest income category. Acute population pressure, abject poverty and development devoid of environmental safeguard have resulted in irreparable environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources. Two of the highest

priorities in all these countries are poverty alleviation and environmentally sound and sustainable development.

You have to work closely with SAARC, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, IORAC and similar other organisations, partnerships and initiatives.

With regard to the ozone hole, measures have confirmed that the international agreements for the reduction in the release of ozone-destroying chlorine and bromine compounds are working. Although rapidly increasing during 1980s and early 1990s, there is now clear decrease in their tropospheric abundance that may have also begun in the stratosphere. This achievement, which should not be underestimated, is the result of unprecedented international co-operation on environmental issue. The ratification of Kyoto Protocol by developed countries is therefore necessary to minimise adverse effect of climate change.

In conclusion I complement SACEP in its endeavour to promote and support the protection, management and enhancement of the environment, both natural and human, of the countries of South Asia, individually, collectively and co-operatively.

I believe this meeting will result in fruitful deliberations and I wish this environment conference every success.

Annex III

ADDRESS OF WELCOME BY MR. MAHBOOB ELAHI DIRECTOR GENERAL SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Honourable Mr. Tyrone Fernando, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka,

*Honourable Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources,
Government of Sri Lanka and the Chairman, SACEP Governing Council,*

Hon Ministers of Environment from the member countries of SACEP and Delegates,

Your Excellencies,

Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you all to this Special Session of the Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP).

Hon. Mr. Tyrone Fernando, Minister for Foreign Affairs, I thank you on behalf of the member countries of SACEP for honouring us with your presence here to inaugurate the Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP. It is being held in at an important juncture when several global meetings on environment and related issues have been held and prior to 22nd Session of the Governing Council of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) scheduled for in the first week of February at Nairobi, Kenya. Since almost all countries of SACEP region would be participating in the GC.UNEP, this meeting would be a part of our preparations and consultations in this important region to possibly advocate a good case for UNEP support for environmental programmes and projects both at the national, sub-regional and regional level.

I hope that under the guidance and support of the Hon. Minister, Mr. Rukman Senanayake, who is the current Chairman of GC.SACEP, we should be able to chart out our thinking and strategy in this regard.

We are also grateful to the Ministers who have responded to our invitation to be with us in Colombo despite their busy schedule at home. I also particularly recognise the presence of Mr. Q. A. M. A. Rahim, Secretary General, South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) to represent this important sub-regional organisation at the highest level. It many ways manifest the significance of the need for regional co-operation in achieving the goal of environmental protection and sustainable development, as do our respective charters. I also gratefully acknowledge presence of Mr. Surendra Shrestha, Director, UNEP-RRC.AP with us today who has always supported SACEP and we offer especial thanks to him for mobilising financial resources for this event. Mr. Shrestha, you are always a great help to SACEP.

I am also thankful to ESCAP for having responded to attend this Session and Chief of the Environment Section, Mr. Khan is here with us; thank you Mr. Khan

It is also worth mentioning that between the meetings of GC.SACEP, our work and performance is regularly monitored by the Consultative Committee of SACEP represented by the High

Commissions and Embassies of the Member countries in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The efficacy of this institution is now well established and the presence of High Commissioners/Ambassadors and their representatives in the meeting is appreciable.

*Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The beginning of the Third Millennium has brought us new challenges and opportunities. The concept of global unity coincided with an agreement on United Nations Millennium Declaration on many new and continuing challenges especially environmental protection in pursuit of sustainable development.

Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development, Mexico and World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, South Africa have not only reaffirmed the principles of Millennium Declaration but have further stressed the importance of "integrated and holistic approach" to development. Noting further that peace, security, development, human right, good governance and respect for nature are all closely interrelated. These have to be responded accordingly by instituting appropriate policy measures at all levels. Environmental protection is an important link of any response scenario.

The importance of regional focus with a multi-level approach (international, regional, sub-regional and national) in fostering sustainable development has been emphasised both in the Political Declaration of WSSD and its Plan of Implementation. UN and other international agencies have, therefore, been requested to draw plans and programmes in support of the institutions of regional environmental governance.

To see the contemporary relevance of these Declarations and Commitments on environmental issues in South Asia, one only re-read the Charter of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme adopted in 1982. On a broad political and socio-economic front, the regional response has been in the form of establishment of SAARC as of 1985. We are all keen to see co-ordination and synergy working of these mandated institutions of the region to be determined and decided by the member states of South Asian Region. I will now take time to share with you the emerging environmental challenges faced by this region and the need for due response.

South Asia has been the cradle of ancient religions, philosophies and civilisations that have contributed so much to global history. Despite this, all our previous efforts to protect environment, conserve natural resources and cultural endowment are demonstratively not very impressive. It is true that national governments have allocated substantial resources in developing national, sub-national and local environmental institutions, laws, programmes and projects after Stockholm and Rio Conferences. However, we have not been able to mobilise sub-regional environmental programmes in support of the national efforts and our legitimate share of the outreach of global environmental programmes in this region. Following examples illustrate this:

1. According to the World Bank sponsored and supported by 22 other donor agencies (ADB, JICA, DFID, GTZ etc.) Country Environmental Analysis (CEA), only 1 project in the area of Environment and Natural Resources in a member of this region has been covered. On an overall basis, this analysis covers only 64 projects of this region: Bangladesh 9; Bhutan 1; India 28; Maldives 1; Nepal 11; Pakistan 7; and Sri Lanka 7. The notable amongst these are Bangladesh Climate Change and Sustainable Development; Bhutan Forest Sector Review, India's Access of the Poor to Modern Fuels, Urban Health Issues, Water Sector Strategy; Millennium Development Goal Assessment for Maldives and Sri Lanka and Nepal's Power Sector Strategy.

2. Out of 20 Best Practices so adjudged under the World Bank's aforesaid Analysis, only 2 belonged to this region. These are Bangladesh Poverty Assessment-From Counting Poor to Making Poor Count and India's Reducing Poverty- Accelerating Development. The other Best Practices belong to South and Central America and Malawi in Africa.
3. So far 300 Projects (Full Scale, PDF-A and PDF-B) and Enabling Activities have been implemented or programmed for implementation under the aegis of UNEP utilising GEF Funds. Their share in all countries of South Asia is not more than 30 at an estimated cost of US \$ 100 million. Considering that in addition to UNEP, World Bank and UNDP are also the implementing agencies of GEF, even the 3 times of this allocation is not a reasonable share of South Asia from this US \$ 10 billion facility under successive GEF Replenishments.
4. The annual cumulative donor support to SACEP by from all donors agencies does not exceed more than salary of a P-2/3 Post of UN staff. The direct financial support for programmes and project is nominal.

Is it a fair share of the region, which constitute about 25% of the world population and great geographical expanse?

One can only say that our response to the environmental movement that started about 30 years ago at the national and sub-regional level, by and large remains to be countries' driven with a relatively very small support from the UN and other international organisations. In many ways it may be due to our preoccupation and age-old believe in self-sufficiency and sustainability. It may, on the other hand reflect on our capacity and capability to present a viable portfolio of programmes and projects on environment to the donors for implementation in this region. While both may be correct to some extent, it is also the fact that only best can survive in this competitive world. We have to be proactive in pursuing this path both at the national and sub-regional level. Some introspection would be inevitable to critically appraise our inadequacies and shortcomings of the institutions etc. to avoid overlaps and duplications and to up grade capacity as needed. We must perform and establish our credibility.

One message that is coming out from World Bank's CEA strategy, I referred to earlier, is that even the donors are getting organised to work in tandem with each other. It is now for us to get organised both at the national and sub-regional level to create legitimate demand on the global systems requesting help and support for us in the realisation of our expressed priorities and shared concerns.

Some of the important issues on the Agenda of this meeting are follow up on the Recommendations of WSSD at Sub-regional Level in South Asia, Report on the External Review of SACEP, SAARC-SACEP Co-operation and Finalisation of the Work Programme of SACEP. The Meeting of the National Focal Points held yesterday, have deliberated on all these issues and their recommendations would be presented to you for consideration and for approval of the Ministers. Your guidance would be crucial in revitalisation and reinvigoration of SACEP in South Asia.

On this note, I may mention that in the recent past, we have earned some respect and recognition of the UN and other international agencies as an indigenous sub-regional environmental programme of this sub-region. After WSSD, UNEP Regional Seas Programme, International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and ICRAN have in their new Partnership Programmes, indicated to work with SACEP in this region. With your support, we can expand on these partnerships.

In concluding my statement, allow me once again to thank Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Minister for Environment and Natural Resources and the people of Sri Lanka for the kind hospitality that has been extended to the delegations of SACEP member countries, United Nations Agencies, Development Banks, multi-lateral and bi-lateral organisations. Our gratitude are also due to the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources who have worked with us throughout under the able leadership of the Secretary, Mr. Thosapala Hewage.

I am also thankful to SACEP official and staff for making this event possible. The list is long, but I cannot resist few names: Mr. Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardena, IC-SAS, Mr. Kumar Kotta, Project Coordinator, SENRIC, Mrs. Jacintha S. Tissera, Administrative Officer, Ms. Nishathi Perera, Programme Officer.

Honourable Ministers and delegates,

While you are here, please try to take out some time to visit this island and enjoy the nature, culture and adventure, if possible. Also consider buying precious stones or jewellery, if you have the required money. I, therefore, hope that this visit to the Sri Lanka will be not only fruitful on the subject of environment but will also be a memorable occasion.

Annex IV

STATEMENT BY HON. RUKMAN SENANAYAKE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA

*Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen*

First of all, may I take this opportunity to warmly welcome all of you to Sri Lanka, and to this important meeting. It is indeed a great honour and a privilege for my Ministry to host this important meeting in Colombo and I hope that we have a very successful outcome from it.

SACEP, being a recognised international organisation, has a history of significant achievements in respect of regional co-operation towards the environmental issues of the countries in the region. SACEP was established in 1981 with Sri Lanka as the host country. This was a pioneer step towards regional co-operation in the field of environment. Since then, SACEP has been able to build partnerships with various donors and international organisations such as NORAD, IMO, SIDA and UNEP. The Male' Declaration, which paved the way for international collaboration towards the reduction of air pollution and its trans-boundary effects for South Asia, is a great achievement of the UNEP-SACEP collaboration. It was formally endorsed by Ministers of Environment of South Asian countries in April 1998 in Male', with the implementation to span three distinct phases. Phase I has now been completed and Phase II is expected to mobilise experts and provide monitoring equipment for collaborative experiments relating to trans-boundary air pollution.

We, the members of SACEP, were able to develop the South Asian Oil Spill Contingency Plan and a Memorandum of Understanding for this Regional Contingency Plan. The MOU was taken into consideration at the second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting of SACEP Seas Programme held in June last year, in Sri Lanka. I hope during these two days we will further refine the MOU and consider signing it. I am pleased to mention that my Ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka, has been very co-operative and supportive in the implementation of the South Asian Seas Programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

SAARC being a premier regional organisation for South Asia, works not only as a political bridge amongst the countries but also provides greater understanding in the economic, environmental, social and cultural spheres. There has been five SAARC Environment Ministers' meetings, with the fifth being held in August last year in Bhutan. Here, the Ministers jointly agreed that SACEP would focus on environmental issues, while SAARC would engage primarily in the socio-political arena while providing political guidance to SACEP in its endeavours. This recommendation was forwarded for approval to the SAARC Foreign Ministers' meeting held in Kathmandu in 2002, and I understand it was duly endorsed.

SACEP and the SAARC Technical Committee on Environment, Meteorology and Forest both deal directly with regional environmental issues and promote several sustainable development and environmental initiatives. SAARC and SACEP could help by promoting a common approach from the region in international forums. This partnership will be further strengthened by the establishment of working arrangements with SAARC, which is the apex policy-making body for regional co-operation in South Asia.

At this important meeting we will also be discussing the work programme of SACEP for the period 2003-2004. I think we should proactively develop projects and programmes, while also taking action to mobilise international support for these programmes. During the present meeting we can go over the recommendations made in the report of the External Review of SACEP activities by the review panel. This is a 20-year review of the work of SACEP. By taking these recommendations into account in a consultative manner, I hope we will be able to make some changes to SACEP activities. I have no doubt that we all have a meaningful dialogue with respect to these important issues and arrived at some important recommendations by the end of this meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am proud to mention that as a nation, we have been able to give our wholehearted co-operation and contribution

Annex V

THE STATEMENT BY MR. SURENDRA SHRESTHA, DIRECTOR-UNEP REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

*Hon. Chief Guests, Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen*

Mr. Elahi, the Director General, SACEP mentioned the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg. The Summit is still fresh in our mind and we have all come out with different perspectives on how we see the outcome of the summit. But I am sure that, you will agree with me on the following three general things:

- (a) The main focus was on implementation of agreements already on the table from RIO to Millennium Development Goals
- (b) The Process of Implementation focused on partnerships, specially the enhanced role of civil society
- (c) The implementation mechanisms stressed on the need to enhance regional co-operation

Like many other organisations UNEP has done some 'soul searching' to look at the implications on its programme. We have also had some consultations with governments and other partners and with your permission Mr. Chairman, I would like to mention three initiatives proposed for South Asia:

- (a) we focus to enhance regional co-operation in environment for sustainable development as an overall goal
- (b) We implement the International Environment Governance (IEG) capacity building proposal
 - To strengthen the information base: data, indicators
 - Assist with regular assessment of State of Environment to Sustainable Development Strategies
 - Enhance the early warning science capacity in the region to address natural disasters
 - Enhance capacity of environmental professionals for policy responses-both legal as well as economic

The recent world Environment Outlook Reports puts South Asia's GNP growth at 6 percent. This compares to about 10% for China and less than 3% for USA and Europe with 10% of the poor and the projected population growth and the trends of state of air, water, land and bio-diversity. South Asia already has enormous challenges. Experiences in other regions show that regional co-operation is one of the effective mechanism to achieve the same. We have to address these challenges.

Mr. Chairman, under your leadership, the main issues of regional co-operation are being addressed today. These include:

- Strengthening of SACEP as the regional environmental institution of South Asia
- Partnership arrangements between SAARC and SACEP

Resolution of these issues will further enhance the institutional mechanisms for the implementation of proposals for regional co-operation. ESCAP, UNDP and UNEP and international agencies that are represented here can then contribute on their part.

Your Excellency, under your guidance, we look forward to enhance the implementation of these initiatives.

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP)

SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF SACEP

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

21 JANUARY 2003

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of Agenda and Organisation of Work
3. Statements of Heads of Delegations
4. Statements by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) and Global Programme of Action of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-GPA)
5. Follow up on the Recommendations of WSSD at Sub-Regional Level
6. Co-operation and Collaboration between various Regional/Sub-Regional Entities in South Asia for Environment Protection and Sustainable Development
 - (i) Technical Co-operation between SAARC-SACEP in the Field of Environment
 - (ii) UNEP-SACEP Collaboration
 - (iii) Memorandum of Understanding for Implementation of Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan in South Asian Seas
 - (iv) SACEP-ICRAN Partnership
7. External Review of SACEP: Recommendations of the Report of the Review Panel
8. Finalisation of the Work Programme of SACEP for the biennium 2003-2004
9. Approval of the South Asia Environmental Education and Training Action Plan (2003-2007)
10. Status Report on the Implementation of the Malé Declaration on Control & Prevention of Air Pollution and its likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia (Phase 2)
11. Status of the Country Contributions
12. Adoption of the Report
13. Closure of the Meeting

Annex VII

STATEMENT OF H.E. MR. JAFRUL ISLAM CHOWDHURY HONORABLE STATE MINISTER, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Mr. Chairman

Members of the Governing Council

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to attend the Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP in this beautiful city of Colombo. I would like to congratulate the SACEP Secretariat for convening this session of great importance. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka for hosting this Governing Council Meeting and for the warm and generous hospitality extended to us.

Mr. Chairman,

The national vision of Bangladesh is aimed at achieving community capacities to reproduce and enhance the existing wealth and resources. It stresses upon efficient and equitable management of the natural and biological resources base and the life support systems globally, regionally, nationally and locally. The present government is firm to protect the country's ecological vis-à-vis the overall environmental management of this region through regional co-operation of SACEP including other regional and international bodies dealing with environment management.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate the Review Panel for SACEP, which was constituted pursuant to the decision of the 8th Governing Council meeting for their endeavour and efforts in preparing the Report on "SACEP Programme Review".

Mr. Chairman,

As we know, SACEP was the first major organisation for regional co-operation in South Asia in the field of environment. It is true that SACEP was a forerunner, a model for other regions and sectors.

Moreover, the linking of environmental conservation and development in the SACEP objectives anticipated the concept of sustainable development embodied in the Agenda 21 of UNCED 1992. Bangladesh delegation considers that the achievement of SACEP has been less successful toward achieving its goals because of its inherent weakness, which we think rightly identified by the Review Panel.

Mr. Chairman,

Member countries of SACEP are from a region of developing countries. We strongly feel that SACEP should give due emphasis on the linkage between poverty and natural resources management. Moreover, the future activities of the SACEP should reoriented giving major focus on sustainable resource management, benefit sharing, alternative livelihood and alleviation of poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

The environment, economic growth and development of Bangladesh are highly dependable on water of regional and seasonal availability and the quality of surface and ground water. In Bangladesh, spatial and seasonal availability of surface and ground water is highly dependent on the monsoon climate. The availability of water is also dependent on the availability from the upper riparian countries. In terms of quality, the surface water of the country is unprotected from untreated industrial effluent and municipal waste, run off chemical pollution from chemical fertilizers and pesticides and oil and lubricant spillage in the coastal area from the operation of sea and river port and ship breaking. Further to mention that the water issue and particularly the transboundary issue of water is very much linked with other major environment related issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh is also the most disaster-prone country in the world. Because of its geographic location, the country is frequently exposed to various types of natural disasters, such as floods, cyclones, tornadoes, tidal surges, riverbank erosion and droughts.

The climate change issues call for a paradigm shift in the whole development concept, as the change threatens people's livelihood, economy, culture, environment and the natural resources systems.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to share some of our success with the member countries in the field of environment management. Bangladesh has imposed ban on use, production and marketing of Polythene shopping bags since March 2002. The indiscriminate use of Polythene shopping bags for the last 20 years has caused numerous environmental problems and vitiated the urban life. In order to reduce air pollution in the country, necessary amendments were made in the "Environment Conservation Rules 1997" making it mandatory to install Catalytic Converter and Diesel Particulate Filter in petrol and diesel run vehicles. We have also banned two-stroke three wheelers since September, 2002. Saving the river Buriganga from ever-increasing encroachment and pollution is a priority issue. We launched "Save the Buriganga Campaign". Currently steps are also being taken for developing a comprehensive plan for clearing the rivers Balu, Sitalakhya, Turag and Buriganga. We have been able to identify and characterise almost all the major sources of pollution in the major rivers and streams of the country and developed a data bank.

Mr. Chairman,

I have got firm belief that the result and effect of this council meeting will help in promoting more effective role of SACEP in ensuring sustainable environmental management of this region. SACEP with its linkages in the region-within the Governments networks and outside could help in enhancing human resource development for environmental conservation. It may also help in co-operation with other regional and international organisation and their subsequent efficient implementation. Finally, I hope SACEP in future will be able to play even more effective role to address environmental problems of the region under the able leadership of the Governing Council.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thanks to you all.

Annex VIII

STATEMENT H.E. DASHO NADO RINCHHEN DEPUTY MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION SECRETARIAT, BHUTAN

*Honourable Rukman Senanayake, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources,
Government of Sri Lanka, Excellencies,*

Director General of SACEP, SAARC Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Firstly I wish to express our appreciation to Honourable Rukman Senanayake for holding this Special Session of the SACEP Governing Council and also for the warm hospitality extended to us. I think that this meeting is very timely, as there are many urgent issues that need to be deliberated upon. Moreover, it has been more than three months since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and as the apex body for regional co-operation in the field of environment in South Asia, this SACEP meeting is very timely as it gives us the opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the summit and issues of concern to our region.

My delegation would also like to express our appreciation to Mr. Rajamani and his team for the excellent work in reviewing the SACEP Programme. We must congratulate the team for their frank and candid assessment of where SACEP stands today and how it can move ahead in the future. Although SACEP was the first major initiative for the regional co-operation in the field of environment in the world and has been in existence for over twenty-one years, we must accept that it has had only mixed results so far. Mr. Chairman, the assessment of the SACEP Programme expresses clearly that it is up to the member countries to define the future destiny of this organisation and hope that under your able leadership we can steer this organisation in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman, our region is confronted with numerous environmental problems e.g. land degradation, air pollution, waste management, deforestation etc. and SACEP must initiate programmes in areas identified as high priorities for the region. Furthermore, countries in the region are under tremendous pressure (both financially and technical) to meet the obligations of international environmental agreements, conventions and SACEP should assist member countries in particular lies through capacity-building programmes. As the apex body for regional co-operation in the field of environment, SACEP must create linkages with international environmental conventions and facilitate member countries in developing common positions on these conventions. This, Mr. Chairman, is crucial to safeguard the interests of the region and to present a firmer regional common position at various international forums.

Mr. Chairman, SACEP should also ensure that its programmes are consistent with Global Declarations and Action Plans to attract donor support. It is imperative that there be a clear link between global visions and action plans and SACEP programmes in order to mobilise donors. Most relevant here are the UN Millennium Declaration Goals, especially the goals concerning environmental sustainability, and the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

Furthermore, it is important that SACEP, as a regional organisation, blend its programmes with relevant partnerships that were launched during the WSSD in Johannesburg. For example, the Partnership on Sustainable Development in Mountain areas was launched in Johannesburg during the WSSD and SACEP should draw up programmes that meet the objectives of this partnership to benefit member countries and also mobilise resources from donors who are members of this partnership.

I also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the Government of Norway and the Stockholm Environment Institute. SACEP has been able to implement its programmes so far because of the generous support of these two donors. We hope that they will continue their support and commitment to regional environmental projects in South Asia. We also look forward to greater support through the good officers of UNEP.

Mr. Chairman, the people and the Royal Government of Bhutan have always cherished our natural endowment. This has however been possible only because of sacrifices made by our people at great opportunity cost. Forest cover 64% - 72%. Although our special contribution to the global environment is gradually being recognised, the Kingdom is under tremendous pressure from the impacts of development and infrastructure, urbanisation and irrigation. While we have a strong national commitment to the principals of sustainable development, we realise that environmental issues recognise no borders e.g. Asian Brown Cloud, transboundary, air pollution and that regional co-operation is paramount to ensure the success of our own conservation efforts.

Mr. Chairman, the Royal Government of Bhutan has always supported the spirit and mission of SACEP. I would once again like to reaffirm our support to the SACEP Programme. I am confident that with greater interest from member countries, and collectively we can steer this programme in the right direction to our mutual benefit.

Once again I wish to thank the Government of Sri Lanka for the warm hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for this important meeting. I look forward to a revitalised SACEP Programme in the coming years.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!

Annex IX

STATEMENT BY MR. K. C. MISRA, SECRETARY MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Mr. Chairman,

Honourable Environment Ministers of SACEP Countries,

Distinguished delegates and friends,

It is a privilege for me to be present in Colombo today for this Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP. I thank you for the warm welcome that you have accorded to me.

As we embark to scale greater heights in this new millennium, environmental conservation has become one of the most critical issues facing the world and specifically this region. The over-exploitation of natural resources, changing monsoon patterns, rise in sea levels, alarming depletion of atmospheric ozone, desertification of vast tracts of land, droughts and floods – sometimes in geographical proximity – the burgeoning population – these are some of our seemingly insurmountable problems. As a developing region with a large population living below the poverty line, we also face tensions between the claims of environment and those of development.

It is essential for SACEP to promote a better appreciation of the actions needed to address these emerging challenges.

The Political Declaration and Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) are the vision statements for sustainable development. Along with other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity (WEHAB) had been identified by the international community as top five priorities for immediate action. India along with other like-minded countries is happy that the developmental priorities and aspirations of the people of the developing countries have now been recognised to a great extent. We have discussed and agreed at various international conferences on steps required to speed up implementation of this agenda. All of us are aware that actions have to be largely taken by the countries themselves. However, we look forward to a meaningful regional initiatives among SACEP countries for implementing various recommendations of the WSSD.

In the first week of February 2003, Governing Council (GC)/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) of UNEP is going to discuss various measures for implementing the recommendations of World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). In the South Asian Region, SACEP can be a partner of UNEP and other international organisations in this endeavour. We have to explore ways and means to concretise relationships of SACEP with UNEP on a durable basis. In this regard, the SACEP Secretariat has taken initiative and suggests areas for further collaboration with UNEP. I am confident that the growing relationship of SACEP with UNEP would be mutually beneficial. I may also point out here that we need to forge alliances in the region to counter the alarming picture being painted of the impacts of the Asian Brown Cloud even though such concerns are not well sustained by reliable modelling studies or experimental observations. It is a well-know fact that such haze has been observed not only in the Asian region, but over other regions also.

India's development objectives as reflected in the planning process have consistently emphasised the promotion of policies and programmes for economic growth and social welfare. The

alleviation of poverty and the development of the country's economic and social infrastructure have been emphasised in the country's successive Five Year Plans. Various effect have been made to integrate environmental concerns into the decision making process. Environmental standards and environmental management plans prescribed are important measures taken to protect the environment. The same applies to environment audit, which is mandatory for major industries. Extensive use of analytical tools, such Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) have contributed to policy integration by making decision makers aware of the environmental consequences of their actions.

The complexities are considerable given the number of industries, organisation and government bodies involved. To achieve the objectives, maximum use is made of a mix of instruments including legislation and regulation, fiscal incentives, voluntary agreements, educational programmes and information campaign.

The National Agenda for Governance of the Government prescribes protection and improvement of environment as its key goal. In spite of the pressure of a growing population, India has committed substantial resources towards conserving its extensive forests and wildlife. The concept of Joint Forest Management (JFM) is being implemented to ensure a better interface between the forest and the people. The National Forestry Action Programme (NFAP) a comprehensive strategic long-term plan for the next 20 years has been formulated by the Ministry to address the issues underlining the major problems of the forestry sector in line with the National Forest Policy, 1998. A National Master Plan for Prevention and Control of Forest Fires for the Tenth Five Year Plan period has also been prepared after detailed consultation with State Governments.

Through our widespread network of national parks and sanctuaries, we have been successful in the prevention of key species in the face of many difficulties. Wildlife conservation efforts particularly of the elephant, rhinoceros and the tiger have been exemplary.

Recognising the need to promote safe management and use of hazardous substances including hazardous chemicals and hazardous wastes a fairly comprehensive regulatory framework has been put into place covering all the three thrust areas relating to transportation of hazardous chemicals, inventorisation and categorisation of hazardous waste and setting up of common hazardous waste treatment and disposal facilities.

On the issue of water pollution and air pollution, I would first touch on the National River Conservation Programme (NRCP), which we have set into motion to tackle the most polluted stretches of all our rivers. The programme has the objective of improving the water quality of rivers by treating the domestic sewage and industrial effluents before they are discharged in the river. And, for preventing air pollution, the National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAQMP) network was expanded to cover 90 cities in the country. The Government has also notified rules for mass emission standards known as Bharat Stage - II, akin to Euro -II for registration of motorcars and four wheeler passenger vehicles. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as a cleaner auto fuel has been introduced in Mumbai, Delhi, Baroda and Surat.

Protection and Management of Marine Environment and Coastal Eco-systems have emerged as an important area of common concern for regional co-operation. My Ministry is in the process of preparing a National Action Plan under the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities (GPA) - UNEP. It is expected to be ready by February, 2003. We are also in full agreement with the issues covered in the Memorandum of Understanding regarding Marine and Chemical Oil Spill Contingency Planning for South Asia.

India has taken several initiatives to spread environmental education through curricular and non-curricular methods. Under curricular initiatives, we have got a study done of all the textbooks from all the State Educational Boards and National Council for Education, Research & Training (NCERT), focussing on assessing the present status of environmental concerns. This has led to a pilot project for infusion of green curriculum in standards 6 to 8 in eight States of the Country. We propose to universalise the curriculum in these States and also extend this programme to other States. Under non-curricular initiatives, a nation wide movement of eco-clubs under National Green Corps has been launched. More than 50,000 eco-clubs have been set up in as many schools covering all the districts of the country. My Ministry is in the process of developing an 'Environment Appreciation Course' through the Indira Gandhi National University. We are also in the process of infusing environmental contests in Business and Management courses offered by different institutions in the country. Another major initiative for spreading awareness at the grass-root level has been the National Environmental Awareness Campaign, under which more than 5,000 organisations implement programmes/activities at local/community level. One of the recent innovative initiatives in this field has been the organisation of a National Environmental Film Festival 'Vatavaran' where we receive more than 100 entries.

We, in this region, are inheritors of a rich and unique bio-diversity reserve. The Convention on Bio-Diversity (CBD) enjoins upon the Contracting Parties to facilitate access to genetic resources for environmentally sound uses by other Parties. Facilitation of access can be provided only through national legislation and/or regulations, developing of which have proved challenging for most countries. I am happy to inform this gathering that India's biological diversity legislation has just been enacted. We are now engaged in the task of working out detailed guidelines for implementation of this legislation.

India has the third largest pool of technically qualified and trained people in the world. We have gained considerable experience in the field of pollution control and industrial waste minimisation and we would be most willing to share our experiences on river and lake cleaning programmes, hazardous and solid wastes management and provide technical assistance on ecological research and environmental education.

India, on her part would seek co-operation in the region to benefit from the expertise of other countries. We look forward to technologies which could be developed indigenously to tackle the pollution related problems.

Let us strive towards a cleaner environment in our region, through mutually supportive effort and work to promote SACEP co-operation through dissemination of experiences, approaches, and technologies. I am confident that given the goodwill and determination, which I witness here in abundance, we will not fail in this task.

Thank you.

Annex X

STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE NEPALESE DELEGATION HON. MR. KAMAL PRASAD CHAULAGAIN MINISTER OF POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL

Chairperson

Hon. Ministers

Excellencies

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am extremely delighted to be here in the beautiful city of Sri Lanka, Colombo for the Special Session of the Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP). I am thankful to the SACEP for hosting the meeting and providing me an excellent hospitality.

Nepal believes that the great threat to sustainable development in South Asia is poverty, which has also been a key source to many conflicts. Eradicating poverty, employment generation and investment in education are the major focus of development aspects in Nepal. Those people living in poverty and lack of alternatives have also contributed their share to environmental degradation. Due to the fragile Himalayan Mountains, Nepal is acutely aware of the growing perils of poverty and environmental degradation.

Poverty eradication is Nepal's top priority. We are engaged in accelerating growth, promoting social development and preserving the environment. Reforms are under way to encourage innovation and investment, to promote social development and to reinforce environment policy and institutions. We have mobilised civil society and other stakeholders in this process.

After the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, in Johannesburg pressed the concern over the lack of co-ordinated mechanisms to pursue the integrated policies. It was also agreed that a multi stakeholder assembly could be the useful to bring all relevant stakeholders such as government, business and civil society to a common platform to address issues pertaining to sustainable development. Nepal has been giving high priority to the preparation of Sustainable Development Agenda for Nepal (SDAN), which is now in the final stage of preparation. The government of Nepal has set up a high level National Commission of Sustainable Development (NCSD) headed by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Population and Development as the head of the secretariat. This is the tool for co-ordinating mechanism of the implementation of Sustainable Development Agenda for Nepal. The agenda relevant to sustainable development in Nepal offer a framework and opportunity to institutionalise the process for consensus building and improved decision making to address complex socio-economic and environmental problems. In these pretexts, the meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP might provide us an opportunity to work on building our common understanding on the path to sustainable development.

The issue of development and environment has been inter-linked with each other. What happens in once corner of the world now has been the concern of the world at a large, especially on the crosscutting issues like environment. The mountains in Nepal are among the most fragile ecosystems on the earth and usually sensitive, even to small disturbances. What happen in the mountains and Himalayas have profound effects in the plains below. Changes in the upland vegetation and soils, influence the water regime in the lowland. The year 2002, we have observed the International Year of Mountain to create awareness for sustainable mountain development.

When we prepare the action plan, we should visualise the upland-lowland integration in holistic approach for all the member states of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) including Nepal where the scale of economy is very narrow and limited by severe lack of resources.

South-South co-operation is a cornerstone for sustainable development in developing countries. In the same way Regional co-operation could be ensured and sustained once we recognise the need for establishing our region as a single integrated region in the context of global economy. This will require increased commitment to use the regional resources for the development of region as a whole. Increased interrelations and interactions within the region will enhance the region's capacity to survive. We should work towards self-reliance at the regional level.

Based on our past experiences, it is high time that we recognise the need for better regional co-operation on sustainable development. Sustainable development in our region is a prerequisite for global sustainable development. Given the vast resource potentials and diversities among the member countries we should be able to ensure the sustainability of our region in the context of world economy. We have our full support to SACEP which will work more intensely in the coming years to enhance regional co-operation towards this end.

Efforts of member countries for sustainable development should be collated and synthesised to get into a regional position, which in turn should be taken as a protective and continuous process of sustainable development.

I am very much confident that this meeting would help us in paving a way for future direction of SACEP in terms of achieving the objective of sustainable development, and also shaping the future global governance.

Thank You

Annex XI

STATEMENT BY HON. MAJOR (RTD.) THAIR IQBAL MINISTER OF STATE (IN CHARGE) MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

*Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister Rukman Senanayake
Director General, SACEP Mr. Mahboob Elahi*

I am confident that under your dynamic leadership, this Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP will attain its objectives of identifying effective mechanism and instruments for implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development concluded at Johannesburg in September 2002. Having done that the foundation of new era for sustainable development in the South Asian Region shall be firmly laid down.

Sustainable development envisages integration of Social, economic and environmental concerns into the developmental framework not only to achieve material wealth of nations but also to eradicate poverty, improve quality of life as well as preserving and protecting environment from adverse impacts of development. Realising the significance of sustainable development for the survival of mankind on the planet, the World Summit calls for implementation of Plan of Action and WEHAB framework, which was presented by the UN Secretary General, focusing on five core thematic areas of Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Bio-diversity. This Plan also calls for poverty alleviation by having the percentage of people living below poverty line, and simultaneously addressing the issues of having lack of access to clean drinking water and adequate sanitation by the year 2015. There is also strong emphasis on effective management of ecosystems, which are vital for sustaining life support system, especially in poor segment of the society.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan remains committed to preservation and protection of the environment and the commitments undertaken at the international level. As Chairman of G 77, Pakistan played a pivotal role in negotiations leading to the finalisation of the agenda 21 and conventions on Climate Change and Bio-diversity. Since then we have come a long way and the WSSD has set the stage for a new era of sustainable development. Pakistan believes that unless commitments undertaken by all member States of the UN particularly the developed countries are translated into action, the lofty goals set by our leaders would remain an illusion.

In the Regional context Pakistan appreciate the role of SACEP in furthering the agenda of sustainable development in South Asia. In this regard, Pakistan has been working hand in hand with SACEP to the best of its abilities, especially in the areas of transboundary air pollution, environmental education, law and training. However, we realise that there is definite need for strengthening this co-operation further. Pakistan has made significant progress towards the preparation of National Oil Spill Contingency Plan and is expected to finalise it soon.

Pakistan firmly believes that SACEP has the potential to effectively address the environmental challenges as outlined in WSSD in co-operation with the member countries and the sister organisations.

The South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme should seize this opportunity to emerge as a "lead South Asian Environmental Organisation" and serve as a vehicle for effective delivery of

environmental programmes and projects in the South Asia, the most populous region of the World. Co-operation between SAARC and SACEP needs to be strengthened. We agreed to follow that course of action at Thimphu, Bhutan in August last year. The Governing Council could also examine the overlapping mandates of SAARC Technical Committee on Environment and SACEP and consider ways of avoiding duplication of efforts.

We hope that this special session of SACEP will go a long way in accomplishing the desired goals in the large national/regional interest of its member countries.

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to inform the meeting that Pakistan, at the national level has taken a number of initiatives to combat marine pollution. Some of the major initiatives include the preparation of Integrated Coastal Management Plan setting up of Port reception Facility which include laboratory to monitor the quality of harbour waters, Port Reception Facilities for sustainable reception of ballast water, waste oil, noxious liquid substances, sewage and garbage from ships have been established in accordance with the requirements of MARPOL Convention. Pakistan has also prepared National Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land Based Activities, under the Global Programme of Action (GPA).

The paucity of resources at our disposal has always been a great impediment in the way of developmental initiatives conceptualised by us in various environmental fields needing urgent attention. I feel that SACEP and other multilateral agencies need to step forward in making generous contributions to ensure long term and sustained development, in Pakistan and other countries of the region.

At the end Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate the Government of Pakistan's firm conviction and resolve to support all the initiatives of the United Nations and other multilateral agencies for furthering the cause of a clean and prosperous World.

Annex XII

STATEMENT BY DR. M. A. KHAN CHIEF, ENVIRONMENT SECTION UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies

First of all I would like to thank the Government of Sri Lanka and SACEP for inviting ESCAP and for making excellent arrangements for this session.

Mr. Chairman,

ESCAP is the only regional organisation of United Nation in Asia and the Pacific, which comprehensively deals with all the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social progress as well as environmental protection and conservation.

We have been co-operating with SACEP since its inception. Among notable activities, we organised a meeting with SACEP, which adopted the South Asian Seas Action Plan. We are glad to see that it has now led to development of Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

In collaboration with sister organizations UNEP and UNDP and Asian Development Bank (ADB), we also organized a sub-regional meeting which led to the development of South Asia inputs to the preparatory process, which was incorporated to the Phnom Penh Regional Platform for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, adopted by member governments as input to WSSD at High Level Regional Meeting for WSSD. We are glad that this has now become part of the regional chapter of Plan of Implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

In the aftermath of WSSD, we are helping our member countries including the members of SACEP in the implementation of Plan of Implementation of WSSD. In co-operation with UNDP we have established ESCAP/UNDP Poverty Centre to assist the member countries in the implementation of Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, a major project is being implemented to follow up the implementation of WEHAB framework. This project entitled Public-Private Partnership for Provision of Basic Services. The three streams of this project induced -development of a portfolio of best practices; development of a facility in existing national institutions to assist in the implementation; replication of best practices and testing of model best practices in WEHAB areas i.e. water, energy, health and bio-diversity.

Mr. Chairman,

ESCAP is also assisting member countries in implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as climate change, Convention on Desertification, and Convention on Bio-diversity. In past ESCAP's efforts led to the development of Asian Annex to the Convention on Desertification.

ESCAP also assists member countries, under its technical assistance programmes through provision of regional advisory services and Technical Co-operation between Developing Countries (TD-TC). These services were available to SACEP member countries who are also members of ESCAP.

Annex XIII

STATEMENT BY MR. ANJAN DATTA

PROGRAMME OFFICER

GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION COORDINATION OFFICE OF UNEP (UNEP-GPA)

*Honourable Chairman,
Excellencies, Dignitaries,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen*

On behalf of UNEP-GPA, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the Governments of South Asian countries and the SACEP Secretariat for inviting us to join the Special Session of SACEP Governing Council.

Excellencies, since my colleague Mr. Surendra Shrestha, Director of UNEP-RRCAP has already made detailed deliberation on UNEP activities in the region, I would like to briefly highlight some specific activities, which GPA Coordination Office is implementing in the region.

The GPA in reference to its Inter-governmental Review meeting held in Montreal, Canada in November 2001 launched several activities to protect the coastal and marine environment from land-based activities. GPA is supporting the national government in preparation of the National Programme of Action (NPA), initiated multi-stakeholders dialogues in the region to define jointly activities to address the pertinent issues such as physical alteration of the coastal zone, including destruction of habitats of vital importance to maintain ecosystem health.

The issue of physical alteration and destruction of habitat in the coastal and marine environment, as we know is among others, mainly due to increased population pressure and economic activities in the coastal areas.

The GPA in line with the outcome of the WSSD and many other similar events, is committed to invest on human resources development and capacity building in the region. GPA in association with SACEP has planned to host/sponsor training courses on Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM). GPA is committed to facilitate exchange of information and knowledge among professional and institutes within the region and with institutes outside the region. GPA has a fully operational Clearing House Mechanism to share and disseminate the generated knowledge among stakeholders of various regions.

Before concluding, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate that UNEP-GPA and the Regional Seas Programme consider SACEP as the umbrella organization and would like to plan and implement its regional programmes in close collaboration with SACEP.

In order to materialize effective collaboration between SACEP and UNEP-GPA and UNEP-RSP, Excellencies, we look forward to your valued patronage and guidance. However, to make our cooperation effective, I would also like to draw your kind attention to the issue of SACEP – SAARC relationship, on which deliberations have been made by the distinguished delegates of the member countries.

Honorable Chairman and Excellencies, thank you once again for your patience hearing and giving me the opportunity to speak to this august body.

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP)

REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS TO THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF SACEP

20TH JANUARY 2003, COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials to the Special Session of the Governing Council Meeting was held on 20th January 2003.
2. It was convened to discuss substantive issues concerning Follow up of Recommendations of WSSD at South Asian Sub-regional level, Work Programme of SACEP for the biennium 2003-2004, Collaboration with SAARC and UNEP, External Review of SACEP, and Financial Matters of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP). It was also agreed that the Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials on the various Agenda items would be the basis of discussion of the Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP.

II. ATTENDANCE

3. The Meeting was attended by representatives from the following member Countries: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Members of the Review Panel were also present.
4. Representatives from the United Nations agencies and International Organisations attended the meeting as Observers. These included UNEP-Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP-RRCAAP), UNEP-Global Programme of Action (UNEP-GPA), UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Centre for Environment Education-India.
5. The List of Participants is in SACEP/SS2.GC/MSO/Annex 1.

III. OPENING OF MEETING

6. Mr. Thosapala Hewage, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Chairman of the meeting welcomed all the delegates of SACEP member countries.

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

7. The draft Agenda prepared by the SACEP Secretariat for this meeting was adopted excluding the Agenda Item on Election of Office Bearers. The Director General, SACEP introduced an additional item on the Status of the Country Contribution to SACEP. The adopted Agenda is contained in SACEP/SS2.GC/MSO/Annex 2.

V. THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SACEP

8. The Director General of SACEP in his report to the meeting brought to attention the decisions and recommendations of WSSD in support of sub-regional/regional environmental programmes like SACEP. He also stated that although major environmental problems of the region by and large remain the same, efforts have been made by SACEP to address certain issues. He further stated that future Work Programme of SACEP should be supplemental to both the national efforts as well as global initiatives and proposed the following areas for further consideration:
- (i) Assessment of regional environmental trends, regional inventories and future scenarios
 - (ii) Preparation of Regional Environment Strategy for South Asia
 - (iii) Monitoring indicators of sustainable development for the region as per WEHAB Agenda
 - (iv) Establishment of Regional Activity Centre (RAC) for SASP
 - (v) Capacity development to meet requirements under MEAs
9. He thanked the country governments and members of the Consultative Committee of SACEP for assisting him and the Secretariat to achieve its goals. He also thanked Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka and Mr. Thosapala Hewage, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources for their continuous support and guidance to SACEP. The text of the statement of the Director General, SACEP is contained in SACEP/SS2.GC/MSO/Annex 3.

VI. REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

10. Mr. Thosapala Hewage, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in his remarks as the Chairman of the Meeting, commended progress achieved by SACEP under the leadership of Mr. Mahboob Elahi, despite its financial constraints and limited man-power. He stated that it was gratifying to note that 5 Environment Ministers from the region are attending the Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP. He requested all the delegates for a free and frank discussion on all agenda items so that concrete recommendations could be submitted to the Ministers in the high-level segment of the meeting on 21 January 2003. He also emphasised the importance of co-operation and collaboration with the other regional and international agencies to maximize SACEP's performance and output.

VII. FOLLOW UP ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF WSSD AT SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL

11. It was pointed out that the present Special Session of the Governing Council of SACEP was very timely as most of the governments are considering follow up actions on the recommendations of WSSD as well as the scheduling of the 22nd Session of the Governing Council of UNEP for the first week of February 2003. The latter provides an excellent opportunity for SACEP to present its priority programme and needs relevant to UNEP. The SACEP Secretariat put forward a draft Type II proposal titled 'Harmonizing Environment and Development through Enhanced Co-operation in South Asia' as a framework proposal for developing a response for WSSD follow-up activities within the region.
12. Several delegates and representatives of international organizations presented their views on the subject including the actions that were being taken at their end. It was also observed that follow up actions in South Asia should not be necessarily based

entirely from decisions and recommendations of WSSD. The national State of Environment Reports and the Position paper of South Asia developed for WSSD can be utilized for this purpose.

13. The meeting also recommended the following

- Identification of few priority areas for regional cooperation
- Member Governments to provide SACEP Secretariat with details of follow up actions of WSSD at national level enabling SACEP to incorporate them into actions at regional level
- Develop the capacity within the governments to implement the projects
- Plan of Implementation should provide guidelines with regard to the funding mechanisms
- Organize a side event during GC. UNEP for South Asia where further discussions can take place

VIII. CO-OPERATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN VARIOUS REGIONAL/SUB-REGIONAL ENTITIES IN SOUTH ASIA FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(i) Technical Co-operation between SAARC-SACEP in the Field of Environment

14. Pursuant to proceedings of the Fifth SAARC Environment Ministers' Meeting, Thimphu, Bhutan, 10-11 August 2002 wherein the Ministers recommended that SAARC should engage in environmental management in a meaningful way while retaining SACEP's autonomy to a desirable extent. SACEP prepared a draft Memorandum of Understanding in the field of environment between SAARC and SACEP and forwarded the same to the SAARC Secretariat and member governments of SACEP for approval.
15. The delegates from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan stated that their governments have approved signing of the MOU on co-operation between SAARC and SACEP in environmental matters. The delegate from Nepal stated that the proposed MOU is under active consideration by the Government and a formal decision in this regard will be conveyed to the SACEP Secretariat.
16. It was also decided that this agenda item should be taken for further discussion in the presence of the Secretary General of SAARC.

(ii) UNEP-SACEP Collaboration

17. All the delegates appreciated the existing state of active collaboration between UNEP and SACEP and how this framework for co-operation can be expanded. It was recommended that the substance of this co-operation should be broadened and deepened wherever possible.
18. It was also decided that SACEP should enter into a MoU on co-operation with UNEP, which can be announced at the GC.22/UNEP. It will be a vehicle to firm up partnership between UNEP and SACEP.

(iii) **Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan in South Asian Seas**

19. Several delegates appreciated the development of Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan for South Asia and a broader agreement by the marine member states of the region for signing the MOU. It was quoted as one of the most tangible activity maturing under the auspices of SACEP/SAS. One delegate emphasised the importance of training in the implementation of oil spill contingency plan. SACEP Secretariat assured that it would be kept in view while deciding various activities under the contingency plan.

(iv) **SACEP-ICRAN Partnership**

20. The effort of SACEP in initiating this partnership with ICRAN was appreciated as a positive development. The project will be further developed for identifying demonstration projects for coral reef protection, utilizing expertise and financial resources of ICRAN. The member governments will be kept informed of further developments.

(v) **SACEP-UN ESCAP Collaboration**

21. The Governing Council noted the cooperative activities that have been undertaken by ESCAP and SACEP to promote sustainable development in South Asia. Both the organisations were requested to work in collaboration with each other and strengthen the co-operation.

IX. EXTERNAL REVIEW OF SACEP: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT OF THE REVIEW PANEL

22. Mr. Rajamani, Member, SACEP External Review Panel presented salient features of the report on behalf of the Panel. The other members of the Panel viz. Dr. Devanesan Nesaiah and Dr. Atiq Rahman also attended.

23. Mr. Rajamani stated that the Review Panel had a series of meetings with Director General, SACEP and member governments. After taking into consideration all related facts, the Panel has come to the conclusion that SACEP is a bold, visionary initiative for regional co-operation in South Asia and needs to be revitalised and enable to move forward, helping all member countries. It has inherent and latent dynamism and potential to do better if some corrective measures are taken. He outlined, four pillars on which SACEP' performance and image can be enhanced. These included:

- (a) Member Country Support
- (b) Secretariat Efficiency
- (c) Donors' Support
- (d) Help of People through NGOs, Academia, Scientific Institutions etc.

24. He briefly explained the rational of all recommendations relating to the above aspects.

25. The delegations expressed general satisfaction with the report and its recommendations. They appreciated the work of the Review Panel and the substance of these recommendations. It was, however, observed that some more time will required for in-depth study of the Report and in arriving at countries' specific position

on each of its recommendations. It was indicated that about one month would be required for communicating their response to the SACEP Secretariat.

26. Dr. Atiq Rahman, the other member of the Review Panel further added that the Panel feels that mandate and history of SACEP is credible. It suffers from lack of governments' support, ownership and on account of limited innovations tried. It has to move from its traditional agenda of environment to environment for sustainable development and building on partnerships within the region (SAARC-SACEP etc.) and with the international organizations. The role of the leadership in revitalization of the organization is important in term of its dynamism and pro-active stance. It is a matter of satisfaction that the latter has fallen in line and several concrete actions that have been taken by the present Director General, SACEP under the overall guidance of Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka and the Chairman, GC.SACEP.
27. On the discussion that followed, the following points were raised:
- (i) Instead of reliance on the country governments for the corpus fund of 3 million, major multilateral donors such as NORAD, GTZ and GEF may be explored.
 - (ii) SACEP activities and programmes may remain focus so as to minimise country government support.
 - (iii) The position for determining the quantum of corpus funds required for SACEP would become more clear once the regional strategy and the plan of action referred to under Agenda Item No. 1 is available.
 - (iv) In due course, a Support Group for the implementation Strategy and Plan of Action of SACEP would need to be constituted for mobilization of funds. The balance need for the corpus fund may be met from one-time countries' contribution.
 - (v) Director, UNEP-RRCAP informed the meeting that at least four donors have approached him to support SACEP. It is expected that additional donors would be willing if concrete details of the work programme and its financial needs are available.
28. The Meeting of the Senior Officers noted the above position and decided that after the receipt of comments from the member Governments the Consultative Committee of SACEP will finalize its recommendation for approval.
29. On a recommendation, it was agreed that Mr. Rajamani may be requested to present salient features of the report of the review panel in the Ministerial Segment of GC.SACEP. It will be appropriate if the Chairman of the Senior Officers' Meeting also presents the summary of discussion that took place on this agenda item so that full context of the recommendation is appreciated.

X. FINALIZATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME OF SACEP FOR THE BIENNIUM 2003-2004

30. The proposal submitted by the Secretariat was considered. It was observed that due to limited financial and manpower resources, SACEP may focus on a few priority issues, which are of regional importance. The following areas were recommended for these purposes.

- a. Development of Regional Strategy for implementation of WSSD Outcomes including plan of implementation and WEHAB framework in conformity with the national plans of implementation.
 - b. Compliance and enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
 - c. Development of common legislative framework and delivery mechanism at regional level relating to following areas:
 - a. coastal zone management
 - b. environmental impact assessments
 - c. assessment and documentation of biodiversity
 - d. Preparation of Regional Activity Centre for South Asian Seas in consultation with member governments
 - e. Conservation and Management of Water Resources
 - f. Implementation of Programme for Water and Sanitation Delivery and Efficiency including sewage management
 - g. Environment- Energy, Health, livelihood linkage for the poor who depend mainly on natural resources
 - h. Institution of programme for environmentally sound management and dismantling of ships in the South Asian region.
31. Meanwhile, the result of all ongoing projects should be shared with the member countries.

XI. APPROVAL OF THE SOUTH ASIA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTION PLAN (2003-2007)

32. Ms. Meena Raghunathan, Programme Director, Centre for Environment Education, Ahmadabad, India presented salient features of the Action Plan. The Governing Council approved the Action Plan and the Strategy.
33. Based on this Action Plan, specific pilot projects will be formulated for implementation in the region in consultation with the country governments.

XII. STATUS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MALÉ DECLARATION ON CONTROL & PREVENTION OF AIR POLLUTION AND ITS LIKELY TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS FOR SOUTH ASIA (PHASE 2)

34. The status of implementation of the Phase II of the project, which is under implementation in association with the National Implementation Agencies/National Focal Points of the member countries, was noted.

XIII. STATUS OF THE COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS

35. All member countries of SACEP/SASP were requested to clear their outstanding contributions at the agreed rates at an early date to enable the organization to carryout its functions.
36. The member countries were also requested that all future contributions are paid in the beginning of the calendar year to minimize cash-flow problems.
37. The delegates present in the meeting indicated that the matter is already receiving their attention.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBER GOVERNMENTS

BANGLADESH

Mr. S.M. Luthfullah

Joint Secretary
 Ministry of Environment & Forests
 Building - 6, Room - 1307
 Bangladesh Secretariat
 Dhaka - 1000
 Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 8619621
 Fax: (880 2) 8619210
 E-mail: jsef@sdnbd.org

Mr. Ashud Ahmad

Acting High Commissioner
 High Commission for the People's Republic of
 Bangladesh
 Colombo 7
 Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 681310-12
 Fax: (94 1) 681309
 E-mail: bdootlanka@eureka.lk

INDIA

Mr. K. C. Misra

Secretary
 Ministry of Environment & Forests
 Paryavaran Bhawan
 CGO Complex, Lodhi Road
 New Delhi - 110003
 India

Tel: (91 11) 24360721/24361896
 Fax: (91 11) 24362746/24364791
 E-mail: kcmisra35@hotmail.com

Mr. V. Ashok

Counsellor-Economic and Commercial
 High Commission of India
 36-38, Gall Road
 Colombo 3
 Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 421605/422788- 9/439560 (Direct)
 Fax: (94 1) 446403/448166
 E-mail: slecomind@sri.lanka.net
hicomind@sri.lanka.net

MALDIVES

Mr. Mohamed Inaz

Senior Environment Analyst
 Ministry of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment
 Huraree Building
 Malé, Republic of Maldives

Tel: (960) 324 861
 Fax: (960) 322 286
 E-mail: env@environment.gov.mv

Mr. Madan Singh Mahat

Under Secretary

Ministry of Population and Environment

Singh Durbar

Kathmandu

Nepal

Tel: (977 1) 245367

Fax: (977 1) 245138

E-mail: msmahat@mope.gov.np

Mr. Sudhir Bhattarai

First Secretary

Royal Nepalese Embassy

153 Kynsey Road

Colombo 8

Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 689 656/7

Fax: (94 1) 689 655

E-mail: S_bhattarai45@hotmail.com

Mr. Jawed Ali Khan

Director General

Ministry of Environment, Local Government & Rural
Development

Civic Centre, G-6

Islamabad

Pakistan

Tel: (92 51) 920 2574

Fax: (92 51) 920 2211

E-mail: jawedalikhan@hotmail.com

Mr. Tanveer A. Khaskheli

Counsellor

High Commission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

211, De Saram Place

Colombo 10

Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 696 301/2

Fax: (94 1) 695 780

E-mail: hcpak1@sltnet.lk

Mr. Thosapala Hewage

Secretary

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources

82, Sampathpaya

Rajamalwatta Rd, Battaramulla

Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 887 291

Fax: (94 1) 887 290

E-mail: thosapalahewage@hotmail.com

Mr. W. R. M. Sarath Wickramasinghe

Additional Secretary

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources

82, Sampathpaya

Rajamalwatta Rd, Battaramulla

Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 875327

Fax: (94 1) 879 834

E-mail: addsecnr@sltnet.lk

Dr. B. M. S. Batagoda

Director-Economic and Global Affairs

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources

104, Robert Gunawardane Mawatha

Battaramulla

Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 887452 / 410234

Fax: (94 74) 410234

E-mail: envecon@sltnet.lk / airmac@sltnet.lk

MEMBERS OF SAGEP REVIEW PANEL

Mr. R. Rajamani

Ex-Secretary
Ministry of Environment and Forest-India
8-2-585 / Aji, Road 9
Bajara Hills
Hydrabad,
India

Tel : 040 - 23358320
Fax : 040 - 23355480
E mail : raja9@vsnl.net

Dr. Devanesan Nesiah

Ex-Secretary
Ministry of Environment and Forest-Sri Lanka
Marga Institute
93/10, Dutugamunu Street
Colombo 6
Sri Lanka
Tel: (94 1) 829 013 / 828 544
Fax: (94 1) 828 597
E-mail: dnesiah@yahoo.com

Dr. A. Atiq Rahman

Executive Director
Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
House # 23, Road # 10A
Dhanmondi R/A
DHAKA-1209
Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 811 5829 / 811 3977 / 911 3682
Fax: (880 2) 811 1344 / 811 8206
E-mail: atiq.r@bdc.com.bd / atiq.rahman@bacas.net

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

Mr Surendra Shrestha

Director
UNEP-Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific
(UNEP-RRC.AP)
Outreach Building
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
PO Box 4, Klongluang
Pathumthani 12120
Bangkok
Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 516 2124
Fax: (66 2) 516 2125
E-mail: surenda@air.ac.th

Dr. Anjan Datta

Programme Officer
(UNEP) Global Programme of Action Coordination
Office (UNEP-GPA)
The Hague
The Netherlands

Tel: (31 70) 311 4468
Fax: (3170) 345 6648
E-mail: a.datta@unep.nl

Mr. Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty

Senior Programme Officer/Head Environment
Assessment and Reporting
UNEP-Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the
Pacific (UNEP-RRC.AP)
Room 304, Outreach Building
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
PO Box 4, Klongluang
Pathumthani 12120
Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 524 6240 (direct)/516 2124
Fax: (66 2) 516 2125/ 2524 6233
E-mail: mohyng@ait.ac.th

OTHER UN REPRESENTATIONS

Dr. M. A. Khan
Chief, Environment Section
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the
Pacific (ESCAP)
UN Building
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200
Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 1691
Fax: (66 2) 288 1025
E-mail: khan.unescap@un.org

Ms. Shireen Samarasuriya
Co-ordinator, GEF/SGP
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
No. 202-204
Buddhaloka Mawatha
Colombo 7
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 580 691 (Ex.314)
Fax: (94 1) 580 611
E-mail: shireen.samarasuriya@undp.org

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. M. A. Kumaradasa
Development Officer
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Amarasekara Mawatha
Colombo 5
Sri Lanka

Tel: (94 1) 502 640
E-mail: Arlene@cida.psu.lk

Ms. Meena Raghunathan
Programme Co-ordinator
Centre for Environment Education
Ahmadabad-380054
India

Tel: (91 79) 685 8002
Fax: (91 79) 685 8010

Mr. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury
Chairman
Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists
(AFEJ)
42/1/Kha Segun Bagicha
Dhaka - 1000
Bangladesh

Tel: (880 2) 933 6987 mobile - (880) 171 591792
Fax: (880 2) 861 9210
E-mail: apfej@bdcom.com

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP)

10 Anderson Road, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

Mr. Mahboob Elahi
Director General

Tel: (94 1) 589 376 / 589 787
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: melahi@eureka.lk

Mr. Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene
Interim Coordinator-South Asian Seas Programme

Tel: (94 1) 596 442, 589 787
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: pd_sacep@eureka.lk

Mr. Pradyumna Kumar Kotta
Project Coordinator-SENRIC

Tel: (94 1) 596 443, 589 787
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: pk_sacep @eureka.lk

Ms. Jacintha Tissera
Administrative Officer

Tel: (94 1) 504 708, 589 787
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: sacep @eureka.lk

Ms. Nishanthi Perera
Programme Officer - SAS

Tel: (94 1) 552 761
Fax: (94 1) 589 369
E-mail: np-sas@eureka.lk

Ms. Nilani de Andrade
Secretary

Tel: (94 1) 589787
Fax: (94 1) 589369

Ms. Anjana D. Madanayake
Secretary, SAS

Tel: (94 1) 589787
Fax: (94 1) 589369

Ms. Teruni Walaliyadde
Secretary

Tel: (94 1) 589787
Fax: (94 1) 589369

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

**PREPARATORY MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS FOR SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
GOVERNING COUNCIL**

**COLOMBO, SRI LANKA
20 JANUARY 2003**

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work
3. Statement by the Director General, SACEP
4. Remarks by the Chairman of the Meeting
5. Follow up on the Recommendations of WSSD at Sub-Regional Level
6. Co-operation and Collaboration between various Regional/Sub-Regional Entities in South Asia for Environment Protection and Sustainable Development
 - (i) Technical Co-operation between SAARC-SACEP in the Field of Environment
 - (ii) UNEP-SACEP Collaboration
 - (iii) Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan in South Asian Seas
 - (iv) SACEP-ICRAN Partnership
7. External Review of SACEP: Recommendations of the Report of the Review Panel
8. Finalization of the Work Programme of SACEP for the biennium 2003-2004
Approval of the South Asia Environmental Education and Training Action Plan (2003-2007)
9. Approval of the South Asia Environmental Education and Training Action Plan (2003-2007)
10. Status Report on the Implementation of the Malé Declaration on Control & Prevention of Air Pollution and its likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia (Phase 2)
11. Status of the Country Contributions
11. Closure of the Meeting

REPORT OF DIRECTOR GENERAL, SACEP TO THE PREPARATORY MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICERS

Honourable Chairman,

National Focal Points of SACEP and Delegates to the Second Special Session of the GC.SACEP

About more than a year ago, when I took office of the Director General, SACEP and I had the opportunity of first official contact with you, I tried to establish that the decision to create SACEP as a regional environmental organization for South Asia as back as 1982 was visionary and timely, if we compare it with the history of the establishment of similar sub-regional/regional environmental organizations throughout the world. Today, I can re-iterate this statement with confidence quoting the following excerpts from the Political Declaration of World Summit on Sustainable Development and its Plan of Implementation adopted at Johannesburg, South Africa in September, 2002 in support of regionalization of environmental protection and sustainable development:

Actions taken at the regional and sub-regional levels provide a bridge between national realities and global priorities, while also addressing common areas of concern and shared interests associated with geographic proximity, relative homogeneity and shared history.

The Plan of Implementation also puts strong focus on initiatives, experiences, and institutional set-up at regional level. It fully recognizes the importance of regional, sub-regional and trans-regional action to promote sustainable development. The following sections of these documents are specifically devoted to regional dimension of the implementation: VIII.bis (Other Regional Initiatives); and X (Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development at Regional Level) and (Strengthening Institutional Arrangements for Sustainable Development Level).

At that time (29 September, 2001) I had also identified some of the priority issues of SACEP to be attended as soon as possible. These among others included (a) long over due Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP, the last one being held in April, 1998 (b) lack of contacts and interaction between National Focal Points and SACEP and outreach with other international organizations and donors (c) delay in the remittances of the countries' membership contributions (d) inadequate and narrow base of donors' support and (e) weak programme of activities. It was also submitted that the following factors might be responsible for this state of affairs:

- 1) Low budget
- 2) Inadequate/motivated staff
- 3) Weak level of support at political level
- 4) No firm legal base of co-operation, such as legal instruments/conventions
- 5) Lack of common framework of expressed needs and priorities at the national and sub-regional level
- 6) Lack of participation and communication gap at various levels

To this end, a three-pronged approach segmented as (a) involving least cost (b) modest cost and (c) medium/long-range options was submitted for consideration, copy annexed.

While structurally there may not be any quantum shift in the basic problems of the organisation and its future challenges and opportunities, I may like to bring some of the specific actions taken by us, irrespective of the fact as to their scale and nature. The object is, do these make a difference. These are:

1. Registration of SACEP with the Treaty Division of United Nations under Article 102 of the UN Charter.

2. In the last one and half year 2 meetings of the GC.SACEP and one IMM/SASP were held and the fourth one we have started today. Most of these meetings were represented by high-level delegations led by the Ministers. The meetings of Consultative Committee of SACEP/SASP were regularly held. So far 5 such meetings have been held.
3. External Review of SACEP by a 3-member team comprised of two former Secretaries of Environment of Governments of India and Sri Lanka and BACAS from Bangladesh was completed. Its recommendations were made available to the country governments for their views/comments. It is one of the agenda items of today's meeting.
4. A proposal for SAARC-SACEP Co-operation in the Field of Environment has been under reference to the SAARC and Governments of the region. The matter has already been raised at the relevant forums, namely Governing Council of SACEP, SAARC Environment Ministers' Meeting at Thimphu, Bhutan on 10-11 August and SAARC Council of Ministers' Meeting on 18-22 August 2002. We expect positive results of all these efforts.
5. A full-time Interim Coordinator has been appointed for South Asian Seas. This appointment is expected to expand activities and projects for SASP. An MOU on Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan is in the final stages of endorsement by the marine member states of South Asia.
6. Dissemination of information about the existence of SACEP and its current activities and programmes etc. for possible support by bilateral and multilateral donors in Sri Lanka and abroad. Several encouraging responses have been received.
7. A Joint UNEP's GPA Office, Netherlands and OECD mission visited India and Sri Lanka from 26-28 September 2002 for initiating follow up activities/projects in South Asia.
8. UNEP Regional Seas Programme, International Maritime Organization (IMO) and ICRAN have included SACEP region in their New Partnership Programmes
9. UNEP-GPA Office has launched a major initiative on Sewage in South Asia for the protection of marine environment. A major event is planned in Colombo, Sri Lanka soon
10. Strategic Meetings attended
[ESCAP, FAO (Regional Meeting), WSSD, IMO, Male Declaration, Coral Reefs, GPA, GISP, USAID, ESTOP]
11. Presentation of 12 Type 2 Interventions/Proposals at WSSD
12. Several dignitaries and senior functionary of UN visited Colombo, Sri Lanka and held meetings with SACEP
13. Agreement for signing of MOU with IUCN on co-operation in the area of environment, including their willingness to provide US \$ 10,000/- to SACEP from the ADB/RETA project
14. Restarted SACEP's Newsletter in January 2002. Three issues have been issued and the fourth one is under finalization
15. SACEP website is on line as of October 2001
16. Streamlining of Administrative and Financial Procedures etc. in SACEP

As regards the future challenges, opportunities and options, External Review of SACEP has made specific recommendations regarding change in its mission, creating a reliable financial base, improved networks and working of National Focal Points. The recommendations are basic in nature and their acceptance will help the organization move forward, effectively and efficiently.

As regards framework of the Work Programme of SACEP for the biennium 2003-2004, focus may be on -

- (vi) Assessment of regional environmental trends, regional inventories and future scenarios
- (vii) Preparation of Regional Environment Strategy for South Asia
- (viii) Monitoring indicators of sustainable development for the region as per WEHAB Agenda
- (ix) Establishment of Regional Activity Centre (RAC) for SASP
- (x) Capacity development to meet requirements under MEAs

To conclude let me share with you a quote from a visionary leadership of South Asia, no longer with us, on the dilemma between the time-frame and the delivery of outputs:

The Past belongs to us, but we do not belong to the Past. We belong to the Present. We are makers of the future, but we do not belong to the future.

I will be available to provide any input in arriving at the decisions.

Annex of the Report of the Director General of SACEP

Statement showing possible options for responding to the identified problems of SACEP

A. Involving least cost:

- i. Networking and linkages
- ii. Exchange of information of the experiences
- iii. Representation of major supporters of SACEP's programmes on Governing Council/CC of SACEP
- iv. Mapping, GIS, Database
- v. Environment Award

B. Modest Cost:

- i. Catalyst to National Actions
- ii. Joint Activities Planning, Programming at Regional Level
- iii. Environmental Education and Training/Capacity Building
- iv. Inventory of Environmental Friendly Technologies and their Transfer Mechanisms
- v. Meeting, Workshops, Visits
- vi. Series of nationally identified activities with similar focus

C. Medium/Long Range Actions:

- i. Development of Regional Legal Instruments as Basis of Co-operation
- ii. Joint Thematic Reviews
- iii. Common Position on the Negotiation and Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agencies.
- iv. Effective Committees/Taskforces