

UNEP/SACEP
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SEMINAR FOR
COUNTRIES OF SOUTH ASIA
EMS 98

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Conclusion and Recommendations

1. While considerable progress has been made in the countries of South Asia to strengthen national policies, institutional arrangements and regulatory measures for promoting the integrating of environmental considerations in decision making, there is a need for greater focus on the ways and means of promoting more effective monitoring, compliance and enforcement of existing/new policies and regulatory measures. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on promoting compliance through partnerships between government, industry, business and community organisations and NGOs, while maintaining effective enforcement schemes.
2. The business sector has an important role to play in promoting environmentally friendly development. Greater efforts should be directed at strengthening partnerships between government and the business sector, establishing bonds of confidence and enlisting the active participation of the private and public sectors in setting environmental standards and procedures, and in promoting voluntary compliance.
3. The interactive nature of the seminar provided a useful opportunity for representatives of the business sectors from the South Asian countries to exchange views among themselves and with government representatives on the problems being faced by the business sector in their efforts to adjust to the goal of sustainable development and to share and learn from each other's experiences.

4. A consensus emerged among the participants that SACEP and UNEP should take further initiatives to provide for a regular forum for representatives of the business sectors of countries in South Asia to come together for an exchange of views on the challenges they face in pursuing the goal of sustainable development and to share their experiences – both successes and failures – and information to strengthen sub-regional cooperation among the business sectors to promote environmentally friendly development. It was recommended that SACEP and UNEP Organised a workshop in the South Asian Countries to pave the way for such co-operation.
5. It was also felt that SACEP and UNEP should, with the assistance of the private and public sectors of the countries in South Asia, initiate action to promote information networking among the South Asian Countries so that information on achievements in the area of environmentally friendly industrial development, including new technological developments and management techniques, such as the safe waste disposal techniques which provide for recycling and re-use of components of such wastes, could be shared by countries in the region. The forthcoming SACEP-UNEP initiative to convene a South Asian Workshop on advances made in promoting an environmentally friendly industry was also welcomed. They were of the view that the country reports documenting, inter alia, success stories as well as failures and their causes introducing voluntary environmental initiatives including market based instruments, could serve as a useful background paper for the workshop.
6. The participants called on UNEP, SACEP and ESCAP to bring together the extremely important and useful work that they were carrying out in the area of integrating environmental considerations in development decision making, including ESCAP's Asia-Pacific subject on the project, and to arrange for the results of their work to be disseminated among countries of South Asia. Greater efforts should be made to disseminate such information, including among business sector organisations/associations and other relevant institutions through written and electronic media.
7. The participants emphasized the need for further capacity building activities in countries of South Asia for promoting monitoring, compliance and

enforcement of environmental regulations and international and regional environmental conventions and agreements. They called on UNEP, SACEP, ESCAP, UNIDO and other organisations within the outside the UN system to increase their co-operations in the areas of education and training, public awareness and information dissemination in the region. There was wide support for developing an informal South Asian Electronic Network for Environmental Information linking together government institutions, business sector institutions such as chambers of commerce and industry, academic and scientific communities, NGOs and others building upon the existing UNEP-NETTLAP data base. The view was also expressed that SENRIC (SACEP Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre) could be well suited to coordinate these functions.

8. There was a general consensus that countries in the region were taking significant measures within available financial human and material resources for the implementation of environmental conventions and protocols and that sharing the experiences of the countries in the region would significantly enhance this process. SACEP and UNEP were requested to give priority to this matter in their programmes of work in the south Asian Countries and to make every effort to secure the necessary financial resources for this purpose.
9. It is recommended that SACEP and UNEP take initiatives to organise a regional workshop of leading environmental management institutions of the seven South Asian Countries in consultation with the respective governments to lay the frame work for developing cooperation and networking among these institutions in South Asia to promote environmental protection and management in the region.