

**Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting
and
Fourth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting**

INAUGURATION CEREMONY

Inauguration Ceremony of the Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting and the Fourth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting was held on 1 October 2007 in Malé, Maldives where the opening ceremony started with welcome address by Abdullahi Majeed Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Water, Maldives. He extended a warm welcome to the participants of the ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting and the Fourth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting. He highlighted the achievements of the Malé Declaration in phases and thanked the institutions involved in the implementation of the Malé Declaration.

The Introduction to the meeting was given by Mr. Surendra Shrestha, UNEP Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific, he pointed out the Malé Declaration adopted by the Environment Ministers of South Asia is important providing the frame work for regional cooperation on atmospheric issues in South Asia. He mentioned that the Fifth Regional Stakeholders meeting and Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental meeting, will have major task in terms of reviewing the phase 3 implementation and developing the plan for the next 3 years, the phase 4. He thanked member governments, Regional Facilitator (Mr. Rajamani), Monitoring Committee, SACEP, Sida, and SEI for their commitment and continued support for the implementation of the Malé Declaration and finally expressed gratitude for H. E. Ahmed Abdullah and the Government of Maldives for hosting the meeting.

The opening remarks of the ceremony was given by Dr. Arvind Boaz, the Director General of SACEP, where he mentioned that the Malé Declaration is one of the significant milestones in the intergovernmental cooperation in South Asia and the declaration could provide a frame work for cooperation not only on air pollution issues but also for other environmental issues in South Asia. He thanked member countries, Sida, SEI, and UNEP for their Efforts in the implementation of the Malé Declaration; and the Government of Maldives for hosting the meeting. His address was followed by Dr. Johan Kulenstierna, the Director of SEI-York. He indicated that the development of technical capacity has already been initiated in South Asia under the Malé Declaration and the future activities should build on the ongoing activities. He informed that SEI will continue to help the member countries in developing their capacities to address the air pollution issues in South Asia.

Inaugural Address of the Ceramony was given by His Excellency Ahmed Abdullah, Hon. Minister, Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Water, Maldives, and he informed that it is a privilege for the Government of Maldives to host the Malé Declaration meeting during the holy month of Ramadan in Malé, the birth place of the Malé Declaration. H.E stated that nearly 10 years has passed after the adaption of the Malé Declaration and technical capacity of Maldives to monitor air pollution has significantly increased during these 10 years. He thanked UNEP for playing the facilitator role on the atmospheric issues in Asia and providing the secretariat for the Malé Declaration; and Sida for continuously providing the much needed financial support.

Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Malé Declaration

REPORT OF THE SESSION

The Intergovernmental Meeting (IG) on the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and Its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia held its Ninth Session in Bandos, Maldives on 3 October 2007. The meeting was attended by the Ministries of Environment (NFP) and National Implementing Agencies (NIA) of the participating countries, members of Monitoring Committee (MoC), South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and an independent facilitator. Mr. R. Rajamani, former Secretary of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India chaired the meeting as the Regional Facilitator.

Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP presented the key progress made during the past one year after the Eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG8) which was held in September 2006 in Thimphu, Bhutan.

Ms. Wah Wah Htoo, UNEP and Ms. Karin Sjoberg, IVL, member of the monitoring committee, presented the status of the data report and monitoring activities. Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP, presented the comments from the stakeholders cum coordination meeting on the Malé Declaration public awareness material, Youth for Clean Air, compiled by SAYEN.

The Session endorsed the Malé Declaration public awareness material with some changes. SAYEN was requested to incorporate these changes and send the updated version to the Secretariat for circulating among the NIA's for final comments. The chair, Mr. Rajamani, concluded the discussions on this agenda item by suggesting that major journalists and audio visual media person from participating countries be briefed about the Malé Declaration and its activities. It was also suggested to establish a network for knowledge sharing at the regional level.

Prof. Ram Shrestha, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, presented a draft report "Compendium of best practices on Prevention and Control of Air Pollution" which has been prepared based on the request of the eighth Session of the Intergovernmental meeting. He gave a broad outline about the issues faced by South Asia, approaches for mitigating air pollution and examples of these approaches.

Ms. Sara Stenhammar, Sida informed the meeting about the on-going changes regarding development cooperation in Sweden and in Sida. She mentioned that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not increased the budget for Sida as was anticipated. This might endanger Sida's continued financial support to the Malé Declaration.. While regional member countries could continue in the effort to argue financial resources for the programme, it was felt that the continuing support of Sida would be important at this stage. In view of this, the meeting requested the Malé Declaration Secretariat at UNEP to communicate to the Minister of Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden the need for the continuation of Sida funding for the implementation of the Malé Declaration in Phase 4.

Dr. Arvind Boaz, Director General of SACEP expressed the need to strengthen the partnership role of SACEP in the Malé Declaration process as Malé Declaration was discussed and signed by Ministers of the Environment at the seventh meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP in Malé, Republic of Maldives.

Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP gave a brief of the history of the Malé Declaration and mentioned that the proposal has been developed based on a series of consultations with the participating countries, culminating in a final consultation at an Exchange programme with the Project Managers of the Malé Declaration.

The draft Work Programme in 2008 for Malé Declaration was presented by Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP and the Session adopted the document. His Excellency Mr. Abdullahi Majeed, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Environment and Water (MEEW) of Maldives gave his concluding remarks, thanking all the participants. He stressed the need for collective action to tackle air pollution issues. Dr. Arvind Boaz of SACEP during his closing remarks thanked the Government of Maldives, the Regional Facilitator and participants for the success of this meeting and Dr. Johan Kuylenskierna of SEI mentioned that it was the best network meeting that he had attended, and felt that the scientific understanding had improved, as well as the commitment by the countries.

Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP during his closing remarks thanked the Government of Maldives for their support for holding this meeting and finally The Chair, Mr. R. Rajamani noted that this had been a very significant meeting. He closed the Session, thanking each and every one for making this meeting a success.

Fourth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting

REPORT OF THE SESSION

Introduction

The Fourth Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination meeting of Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and Its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia was held in Bandos, Maldives during 2 –3 October 2007. The meeting was attended by the National Focal Points (NFP) and National Implementing Agencies (NIA) of Malé Declaration as well as representatives from various stakeholders groups and ongoing initiatives on air pollution at national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels. Mr. R. Rajamani, former Secretary of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India chaired the meeting as the Regional Facilitator. The meeting started with an introduction by the Regional Facilitator for the Malé Declaration, Mr. R. Rajamani. Where, he commended the progress made so far in Phase 3 of the implementation of the Malé Declaration.

Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan of UNEP RRC.AP presented the progress of the implementation of the Malé Declaration. He briefly mentioned about the Phase I, Phase II, and the activities that are being carried out in Phase III. The Secretariat reported the Progress of Malé Declaration after the Eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG8) which was held in September 2006 in Thimphu, Bhutan. Dr. Johan of SEI presented a brief overview of the structure of the RAPIDC program and its linkages to the Malé Declaration. After him the National Implementation Agencies (NIAs) participating in the Malé Declaration, presented the progress in the implementation of Malé Declaration in their respective countries.

Dr. Nguyen Thi Kim Oanh, from the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, made a presentation on “Protocol for inter-laboratory calibration of Malé monitoring network” and his address was followed by Mr. Gopal Kumar Jain, from the SAYEN Secretariat, who made a presentation on “Malé Declaration: the Youth Version”.

The Session 2 of the program was on Initiatives on air pollution in South Asia where Dr. Manju Mohan from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi, gave a presentation on work done on air pollution modelling in India. which was followed by a presentation by Prof. Razi Abbas Shamsi, University of the Punjab, Lahore, on “Implications of Tropospheric Ozone on Agricultural Production in Pakistan”.

Dr. Vahid Esfahanian, University of Tehran made a presentation on Air Pollution Modeling, and his presentation was followed by a presentation titled “Market Segment and Geographical Diversification of Electric Vehicles in Nepal” which was made by Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi, Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN), focusing on a Global Environment Facility (GEF) supported project to further expand the reach of Electric Vehicles in Nepal. This was followed by a presentation on Public awareness on Air Pollution. By Dr. Asif Javed Khan Khawaja.

Session 3 of the Programme was about initiatives on air pollution in Asia and Ms. Aida Roman of East Asian Network on Acid Deposition (EANET) made a presentation on the activities of EANET and Mr. Cornie Huizenga, Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia), made a presentation on “CAI-Asia: Recent Developments” and Dr. Nguyen Thi Kim Oanh, Asian Institute of Technology made a presentation on the AIRPET integrated monitoring and modeling for air quality management in Asian urban areas and Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan of UNEP ROAP made a presentation on the Project Atmospheric Brown Clouds (ABC).

The Session 4 was based on the Initiatives on air pollution in other regions where Dr. Johan Kuylenstierna of SEI and Mr. Iyngararasan of UNEP ROAP presented the progress of the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum (GAPF)

Conclusion of Session

The Third Regional Stakeholders and Coordination meeting ended with concluding remark from Mr. Rajamani, Regional Facilitator. During his concluding remarks, Mr. Rajamani summarized the progress in each country and appreciated that most of the targets set for Phase 3 is being achieved. He stressed the need for better networking and improved awareness building about air pollution related issues and about the progress of the Malé Declaration activities in particular. Mr. Rajamani expressed that the participating countries have to take greater ownership of the project, especially in terms of financial support for the implementation of Malé Declaration. He thanked Sida for its support and hoped that Sida support will continue even in the next phase. He further thanked the Government of Maldives for the hospitality and excellent arrangements.