

Statement by the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme on SDGs Road map in South Asia

Mr. Chair, thank you very much for allowing me to make statement on behalf of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP). Excellences, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen good afternoon. SACEP being an intergovernmental organization of eight South Asian Countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) appreciates the opportunity for this statement on the SDGs roadmap in South Asia. SACEP welcome the United National Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) endeavors for devising the roadmap for achieving targets of SDGs in Asia and Pacific region and SACEP fully supports holding of the APSDF. As you are aware the South Asian Sub-region is hosting 1/4th of the total global population and is one of the fastest growing sub-regions of the world. It is blessed with the oldest civilizations, rich and diverse natural resource base, which has historically supported economic development and sustained rural livelihoods. South Asia is faced with a host of environmental challenges linked to poverty and hunger as nearly 40 percent of the world's poorest population lives in South Asia, rising inequality, poor levels of human development, wide infrastructure gaps, widespread food and energy insecurity and high risk of disasters. Consequently, natural resources are under extreme pressure due to increasing human population and urbanization.

The negative effects of unsustainable urbanization and industrialization leads to poor ambient air quality, loss of Bio-diversity, poor solid waste management and unsustainable production and consumption pattern & resource inefficiency. The water availability and water quality is also affected by rapid urbanization, population growth and industrialization. Amid these emerging challenges, capacities of the public sector policy formulation and implementation institutions are weak coupled with very weak civil society and private sector institutional base. The common citizens are not aware of the gravity and severity of environmental problems and are therefore not taking part in any such environmental protection initiatives.

The private sector contribution towards environment protection is negligible and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has rarely focused environment protection in South Asia. Baseline data on environmental SDG indicators is not available at one place and it is therefore not possible to undertake holistic planning for SDGs in South Asia. Therefore, implementation of SDGs appears to be a real challenge in in South Asia.

SACEP understands that the global commitments associated with Agenda 21, the MDGs and JPOI and now SDGs would require developing an appropriate strategy for capacity development in South Asia. With a view to help support SACEP member countries in improving the institutional and professional capacity related to the environmental SDGs in South Asia, SACEP like to offers support to member countries in assessing the SDGs indicators and developing baseline and support countries in establishing harmonized and aligned enabling environment in the eight SACEP member countries for which donor support has to be arranged through various fund raising.

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