

DECLARATION

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP) at its FIRST MEETING held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 27 and 28 January 1983.

HAVING heard with great interest the address of the Hon. Gamini Disanayake, Minister of Lands and Land Development and Mahaweli Development, Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, in which he made a fervent appeal for urgent co-operative action to be taken to resurrect, restore and re-establish tree and forest cover in the territories of the countries of South Asia.

CONSIDERING that trees and forests which had been our capital assets and which contributed to regular and timely flow of water and provide resources for economic and social activities of the community, had been subjected to indiscriminate and inconsiderate exploitation.

NOTING that most Member countries have appreciated the extensive and calamitous nature of the damage caused by such exploitation and have allocated considerable resources for the resurrection and restoration of forest cover in their territories through re-afforestation and social forestry programmes.

NOTING further that, happily, in this matter the interests of the developed countries, who do not have sufficient land area for the purpose, appear to coincide with that of the developing countries and accordingly may be expected to give symbiotic support to programmes for tree and forest planting in developing countries.

NOTING in this context the remarkable feat of tree planting in a massive scale in countries such as China, where all marginal lands, borders, boundaries etc., have been planted with appropriate species.

CALLS upon Member Countries, who also have considerable vacant marginal land, boundaries, borders etc., to **MOUNT AN INTENSIVE CO-OPERATIVE EFFORT** in this matter and as a part of the effort.

RECOMMENDS that the year 1988 be declared the **YEAR OF TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA**.

DIRECTS the Secretariat of SACEP, as a set of activities to attain the goals and targets of this recommendation, to promote projects and programmes for the sharing of knowledge, experience and development of seed material, the exchange of research data between Member Countries and for this purpose seek and obtain the help and assistance from developed countries as well as from international agencies like the Fypd and Agricultural Organisation, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Adopted in Colombo

28.1.83.