

Quotable Quotes

The following are extracts from key Statements made at the South Asian Co-operative Programme meeting.

Hon. (Dr.) R.A. Ghani, Minister of State for Science and Technology (Bangladesh): "It goes without saying that SACEP will undoubtedly offer a wide beneficial support, an exchange of ideas and plans, which will appropriately supplement national environmental development and management deficiencies..... The creation of circumstances that lead to a healthier environmental surrounding, has a very special implication on the deteriorating environmental conditions in the South Asia region. Environmental programmes under the aegis of SACEP will have a positive influence on the quality of life..... SACEP's integrated framework of action rather than isolated national endeavours, should serve as a very effective strategy for conservation programmes."

Hon. C.P.N. Singh, Minister of State for Science and Technology (India): "The basic goal of our efforts concerning the environment should be the management of the human use of natural resources, so that they may provide a sustainable basis for development of our nations and people. At the inaugural session of the Indian Science Congress at Benaras, the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi expressed the view that "the greed of the rich and the needs of the poor" had caused, or are causing, irrevocable damage to the ecosystems..... Through this forum (SACEP) we expect to receive the benefit of experience of environmental management strategies from the countries in the region with similar problems. It is through co-operation that we can resolve our common problems and mutually support each other's endeavours. In this regard it is important that bilateral links be strengthened and progressively lead to regional co-operation, for we must remember that a chain can only be as strong as the weakest link."

Hon. Mohammad Mustafa Hussain, Minister of Health (Maldives): "This meeting of ours addresses to an area which moulds and influences our lives into a particular style or a pattern. That is the environment into which we are born. We are surrounded by it. The environment *did, is and will* further and improve our lives. It is an umbrella of nature we cannot escape. But strangely enough, all this time we have not paid much heed, and have somewhat forgotten or neglected the fact that, environment keeps providing us an indispensable power. A power which is essential to our lives. Environment protects us "from cradle to grave". Now it is time that we began to protect the environment. Our country is the smallest country in this regional group of countries. Furthermore, it is a country, which is composed of over one thousand small islands. They form an environment which is intricately complicated."

Air Marshall Inamul Haque Khan, Minister for Housing and Works, Water and Power (Pakistan): "The management of environment and saving it from further degradation can, however, be made more effective if the developing countries in the region, having identical socio-economic patterns and other important commonalities like the shared struggle for development, the search for resources, technology, methods of planning and of management etc. collaborate and extend technical assistance to each other in deficient areas. Viewed in this perspective, SACEP would hopefully provide an excellent opportunity to make the best use of each others skills and experience in dealing with environmental problems. Needless to say this would not only reduce our heavy dependence on the industrialized nations but also go a long way in improving the environment of individual countries as well as the sub-region more effectively."

Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of Trade and Shipping (Sri Lanka): "Sri Lanka welcomes and endorses the establishment of SACEP. The Programme will establish close co-operation and collaboration between the national authorities in the region as a whole, as well as in projects at the national level in subject areas that are common to the region. It is my firm belief that this programme, more than anything else, would help our countries to benefit from the experiences of each other, in our attempts to reconcile accelerated development and the raising of living standards of our people, with the ever increasing need to protect and manage our environment for our benefit and the benefit of generations yet to be born."

Mr. Esmatullah Walli, Director (Country and Town Planning), State Committee of Planning (Afghanistan): "The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan whole-heartedly supports the co-operative effort among the South Asian countries to preserve the environment. We believe that this type of co-operation will help the developing countries to use their resources wisely and help development of their countries. SACEP no doubt would be landmark in the endeavour of the countries of the region to solve their environment problems together."

Mr. K.H.J. Wijedasa, Acting Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Construction (Sri Lanka): "It was our earlier belief that the degradation of the environment is a phenomenon peculiar to the industrialized countries. But there has been and continues to exist in developing countries, a type and scale of environmental degradation which can be positively dangerous to their development. In our countries, forests have been depleted by shifting cultivation and overfelling. Grazing lands have been plucked down to their roots and corals and mangroves deprived of their capacity to renew themselves. It is in this background that I called this meeting a historic one. There is nothing new in Man defending his territory; in protecting and preserving his environment. But what is new is the common purpose enshrined in our co-operative approach to the environment. Our common objective is to promote the consideration of the environment in the overall development process from the local level to the regional level and from the smallest project to the biggest project."