

# Ministers to map out environmental policy

By Jennifer Henricus

Ministers from eight South Asian countries will meet in Colombo at the end of the month to formulate an environmental policy and projects for the region.

The three-day ministerial meeting which will commence on January 27 will have participants from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Iran, India, Pakistan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka with Nepal participating as an observer.

The meeting which is the first of the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) will be preceded by a five-day workshop of officials from the participating countries, pro-tem director of SACEP Dr. Leslie Herath told a news conference yesterday.

Among the projects that will be discussed and adopted is a regional seas programme, environment and energy, environmental legislation, environmental education, impact assess-

ments and the transfer of technology for reusable and renewable energy.

The regional seas programme which will fulfill a long-felt need in the region will include legislation to prevent the pollution of the seas, either from human activity on land or the transportation and exploration of oil, Dr. Herath said.

Each participating country since the inception of SACEP in 1981 has been carrying out programmes on environment; Sri Lanka being allocated environmental assessment, cost benefit and environment in the context of development.

While impact assessment studies have already been commissioned by the National Environmental Authority, Cabinet has decided that no future projects will be approved for establishment without an environmental impact report. Chairman of the Authority K. H. J. Wijayadasa said.

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Pro-tem Director of the South Asian Co-operative Environment Programme Dr. Leslie Herath spelling out the guidelines on which the first meeting of Governing Council of Ministers will be held.

Also in the picture are the Chairman of the National Environmental Authority, K. H. J. Wijayadasa and Chairman of the Consultative Committee of SACEP Z. Chaudhary.

'SUN' Photo—Berty Mendis.

## MINISTERS TO MAP..

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The three studies that have been commissioned are on the Hikkaduwa beach development and its impact on the environment, the fertiliser complex at Hunupitiya, and the Anuradhapura Dry Zone animal husbandry project.

Although these studies will provide corrective measures the environmental impact studies of future projects will involve preventive measures, Mr. Wijayadasa said.

The three Sri Lankan Ministers who will participate at the Ministerial meeting will be Trade and Shipping Minister

Lalith Athulathmudali, who is the Chairman of the Governing Council of SACEP, Lands, and Mahavel Development Minister Gamini Dissanayake and Fisheries Minister Festus Perera. The meeting will be inaugurated by Prime Minister R. Premadasa.

Also present at the conference yesterday was the Chairman of the Consultative Committee of SACEP, Zia Chaudhary, First Secretary of the Bangladesh High Commission who said that SACEP was very important for the region in that it was the first joint effort of these countries.