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It is required to conduct national level public awareness campaign in all member countries – T Chatterjee

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T Chatterjee , Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests said that focus of Sixth Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting (RSC6) is to enhance regional cooperation, monitoring impact assessment, strengthen the initiatives which were started in earlier phases and initiate new ones. Addressing RSC6 of Male Declaration on Control and Prevention of air pollution and its likely trans-boundary effects for South Asia he said it is required to conduct national level

public awareness campaign in all member countries. He expressed a hope that these deliberations and sharing of experiences during these meetings will further strengthen the implementation of the Male Declaration Programme.

Ms Jacintha S Tissera, Director General , South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme, (SACEP) said, “ We are successfully progressing in the Fourth Phase of this programme which continued to assist the member countries to enhance their regional co-operation in monitoring , impact assessment and strengthening the initiatives started in the First Three Phases. Since its inception, Male declaration has come a long way in terms of building the scientific capacity. The declaration has initiated activity in all major areas of air pollution research, and this is embedded within national policy structures and forms part of the work plan for the Ministries of Environment involved.”

“Under the programme, mapping of various emission sources and understanding the complex relation between them and their contributions to ambient air concentrations and effects on human health, crops, buildings etc in South Asia has been understood. It has contributed significantly in promoting international co-operation and developing scientific information for the policy process. Through these improvements, our shared understanding of regional trans-boundary effect of Air Pollution has grown tremendously,” Ms Jacinth added. Referring to fast dynamic changes taking place in the Region of South Asia every day, she elaborated that Air pollution does not stop at national borders and therefore everyone is affected by air pollution. Integration in ways of controlling pollution can be a more cost-effective and an efficient path rather than dealing with our challenges alone. As a Regional Environmental Secretariat, SACEP has the mandate to take a lead role in addressing the emerging environmental issues. In 2008 SACEP joined the UNEP's programme on Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) which has now set its sights on reducing the Sulpher content of the Vehicle fuel.

Giving details of various initiatives taken by the participating countries along with other coordinating agencies to control and prevent the air pollution since the implementation of the Male Declaration, Prof S P Gautam, Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board said these initiatives helped in studying the impacts of Trans boundary air pollution on the human health , cultural heritage, monuments, vegetation and crop yield and to incorporate the policies and the strategies that are effective in the reduction of the air pollution and its impacts.

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