

'Regional cooperation imperative to solve effects of climate change' (/news/1060826/regional-cooperation-imperative-to-solve-effects-of-climate-change)

THE NEWSPAPER'S STAFF REPORTER (/AUTHORS/397/THE-NEWSPAPERS-STAFF-REPORTER)

Published at

2013-12-06 07:40:58

ISLAMABAD, Dec 5: Common problems of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc), including the challenges due to climate change, can be effectively tackled only through unhampered collaboration and cooperation at the regional level.

This was stated by Federal Minister for Science and Technology Zahid Hamid as chief guest at the concluding ceremony of the three-day 13th Governing Council of South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP).

The programme also included the fifth Inter-governmental Ministerial meeting of South Asia Seas Programme (SASP), and called for a collaborative approach to overcome regional challenges of climate change.

Mr Hamid said regional efforts needed to focus on a range of response options to address challenges of environmental degradation and natural calamities such as floods which occurred due to climate change.

The federal minister said he hoped the three-day sessions had been fruitful and productive, and would help boost regional cooperation among Saarc member countries for sustainable development.

He added that regional cooperation would help tackle common natural disasters such as floods, forest fires, cyclones, typhoons, rise in sea-level, droughts and depleting water resources.

However, the minister's claim that the country was actively developing capabilities to cope with environmental challenges and effects of climate change were contrary to the practical efforts

being taken especially after the 18th Amendment three years ago.

He claimed that Pakistan had adopted a number of policy measures in this regard such as the National Environment Policy, National Climate Change Policy and the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Director General SACEP Anura Jayatilake said the programme was the first inter-governmental forum in the past 32 years (since 1981) in which all South Asian countries came together to support its initiatives.

He said, "Collective viable approaches to cope with environmental challenges can reduce the negative impacts on the lives of millions of people in the region."

Meanwhile, addressing participants of SASP held later in the day, Secretary Climate Change Division Raja Hasan Abbas said the high-level meetings of SACEP had provided a unique opportunity to hold productive discussions related to environmental issues.

The previous three days witnessed meetings between ministers and officials, networking and discussions over environmental challenges on various subjects such as National Biodiversity Strategy, Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production in South Asia.

Similarly, control of air pollution, waste management, conservation of wetlands, coastal biodiversity, ocean governance and commitments made by the Governing Council were also discussed.

Joint Secretary Ministry of Earth Sciences India, Shri Anand Singh Khaki, in his address said SACEP and SASP had witnessed immense progress.

"Commitments of member countries to develop SACEP and its associated programmes in a proactive manner would lead South Asia to a climate and environment-conscious region," he said.

Similarly, Sri Lankan minister for environment Susil Premajayantha said "Protection and management of regional environment is of paramount importance for all Saarc countries. There is no doubt that these countries face many environmental challenges, but SACEP is committed to viable programmes and contingency plans to deal with natural disasters which occur due to climate change."