



**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Climate Change, Zahid Hamid has said that awareness-raising at all levels is vital to coping with environmental issues for achieving sustainable socio-economic development goals.

Addressing a ceremony in connection with launching of weekly news bulletin of SACEP here today, Zahid Hamid said that although awareness of environmental issues has increased in the last few years, there is still a lot of work to be done to increase public awareness, particularly in South Asian countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and India, where environmental degradation is at its height and is blocking the efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development goals.

Mr. Thoriq Ibrahim, Minister for Maldives, HRH Prince Mostapha Zaher from Afghanistan was also present on the occasion.

Zahid Hamid told the participants that environmental awareness campaigns are most successful when targeted to specific groups or populations.

He said, “Many people don't pay much attention to environmental problems because they don't understand how the problem would affect them or their lifestyle. Showing people how much money they could save by purchasing a hybrid or installing a solar panel has helped to "convert" people who normally wouldn't have paid much attention to environmental problems.”

The suggested that in South Asian developing countries, the use of print, broadcast, and social media could be a great way to increase education and awareness about environmental issues and their possible research-based solutions.

The Minister further said by working with the media, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions could help spread their message, either by holding press briefings, issuing printed press releases, or even setting up online databases that can be used as information centers.