

SACEP Director General Ashraf Haidari meets US officials

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ThemeGrill

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Washington-DC: – As part of his recent regional country visits, meeting with the leaderships of Afghanistan and Sri Lanka on the environmental programs, projects, and partnerships of SACEP, Director-General Ambassador M. Ashraf Haidari also met with international climate stakeholders this past month. This included a meeting with Alan Yu, Senior Advisor to the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, in Washington-DC

This followed the Envoy’s April visit to South Asia where he met Indian and Bangladeshi leaders (both countries are member-states of SACEP) on increasing climate ambition ahead of the US Summit on Climate in late April and the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in November. COP26 intends to help “secure global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach.”

To achieve this ambitious climate goal, South Asia as one of the most climate-vulnerable regions figures high on the global climate agenda both for mitigation and adaptation purposes. In this light, DG Ambassador Haidari had a productive discussion with Mr. Yu, exploring opportunities for cooperation with the Office of the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate as a newly established mechanism, helping promote global climate partnerships, especially with vulnerable regions.

The Director-General thoroughly introduced SACEP and its mission goals to Mr. Yu, including its recent undertaking of implementing a major World Bank and Parley for the Oceans project: Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE). Moreover, he pointed out the X-Press Pearl disaster last May, causing unspeakable damage to the marine life and coastal environment in Sri Lanka, calling for international recovery assistance to the country.

DG Ambassador Haidari also discussed with Yu his leadership meetings with the President, Vice President, Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, and Director-General of the National Environmental Protection Agency of Afghanistan (NEPA), given the country's status as the world's most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. In the Afghan context, he pointed out the direct connection between climate change and national security, highlighting how recent climate-induced droughts and flash floods had displaced for a third time impoverished people in eight Afghan provinces. With little or no humanitarian aid, climate-displaced jobless youth were easy recruits by terrorists, he said. Both sides agreed this needed special attention from the US and global aid community concerned with climate change and its impact on international security.

Mr. Yu discussed the core goals of the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate and the programs associated with the key objectives of the Envoy, including raising global climate ambition. On climate aid and aid implementation, he pointed out other US agencies, including USAID, and encouraged SACEP to seek tangible cooperation with them. He also noted US's contributions to multilateral financing institutions such as the World Bank, encouraging greater cooperation between SACEP and those institutions to support the former's regional initiatives. In this light, he welcomed the implementation by SACEP of the PLEASE project with the support of World Bank.

DG Ambassador Haidari thanked Enjoy Kerry, Yu, and their team for the enhancement of global attention to one of the key challenges confronting humanity. He reaffirmed SACEP's commitment to doing its part in working with its member-states to coordinate regional and global efforts for mitigating and adapting to climate change in the South Asia region.

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