



**South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme**  
Volume 2 July 1984



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*Message from Stjepan Keckes,  
Director, UNEP Regional Seas Programme.*

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The quest for the launching of a Regional Seas Programme for the South Asian Seas, initiated by the SACEP member states at UNEP'S Governing Council in 1982, led a year later to the designation of the region as part of UNEP'S programme. In close co-operation with SACEP, UNEP was pleased to prepare and convene in March of this year, in Bangkok, the meeting of National Focal Points on the development of an Action Plan for the protection and management of the South Asian Seas Region.

If the future of the Action Plan can be judged from the results of that meeting, it is promising. Participants from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka unanimously agreed on the objectives to be borne in mind in developing an Action Plan, on priority areas of regional concern, on the principles underlying institutional and financial arrangements as well as on future steps leading to the formal adoption and implementation of the Action Plan. UNEP will not spare efforts, in the framework of our limited financial resources, to assist SACEP in bringing the countries of the region the benefits that may be derived from their participation in the Regional Seas Programme.

However, it is important to note that our joint efforts may succeed only if the Action Plan is seen as reflecting the priorities and needs of the SACEP member states and as a plan whose activities are to be carried out by the existing institutions to be found within the region. Assistance from the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and of other international and regional organisations will be forthcoming. But the action must be fully controlled, managed, executed and largely financed by the Governments of the region. It must be an action plan of the South Asian Seas Region and not for the South Asian Seas Region.

We do not doubt that we share a common view with the Governments of the region and the SACEP as to the means for ensuring the long-term success of the action plan and we look forward to collaborating actively with them.



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*Message from Nay Htun,  
UNEP Director and Regional Representative for  
Asia and the Pacific*

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Environment is an area which provides many opportunities for countries to cooperate with mutually accruing benefits. Harmonious collaboration in one area promotes more conducive conditions for resolution of other areas of disagreements. SACEP provides an important and unique framework for countries sharing similar environmental problems to join forces to overcome them.

The marine environment, identified by SACEP as a priority area for attention, is very important for the livelihood of a large segment of the population, their health and well-being and economic development from the resources it contains. As there are many benefits that can be derived from the sea as well as many corresponding demands and competing uses of it, the impacts on the marine coastal environment can have serious consequences if appropriate management measures are not implemented. It is very commendable that five member countries of SACEP have agreed to initiate the South Asian Seas Programme.

This augurs well not only for the prudent management and conservation of the marine environment in the South Asian Seas for sustained development to increase the standards of living of the people and the concomitant improvement in the quality of life, but also serves as yet another incentive for increasing collaboration in the other priority areas identified by SACEP's Governing Council.

The important role of SACEP is clear, the will and the commitment of the countries is evident and UNEP is privileged to be closely associated with the development and implementation of a vital programme.

## EDITORIAL

The Stockholm Conference in 1972 on the Human Environment was the spiritual father of the United Nations Environment Programme. This conference underlined the 'vital importance' for humanity of the seas and all the living organisms which the oceans support. UNEP in its very First Governing Council Sessions in 1973 set the 'Health of the Oceans' as one of its priority concerns. Even today this remains as one of its seven major concerns.

Two of the recommendations of the Action Plan of the Stockholm Conference were the need for regional co-ordination in controlling pollution of the seas and that Government should take "effective national measures for the control of all significant sources of marine pollution including land-based sources, and concert and co-ordinate their actions regionally and where appropriate, on a wider international basis". As a follow up to this in 1974, the Regional Seas Programme was initiated.

At present, there are 11 regional seas involving 125 states, 14 United Nations Agencies and 12 other International Organisations. A Regional Seas Programme Activity Centre was also set up in 1977, to co-ordinate the work carried out under this programme.

For a variety of historical reasons a regional programme for the South Asian Seas was not initiated. The emergence of SACEP saw with it the revival of interests towards the establishment of Regional Seas Programme for the South Asian Seas.

The UNEP's approach to the Regional Seas Programme is most flexible. It recognises the fact that human civilization is a patch work of different cultures and economic structures. It is also aware of the fact that people have differing demands on the world around them. It also believes that each society has to learn to manage its own eco-system. The success of the Regional Seas Programme is mainly due to this imaginative, innovative and very sensitive approach.

Action Plan of each individual Regional Seas Programme, reflects the particular priorities, needs and resources available in the region in order to cope with its special environmental problems. The enthusiasm shown by SACEP member countries coupled with experience and guidance of the Regional Seas Programme Activity Centre would result in the two organizations, co-operating to bring forth a very meaningful programme of activity for the South Asian Seas.

As the first step towards the formation of the South Asian Regional Seas Programme, a meeting of the National Focal Points was held in March 1984 at Bangkok. This meeting decided on a framework for developing an Action Plan for the South Asian Seas.

Based on these recommendations, there will be preparatory activities leading to an intergovernmental meeting which will review the draft action plan and recommend it along with the necessary legal instruments to a meeting of plenipotentiaries.

## **RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE 11TH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF UNEP ON THE SOUTH ASIAN SEAS**

### **DECISION 11/7 TAKEN ON 24.05.1983**

Noting also the consultations carried out in accordance with Council decision 10/20 among members of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme concerning a Regional Seas Programme.

1. Requests the Executive Director to designate the South Asian Seas as a region to be included in the Regional Seas Programme in close collaboration with the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme and Governments in the region, and to assist in the formulation of a Plan of Action for the environmental protection of the South Asian Seas,
2. Urges all member states to give fullest support to the adoption and ratification of relevant conventions and protocols for the protection and development of the regional marine environment and coastal areas;
3. Invites participating member States to pay their contributions in support of the implementation of the existing regional action plans;
4. Urges all Governments, the organizations of the United Nations system, and other inter-governmental, non-governmental and other organizations to extend their full support to the countries concerned in their efforts to combat coastal erosion and marine pollution;
5. Calls upon the Executive Director to provide adequate funds to the Regional Seas Programme as a high priority

**MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS ON  
DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN  
FOR THE PROTECTION OF SOUTH ASIAN SEAS  
19TH — 21ST MARCH 1984 BANGKOK**

On the 24th of May 1983, the 11th Governing Council of UNEP requested "the Executive Director to designate the South Asian Seas as a region to be included in the Regional Seas Programme, in close collaboration with the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme and Governments in the Regions, and to assist in the formation of a plan of action for the protection of the South Asian Seas".

As a first follow up activity to this decision, a meeting of National Focal Points of the States of the region was convened by the Executive Director of UNEP, in co-operation with SACEP, to ascertain how to proceed in developing a comprehensive Action Plan for the South Asian Seas.

This meeting was held in the United Nations Building in Bangkok, Thailand from 19-21st March 1984. Participation included

experts from the five member states, (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) & representatives from 9 UN bodies, and Inter-Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations.

The meeting commenced with opening statements from the Director, UNEP Regional Seas Programme Activity Centre and Director SACEP. After the customary procedural matter were agreed upon, participants from each of the 5 member states made general statements expressing the view of their governments as to the objectives of the Action Plan for the South Asian Seas. Their statements were supportive of UNEP's Governing Council decision and also endorsed the broad objectives of the proposed programme.

Next was the presentation of 2 documents. The first by the Executive Director, UNEP titled 'Procedures & Activities that may be



followed in Developing an Action Plan' and the second by the Director SACEP, where a review was given on the 'Regional and National Activities relevant to the development of an Action Plan for the South Asian Seas'.

The representatives of the United Nations, the specialized organisations and other organisations attending the meeting were then invited to inform the meeting of their past, ongoing and proposed activities in which they may be able to assist in the development and implementation of an Action Plan for the South Asian Seas.

After much discussion, a consensus was reached on the items that should be considered in the further development of the Action Plan. The broad areas agreed upon were -

- a) Geographic scope
- b) Objectives
- c) Priority areas of regional concern

- d) Institutional arrangements
- e) Financial arrangements
- f) Documentation
- g) Schedule of future meetings

Finally, the meeting recommended that,

- a) The Governments & UNEP should initiate the preparation of documents as discussed.
- b) The result of this meeting should be brought to the attention of the next session of UNEP's Governing Council in May 1984, with a request for adequate financial support to complete the preparatory phase leading to the adoption of the Action Plan.
- c) UNEP should bring to the attention of relevant International Organisations, the result of this meeting, with a view to obtain their assistance in achieving the goals of the Action Plan.

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*Statement made by Air Marshall Hon. Inamul Haque Khan, Minister for Housing and Works, Water. & Power, Pakistan*

The basic causes of our environmental troubles are thus complex and deeply imbedded. They include our past tendency to emphasize quantitative growth at the expense of quality, the failure of our economy to provide full accounting for the social costs of environmental pollution; the failure to take environmental factors into account as a normal and integral part of our planning and decision-making; the inadequacy of our institutions for dealing with problems that cut across traditional political boundaries; our dependence on expediencies, without regard to their impact on the environment; and more fundamentally our failure to perceive the environment as a totality and to understand or recognise the fundamental interdependence of all its parts, including man himself.

## SAS WINS FIRST TEST

Five countries of South Asia are launching an eight-pronged attack on their common environmental problems.

At a meeting of national focal points (Bangkok, 19–21 March 1984), Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka committed themselves to the development of an action plan to protect and manage the marine environment of the South Asian Seas (SAS) region and to promote environmental awareness among its people.

Eight "priority areas of regional concern" were defined by the meeting:

- environmental assessment of pollution from human settlements, by oil from coastal and maritime sources, from agriculture and from industrial sources;

- management of the coastal zone and marine ecosystems;

- conservation of endangered and threatened species, including establishment of marine parks, reserves and sanctuaries;

- study of environmental aspects of renewable sources of energy from the sea;

- exchange of information, including establishment of data banks and clearing houses;

- development of human resources through education and training;

- promotion of environmental awareness; and

- consideration of essential legislative aspects relevant to the action plan.

Preparatory activities for the plan will center around the preparation of country reports reviewing environmental problems in each of the areas

mentioned above, outlining possible solutions, and describing available institutional and human resources.

In their enthusiasm to develop as action plan, the South Asian States set themselves a challenging timetable. With help from the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and UNEP, the five countries want to have their reports ready during 1984. On the basis of these, UNEP, in co-operation with SACEP and other international organizations, will draft an overview of the region's environmental problems and a preliminary action plan. National experts will then meet in late 1984 to review and revise the regional report and the draft action plan, and to consider a document which UNEP will prepare in the meantime on legislative aspects of the action plan. At this time, a recommendation could be made concerning the development of a regional convention and protocols allied with the plan.

The South Asian States hope to convene an intergovernmental meeting to adopt the action plan no later than mid-1985.

The meeting requested that UNEP provide financial assistance for the preparatory phase of the action plan, noting that the Governments would be expected to gradually assume financial responsibility for its implementation. It also asked that national institutions and experts from the region be fully involved in development of the plan.

Results of the Bangkok meeting will be brought to the attention of the UNEP Governing Council at its May 1984 session, just one year after the Council voted to include South Asian Seas in its Regional Seas Programme.

— *Courtesy The Siren*

## ESCAP/SACEP REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF MANGROVES, CORALS AND ISLAND ECO—SYSTEMS IN SOUTH ASIA

AUGUST 1983 DHAKA

A successful symposium on the Environmental Management of Mangroves, Corals and Island Eco-systems in South Asia was held in August 1983 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The host facilities for this very important symposium was provided by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh through the Department of Environmental Pollution Control. The symposium was jointly sponsored by ESCAP and SACEP.

The participants at this symposium included representatives from the 5 Maritime states of SACEP, namely Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, FAO, UNESCO (UNDP/UNESCO Regional Mangrove Project), USAID & UNEP (Regional Seas Programme).

The inaugural address at the symposium was delivered by Hon. Mr. Mahbubur Rahman, Minister of Local Government, Rural Development, Co-operatives and Religious Affairs, while the keynote address was by Mr. K. F. Jalal, Chief, Environmental Co-ordination

Unit, ESCAP. Mr. Mohammad Siddiquer Rahaman, Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives gave the welcome address and Dr. Leslie Herath, Executive Director, SACEP, made the introductory statement. The vote of thanks was given by Dr M A Karim, Director, Department of Environment Pollution Control.

The deliberations of the symposium which included presentation of country papers, panel discussions on the main themes and field trips culminated with the adoption of a draft report.

This symposium served a very useful purpose as it identified the critical areas for attention in the Mangroves, Corals and Island Eco-systems in South Asia. Its draft report contains many recommendations which will eventually go to form an integral part of the proposed action plan for the South Asian Seas. It is also envisaged that there will be follow up to this symposium, so that an action programme would be presented to an appropriate consortium of donors.



INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY HON. MR MAHBUBUR RAHMAN, MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CO-OPERATIVES & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, BANGLADESH

## NEWS OF OTHER PROJECTS UNDER IMPLEMENTATION

### ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

This programme which was unanimously approved by the 1st Governing Council of SACEP is now adopted by the UNDP. The participating member countries have nominated their country consultants who will draw up a status report on the Environmental Legislation in their respective countries. UNDP at present is in the process of finalising the terms of reference for these Country Reports. They are also in the process of nominating a consultant who will look into these reports at a workshop to be held later on.

### INTEGRATED ENERGY SAVING DOMESTIC STOVES & FUELWOOD SYSTEMS.

This is a project formulated by the SACEP/UNDP Project Formulatory Mission. UNDP has consented to field a consultant to visit the member countries in order to draw up the modalities of operation. Meanwhile the Netherlands Government has indicated her interest to examine this project. The first phase is expected to last 2½ years and should the result be encouraging the 2nd phase is expected to be an ambitious operation where appropriate stoves would be fabricated in the participating countries and disseminated among a major section of the population.

### RICE HUSK ASH CEMENT FOR SRI LANKA, FEED BLOCKS FROM AGRICULTURAL RESIDUES FOR PAKISTAN, BUILDING MATERIAL FROM WASTE BRICKS FOR NEPAL

These 3 projects which were formulated by the UNDP/SACEP Mission for the utilization of Agricultural and Industrial Waste in Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, have now been adopted by UNEP as suitable projects for assistance. The Netherlands Government has informed UNEP on its willingness to assist two of these projects under their Clearing House Programme.

### PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION OF A SPECIAL YOUTH ENVIRONMENT REFORESTATION /LAND RECLAMATION SCHEME

This project has been formulated at the request of SACEP by Dr. David Dichter of the Institute of Technology for People stationed in Geneva. Funds for this project is expected from various sources and it is hoped to implement this project early. The Project document has been circulated among the member countries for their approval.

### ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The projects and sub-projects formulated under the focal point Environment Impact Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis/Environment and Development was forwarded to East-West Centre, Hawaii for their consideration. Discussions are underway regarding the modalities of operation of this set of projects. The Government of India was also contacted to assist in implementing activities in this area.

### A STUDY ON VECTOR-BORNE DISEASE PROBLEMS IN SMALL SCALE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SRI LANKA.

At the second annual meeting of the Panel of Experts on Environmental Management for Vector Control (PEEM) held in 1982, Sri Lanka was selected as an area for Pilot Studies in the assessment of the magnitude of vector-borne disease problems and the effects of ecological changes resulting from small scale water resources development projects.

This project is funded by the WHO and is expected to be completed by mid 1985. Depending on the final evaluation, this project will be extended to other member countries of SACEP.

## AUSTRIAN CONNECTION

The First Governing Council of SACEP directed the Secretariat to explore possibilities of expanding the activities of the "Energy and Environment" focal point in order specially to formulate projects and programmes for the utilization of renewable energy resources. At the instance of the Consultative Committee, the Secretariat approached a number of donor agencies for this purpose. The Environment and Energy Commission of Austria was one such Organization that was approached by SACEP. The Director was invited to visit Austria where arrangements were made for him to present the objectives and the work programme of SACEP to a number of leading institutions and individuals by organising a series of seminars. A two-member Austrian team later visited the SACEP Office in Colombo to further discuss the modalities of future co-operation of SACEP with the Environment and

Energy Commission of Austria. On a directive made by the Consultative Committee, a formal request for assistance to the SACEP Secretariat was made to His Excellency the Chancellor of Austria. A warm, prompt and a positive response was received from the Chancellor indicating that he would view sympathetically the establishment of a SACEP office in Vienna to assist the activities of this Organization. The Viennese authorities have now informed this Organization that a eight member team will undertake a mission to visit selected member countries of SACEP in order to identify the felt needs of the member countries with a view to formulating suitable projects. The SACEP office in Vienna would assist in the location of suitable donors to the projects identified and formulated when these have been finally approved by the respective governments of member countries of SACEP.

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*Statement made by Hon. Mohamed Mustafa Hussain, Minister of Health, Maldives*

. . . But strangely enough, all this time we have not paid much heed, and have somewhat forgotten or neglected the fact that, environment keeps providing us an indispensable power. A power which is essential to our lives. Environment protects us "from cradle to grave". Now it is time that we began to protect the environment.

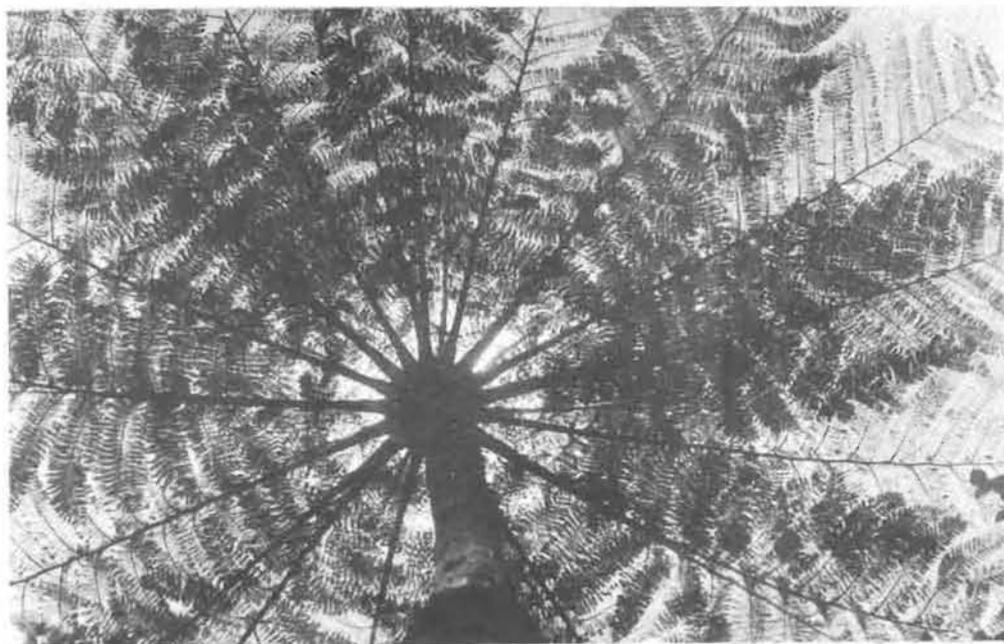
*Statement by the Hon. Obaidullah Khan, Minister of Agriculture & Forestry of the Govt. of Bangladesh.*

The South Asian sub-region bounded by the towering Himalayas at one end and the rumbling Indian Ocean at the other has both ecological similarities and diversities. In the context of recent collective efforts to build a regional fabric of cooperation in South Asia, the need for attention to environment management in this region acquires a significant dimension.

## NEWS ABOUT THE NEXT ISSUE

### 1988 – YEAR OF THE TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA

A resolution unanimously adopted at the First Governing Council of SACEP has now received positive reactions from a number of donor agencies. UNEP at its 11th Governing Council held in May 1983 adopted a resolution designating 1988 as the Year of the Trees for Asia and the Pacific. A mission is expected to visit the member countries in early 1985 to formulate projects under this programme. Meanwhile SACEP is in the process of formulating a work plan for the Year of the Trees for 1988 in accordance with its GC-1 resolution. The Year of the Trees will form the Theme for the 3rd Issue of the SACEP News Letter.



*Alsophila crinita (Tree Fern)*

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*"The tree is a peculiar organism of unlimited kindness and benevolence that makes no demand for its sustenance, and extends generously the products of its activity: it affords protection to all beings, offering shade even to the axe-man who destroys it" – Gautama Buddha.*

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## SACEP SUBJECT MATTER AREAS

- (1) Environmental Impact Assessment and Cost/Benefit Analysis; Environment and Development (Focal Point – Sri Lanka)
- (2) Environmental Quality Standards (Focal Point – Iran)
- (3) Technology for Development of Renewable and Reusable Resources (Focal Point – ESCAP/RCTT)
- (4) Environmental Legislation (Focal Point – India)
- (5) Conservation of Montane Eco-systems and Watersheds (Focal Point – Pakistan)
- (6) Social Forestry (Focal Point – Afghanistan with assistance of India)
- (7) Regional Co-operation in Wild Life and Genetic Resources Conservation (Focal Point – Iran)
- (8) Conservation of Corals, Mangroves, Deltas, Coastal Areas and
- (9) Island Eco-Systems (Focal Point – Bangladesh & Maldives)
- (10) Tourism & Environment (Focal Point – Nepal)
- (11) Desertification (Focal Point – UNEP)
- (12) Regional Seas Programme (Focal Point – UNEP)
- (13) Energy & Environment (Focal Point – Iran in co-operation with Pakistan and India)
- (14) Education and Training (Focal Point – India)
- (15) Training in Wild Life Management (Focal Point – India)

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*Statement by Hon. Mohamed Zahir Hussain, Minister of Education of the Republic of Maldives*

We note with satisfaction and pleasure that inspite of various financial and other constraints, SACEP has made fast and remarkable strides in its endeavours to establish itself as a regional body capable of achieving its aims and objectives as set forth at its inception.

## ADDRESSES OF THE SACEP FOCAL POINTS

AFGHANISTAN	Resident Representative UNDP, P O Box 5 Sardar Shah Malimoud Ghazi Wat, Kabul AFGHANISTAN
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BHUTAN	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Royal Government of Bhutan Thimphu BHUTAN
INDIA	Secretary Department of Environment Bikaner House Shahjahan Road New Delhi-110003 INDIA
IRAN	His Excellency R H Mirza Taheri Assistant Prime Minister & Director Department of the Environment P O Box 1430, Tehran IRAN
MALDIVES	Director of National Health Services Ministry of Health, MALE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES
NEPAL	Chairman Nepal National Committee for the Man & The Biosphere C/o Ministry of Education & Culture Kaisher Mahal, GPO Box 1071 Kathmandu NEPAL
PAKISTAN	Secretary Ministry of Housing & Works 263 Street 17, F 7/2 Islamabad P O Box 1282 PAKISTAN
SRI LANKA	Chairman Central Environmental Authority Maligawatte New Town Colombo 10 SRI LANKA

