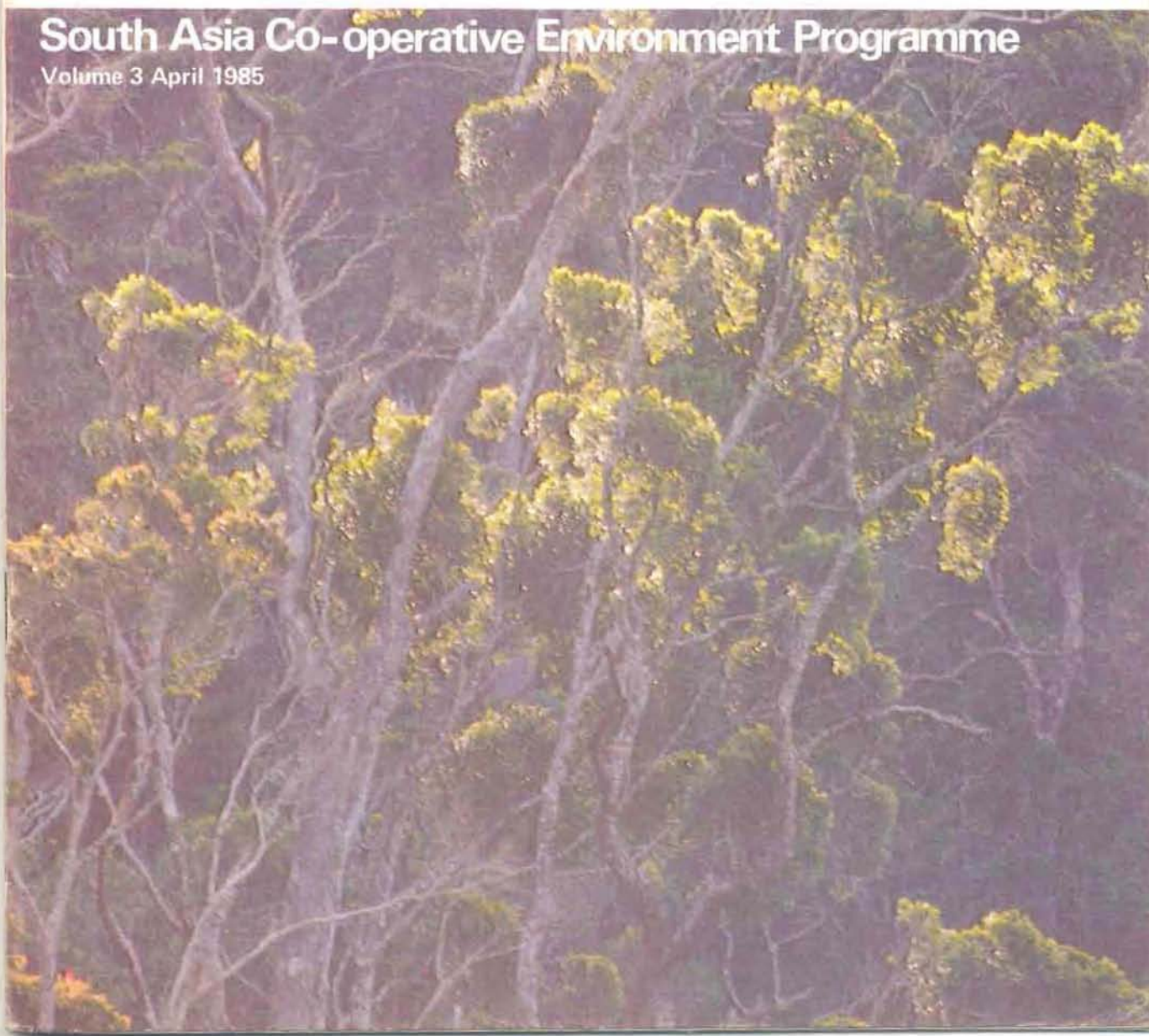




COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE  
GOVERNING COUNCIL II

## South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme

Volume 3 April 1985



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA

MESSAGE

It is indeed heartening that South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) has decided to dedicate the first issue of its Newsletter of 1985 to the subject of 'Year of Trees' following the declaration of year 1988 as 'Year of Trees' by the Governing Council of the SACEP in its first meeting in Colombo in 1983.

Needless to say that encouragement for afforestation by planting more and more trees and discouraging indiscriminate destruction of forest is a matter of profound importance for preservation of the ecological and environmental balance and also for retention of soil, its moisture and fertility. I am confident that the SACEP's programme which includes cooperative projects like extensive tree plantation, social forestry schemes, exchange of seeds, sharing of knowledge and experience and exchange of research findings among the member-countries would go a long way towards increasing the forest resources in the region.

In Bangladesh we have taken up similar programme of wide-spread motivational campaign to create awareness among the people along with the programme of supplying seedlings to them for large-scale growing of trees in the country. Commensurate with the SACEP declaration, we have also declared the year 1988 as 'Year of Trees' here.

I wish the SACEP all success in carrying out of its programme of the 'Year of Trees' for betterment of mankind of the region.

Lt. General Hussain Muhammad Ershad

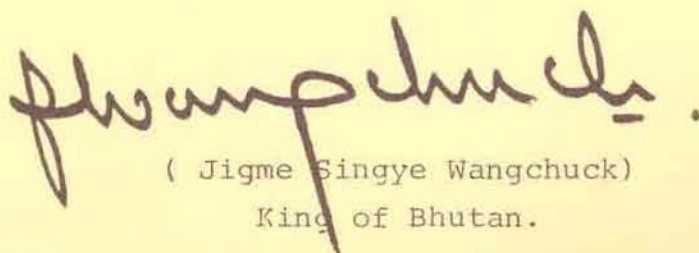


THIMPHU

MESSAGE TO SOUTH ASIA  
COOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

One of the most serious environmental problems in the region associated with economic development and rapid population growth is deforestation. Forest resources are presently being depleted at a rate, and in a manner, that is both ecologically damaging and economically unsustainable. This factor has had an adverse impact on the economic and social life of large numbers of people whose lives depend on the wise management of forests and the ecosystem. If this trend continues unabated, the degradation or loss of forest resources will pose a threat not only to our own opportunities for increased welfare and development but also those of future generations. In these circumstances, the initiative taken by SACEP to formulate and implement projects and programmes under the Year of the Trees is most opportune. Such cooperative activities involving large-scale community participation will certainly be of great importance in replenishing our dwindling forests and in generating wide-spread awareness of the need for greater care and more rational use of this vital resource.

I wish the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme every success in their endeavour.

  
( Jigme Singye Wangchuck )  
King of Bhutan.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ



PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

I am very happy that the 11th Governing Council of United Nations Environment Programme held in May 1983 adopted a resolution designating 1988 as the Year of Trees for Asia and the Pacific. This decision has come at a most opportune time. For in recent years there has been excessive deforestation in many parts of the world, and more particularly in South Asia, as a result of which many countries of the region are now faced with increasing scarcity of the very essential forest resources. This has come about mainly because of rapid urbanization and the failure to take environmental factors into account as an integral part of national planning.

I would like to note here that we in the Maldives have increasingly felt the need to remedy the situation. We had in fact observed 1983 as the Year of Plantation. At 0001 hours on 1st January of that year, I and members of my cabinet planted trees at a simple ceremony held in Male' to mark the beginning of the planned year-long campaign of reforestation. My Government was particularly concerned about the uncontrolled felling of trees for various purposes with very little or no efforts made to replace them. Our Year of Plantation was highly successful, for besides the many thousands of trees that were planted all over the country in 1983, public attention was focused on the importance of this aspect of environment management in promoting the economic and social well-being of the country.

I find it therefore most encouraging that SACEP is taking the initiative of working towards revitalizing our forests in the context of collective cooperation. The need to make the most of the forest resources of the region was never more apparent than now and the opportunity to extract full benefit from it never as promising.

The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme will have our full support and co-operation in making the Year of Trees a resounding success.

(Maumoon Abdul Gayoom)



## *Prime Minister of Sri Lanka*

Forest Resources play a most important role in the national development of all countries in the South Asian Region. Unfortunately, there is probably no other area of the Region's environment that has been more viciously attacked and destroyed in the last century than the South Asian forests.

Therefore, it gives me much pleasure to note that the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme has designated 1988 as the "YEAR OF TREES" and called upon member countries to launch an intensive co-operative effort to restore and re-establish the lost tree and forest cover.

Almost all the countries in the Region, have experienced the consequences of excessive deforestation and loss of tree cover, in the form of increasing floods, soil erosion, heavy siltation of dams and changes in the micro-climate. At the same time, forest products essential for survival like fuelwood are becoming increasingly scarce for the large populations in the South Asian countries.

Trees and shrubs in the rural areas of our countries traditionally served not only as fuel, but also as shade and shelter, as building materials, as food or fodder and as herbs or medicines. Therefore, the effects of diminishing forest reserves are beginning to be felt in all facets of rural life, all over the Region. I am happy that the Central Environmental Authority has launched the 100 Million Trees Programme as its contribution to the South Asian Year of the Trees Programme.

The dedication of this issue of the SACEP newsletter to this cause is praiseworthy. It not only invites attention to one of the most pressing environmental problems in the Region, but gives expression to the shared concern of all our countries to its urgency. I wish the South Asian Programme for the Year of the Trees every success.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J.R. Jayewardene', written in a cursive style.

→ Prime Minister



## EDITORIAL

The world's forests contain 90 percent of all the surface carbon on Earth, cover 9 percent of its land area and support nearly half of all known plant and animal species. As aptly and graphically put by a tribal chief, "the Forests are the Earth's skin". Man rips off the earth's green cover at the alarming rate of 50 acres a minute. Once the vital skin is gone, the earth will wither away into parched wasteland incapable of sustaining the myriad life forms nourished by rain forests.

Man in turn will be forced to eke out a feeble living at the precarious edge of existence.

The creeping desert will hasten its pace to smother once smiling land in its arid and devastating embrace.

The grim prologue to this tragic scenario, is being written all over the earth. If the speed at which the rain forests are disappearing is kept up unabated all tropical forests will have vanished in 85 years.

In some Asian countries, forests have only a slim chance of seeing the arrival of the new century.

The tropical rain forests — one of the richest and most delicately balanced ecological systems in the world — is now seriously at risk. These forests cover 40 percent of land area in the tropics, protecting a thin top soil from the eroding effects of wind and rain. When the forest is removed, surrounding areas are often subject to erosion, desertification and siltation and millions of people are deprived of the firewood which is their only source of energy.

The depletion of forest cover is the inevitable outcome of runaway

population growth. As men increase in number, agriculture spreads mostly at the expense of forests. Poverty compels people to exploit the forests for fuelwood. To serve the proliferating needs of burgeoning populations, timber has to be harvested through indiscriminate felling.

The thoughtless destruction of forests also brings about the depletion of priceless biological resources. Apart from supplying varieties of food and building material, forest yields serve as raw material for an extensive range of products including cellophane, rayon, plastic and many others. If forests are gone man will invariably experience an universal regret. With advanced technology he will begin to see the varied uses forests could have been put to as medicine, energy and new sources of food.

The rapid deterioration of forest cover in Asian Countries has turned out to be a major eco-disaster of the world. To prevent this human disaster an urgent global strategy is of the essence forests have to be preserved and protected. New forests have to be planted.

SACEP's declaration of 1988 as Year of Trees for South Asia, thus is most opportune. It's broad perspectives envisages not only the planting of forests but also the planting of trees in general. A regional action plan is expected to be formulated during 1985 to see the realisation of this goal. To us in Asia, every day in the future should be a "Day of Trees".

## 1988 YEAR OF THE TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA.

A resolution was unanimously adopted at the First Meeting of the Governing Council declaring the year 1988 as the Year of the Trees for South Asia. Moving the resolution, Hon. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Lands and Land Development and Mahaweli Development, Government of Sri Lanka, stated that:

"We have a coincidence of a common interest from the developed countries, from whom therefore it would be possible to expect the strongest financial support. Most temperate climate countries have depleted their forests already and developed countries are extremely keen supporters of global efforts in the maintenance and consolidation of forest cover. There is concern as to maintaining the levels of carbon dioxide and in conserving the ozone layer, in both of which trees play a vital balancing role. This interest of the developed countries is one of these rare symbiotic relationships in which giver and taker are both beneficiaries....."

The programme for us in SACEP will involve national level thinking and planning. As I mentioned, it is not simply environmental, economic and developmental. It will also give opportunities for an involved sharing of our common knowledge and experience in the environmental, economic and social aspects of forestry. It should involve

exchanging research data, seed material and various other aspects of a successful national, regional and possibly, global project."

At the 11th Meeting of the Governing Council of UNEP, held in Nairobi in May 1983, a resolution was adopted commending the initiative taken by the countries of South Asia to overcome deforestation and requesting the Executive Director to support, within available resources, the formulation of projects and programmes by the Secretariat of SACEP in connection with the Year of the Trees, and to assist in soliciting support from donor agencies for the implementation of these activities. The resolution also invited other member countries of the Asian and Pacific Region to consider designating 1988 as the Year of the Trees for Asia.

In accordance with the terms of the resolution, UNEP has agreed to provide funds for the formulation of programmes and projects, after deciding on the modalities of operation for the same. It has been proposed to appoint country consultants from the region to draw up priority projects and programmes based on certain guidelines. These country reports would then be synthesised into a regional project during 1985. It is to be expected that a regional Action Plan would emerge on the basis of these activities.



# THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES

This article is adapted from a UNDF feature by the late Jean Giono.

About 40 years ago, I was trekking across the mountain heights in that ancient land where the Alps thrust down into Provence. In the deserted region, everything was barren and colourless. Nothing grew there but wild lavender.

After three days of walking I found myself amidst unparalleled desolation. I had no water, I camped near the vestiges of an abandoned village. The clustered houses suggested there must once have been a well or a spring. Indeed, there was a spring, but it was dry.

It was a fine June day brilliant with sunshine. But over the unsheltered land, the wind blew with unendurable ferocity. It growled over the carcasses of houses like an enraged dragon. I moved camp.

After five hours of walking, I glimpsed in the distance, a small, black silhouette and took it for a solitary tree. I started towards it. It was a shepherd. Thirty sheep were lying about him, on the baking earth.

He gave me a drink from his water-gourd and, a little later, took me to his cottage. He drew his water — excellent water — from a very deep natural well.

He spoke little. It is the way of those who live alone. He lived not in a cabin but in a real house of stone. It bore plain evidence of how his own efforts had reclaimed the ruins. The sound of the wind against its tiles was the sound of sea waves hitting the shores.

He was cleanly shaved. All his buttons were firmly sewed on. His clothes had been mended with meticulous care. He did not smoke. His dog, as silent as he was friendly, without being servile.

It was understood from the first that I should stay for the night.

The nearest village was a day away. The shepherd shared his food with me.

Then he fetched a small sack and poured out a heap of acorns on the table. He began to inspect them, one by one, with great concentration. Separating the good from the bad. I offered to help him. He told me it was his job. After he had set aside a large enough pile, he counted them out by tens. When he had thus selected one hundred perfect acorns, he went to bed.

The next day I asked if I might be there for another day. He agreed. In the morning he opened his pen and led out his flock. Before leaving, he plunged his carefully selected sack of acorns into a pail of water.



Instead of a stick, he carried an iron rod, thick as a thumb and five feet long. His pasture was in a valley. He left his flock in the care of his dog and climbed a ridge. I followed. I was afraid he would rebuke me for my indiscretion. Instead he invited me to go along. We climbed to the top of the ridge.

There he began thrusting his iron rod into the earth, making a hole in which he planted an acorn. He refilled the hole. He was planting an oak. I asked him if the land belonged to him. He answered, no. Did he know whose it was? He did not. Nor was he interested in finding out. He planted his hundred acorns with the greatest care.

I must have been fairly insistent in my questioning, for he answered. For three years he had been planting trees in this wilderness. He had planted 100,000. Of them 20,000 had sprouted. Of the 20,000 he still expected to lose about half to rodents and to the unpredictable designs of Mother Earth. There remained 10,000 oak trees to grow where nothing grew before.

I began to wonder about the age of this man. Fifty-five, he told me. His name was Elzeard Buoffier. He had a farm in the lowlands once. There he had lived his life. He had lost his only son, and then his wife. Then he had withdrawn into this solitude. He felt that this land was dying for want of trees. Having no pressing business of his own, he had resolved to remedy this state of affairs.

I told him that in 30 years his 10,000 oaks would be magnificent. He answered simply that given life, he would have planted so many trees that those 10,000 would be a drop in the ocean.

Presently he was studying the reproduction of beech trees and had a beech-nut nursery near his house. The seedlings, which he protected from his sheep with a wire fence, were beautiful. He was also consider-

ing birches for valleys where there could be moisture below the surface.

We parted the next day. The war started in 1914 and I became a soldier. As soldiers do, I forgot everything but the war. I forgot about the old man and his trees too.

Five years later the war was over I took to the road again, to the barren land, following my wanderlust.

Elzeard Buoffier had not died. On the other hand, he was extremely spry. He had changed his jobs. Now, he had only 4 sheep. He had got rid of his sheep because they threatened his young trees. He had imperturbably continued to plant.

The oaks of 1910 were ten years old and higher than either of us. His forest measured 11 kilometres by three. It had all sprung up from the hands and soul of this one man — a man who could be as effectual as God in realms other than that of destruction. Creation seemed to come about in a sort of chain reaction. I saw water flowing in the brooks that had been dry since the memory of man. As the water reappeared, so there reappeared willows, rushes, meadows, gardens, flowers and a certain purpose in being alive.

Hunters and forest officials came to see this wonderful and "natural" forest. When they saw it was all the work of one man, they did not meddle. They left him to himself. He worked in total solitude that towards the end of his life, he lost the habit of speech. Or perhaps he saw no need for it.

The only serious danger to his work occurred during the second World War. Cars were being run on wood-burning generators. There was never enough wood. Cutting was started among his oaks. But railway lines were so far away that the effort flopped. The shepherd saw nothing of it. He was 32 kilometres away planting his trees, in peace. He ignored the war of 1939 as he did that of 1914.



I saw Elzeard Buoffier for the last time in the June of 1945. He was then 87.

I had started back along the route through the wasteland. But now there was a bus. I no longer recognised the scenes of my earlier journeys. Only when I heard the name of the village could I actually believe being in the region that had been all ruins and desolation, once.

The bus put me down at the village which in 1913 had a few houses and fewer inhabitants. The living was bad. Living in excessively harsh climates in winter and in summer, there was no escape from unceasing conflicts of personalities. Irrational ambition reached inordinate proportions in the continual desire for escape. The soundest characters broke under the perpetual grind. They had been savage creatures. Malice, mistrust and hatred had composed the spirit of the land. They were little removed, physically and morally, from the conditions of pre-historic man. There were epidemics of suicides and frequent cases of insanity. All around them, nettles were feeding on the remains of abandoned houses left beached in time. And over all there was the wind, the ceaseless rattling wind, to rasp upon the nerves. Their condition had been beyond hope. They had to wait for nothing but death,

a condition which rarely predisposes to virtue.

But everything had changed. Even the wind. Instead of the harsh dry wind, a gentle wind was blowing, laden with scents. A sound like water came from the mountains, it was the forest wind. Most amazing of all, I heard the sound of water falling into a pool. A fountain had been build and it was flowing freely. What touched me most was that someone had planted a linden by its side. It must have been four years old and already in full leaf, the incontrovertible sign of resurrection.

The village bore signs of labour for which hope is required. Ruins had been cleared away, dilapidated walls torn down and houses restored. The new houses were surrounded by little gardens where vegetables and flowers grew in orderly confusion. The war just finished had not allowed full blooming of life, but Lazarus was out of the tomb. I saw little fields of barely and rye. Deep in the narrow valley, the meadows were turning green.

One man, armed with only physical and moral resources, was able to raise this land from wasteland. The old and unlearned shepherd who fathered this miracle died in peace at the hospice in Banon in 1947.

*(Repeat - SACEP Vol.1)*

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*Statement made by, Air Marshal Hon. Inamul Haque Khan, Minister for Housing and Works, Water and Power (Pakistan)-*

**"The management of environment and saving it from further degradation can, however, be made more effective if the developing countries in the region, having identical socio-economic patterns and other important commonalities like the shared struggle for development, the search for resources, technology, methods of planning and of management etc. collaborate and extend technical assistance to each other in deficient areas".**

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## OTHER SACEP PROGRAMMES UNDER IMPLEMENTATION

### SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMME

Following a resolution adopted at the 11th Governing Council Meeting of UNEP held in May 1983, a meeting of the National Focal Points was held in March 1984 in Bangkok, as the first step towards the formation of the South Asian Regional Seas Programme.

At this meeting, the relevant member countries agreed on the modalities of operation for the implementation of this project. The countries were requested at this meeting to prepare country reports by 31st December 1984. UNEP has provided funds for the preparatory phase of this project.

On the basis of these reports UNEP, in co-operation with SACEP and other International Organisations will draft an overview of the regions environmental problems and a preliminary Action Plan. The national experts will then meet to review the regional reports, the draft action plan and also to consider a document prepared by UNEP on the legislative aspects of the Action Plan. It is hoped that an Inter Governmental Meeting, to adopt the action plan, will be convened during late 1985.

### CONSERVATION OF MANGROVE CORAL AND ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS

At the First Meeting of the Governing Council, the Bangladesh Delegation made a plea for the commencement of activities on a priority basis for development of projects and programmes on environmental management of mangrove, coral and island eco-systems in South Asia. With financial assistance from UN/ESCAP, a symposium was held in Dhaka, 21 – 25 August 1983 to discuss this subject, and was attended by the coastal member states and a

number of UN and other international agencies. The symposium considered the critical areas that require attention in these specialised ecosystems, and discussed their present status, effects of resource exploitation and other human activities, as well as pollution impacts. Several suggested actions were considered for the sound management of these fragile ecosystems.

A draft Action Plan for the environmental management of these ecosystems, based on the discussions and recommendations at the Symposium, was prepared and circulated by the Secretariat for comments from the member countries.

Many of these recommendations will eventually go to form an integral part of the proposed action plan for the South Asian Seas. It is envisaged that there will be a follow up to this symposium so that the final approved action programme would be presented to an appropriate consortium of donors.

### ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

Based on the findings of the UNDP/SACEP Project Identification Mission during August-October 1982, UNDP agreed to fund this project. After a series of discussions regarding the modalities of its implementation, it was decided to prepare, using country consultants, country reports on the present status of environmental legislation in each country. An expatriate consultant is being provided to two member countries as requested for preparing this report. These reports will later be discussed at a meeting of Focal Points (along with the consultants who prepared them) to draft Action Programmes for member countries. The project is presently under implementation and may be expected to be completed by the second half of 1985.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION**

At the 11th Meeting of the Governing Council of UNEP, held in Nairobi during May 1983, a resolution was adopted "to formulate a project for Environmental Education for Asia and the Pacific. SACEP requested UNEP to consider South Asia as a block, taking into consideration of the aspirations reflected in the revised project on Environmental Education for South Asia so that this organisation could take a leading role in its implementation."

The approval of the Environmental Education and Information Project was deferred at the First Meeting of the Governing Council. Considering the large area to be covered, the diverse languages and customs in different countries, etc., the meeting felt that it would be impractical to get the expected results by creating one centre in any particular country. A more fruitful approach would be to identify institutions in different countries to implement the programmes with necessary co-ordinating mechanism established at the SACEP Secretariat. As a small number of workshops would not suffice to inform, educate and motivate various target groups in different countries, it would be more appropriate to work through national workshops.

A revised project document incorporating the observations made at the First Meeting of the Governing Council was circulated among the member countries. The Secretariat is now awaiting their observations for submitting this document to UNEP for consideration of funding.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT, COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

Discussions were held with the East-West Centre, Hawaii, for possible assistance to initiate activities and programmes under this project. Discussions are also still ongoing to identify interested donors for the

implementation of the project. A workshop will be organised towards the end of 1985 to formulate a work plan, depending upon the availability of funds.

## **ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

As recommended at the First Meeting of the Governing Council to initiate project activities in this priority area, SACEP Secretariat contacted the Austrian Academy of Energy and Environment for possible assistance in identifying and formulating projects. A High Level Austrian Mission visited the member countries during July-August 1984 on a project pre-planning mission to familiarise themselves with the situation in the region. The Mission is now expected to revisit some member countries in the near future for a more indepth study after consultations with the Secretariat and the member countries concerned.

## **INTEGRATED ENERGY SAVING DOMESTIC STOVES AND FUELWOOD SYSTEMS PROJECT**

This project was approved by the 1st Governing Council and later adopted for UNDP for funding. The first phase of the project is scheduled to last 2½ years whilst the 2nd phase is expected to be an ambitious operation, when appropriate stoves would be fabricated in the participating countries and disseminated among a major section of the population. The Netherlands Government who have shown considerable interest in this project, is likely to fund the totality of the 1st phase of the project. A senior consultant from the University of Eindhoven appointed by UNDP visited the Secretariat in late September 1984 in order to formulate modalities for the operation of this project. His final report is now awaited. Meanwhile, a meeting set up by the Netherlands Government along with US Aid, was held in the Netherlands in March, 1985, to discuss the modalities of implementing this project under the Bio Mass Fuel Stoves Network.

## **TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE AND REUSABLE RESOURCES**

SACEP, in co-operation with the UN/ESCAP Regional Centre for Technology Transfer, formulated several pilot demonstration projects for member countries under this subject area. The Government of Netherlands has expressed interest in two of these projects, viz :

- (a) Production of Rice-husk Ash Cement (Sri Lanka), and
- (b) Manufacture of Feed-blocks from Agricultural Residues (Pakistan)

Final decision of the Government of Netherlands on financial assistance to these projects is awaited.

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

This proposed project aims at providing governmental organisation in the South Asian region with detailed guidelines on ways of rehabilitating large tracts of their affected land area using unemployed and under employed youth as the principal work force. Accomplishment of such goals is initially through a

series of "Learn by doing" workshops. The initial workshop has been scheduled for 1985 in Sri Lanka.

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

At the 2nd 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. PEEM decided that SACEP should co-ordinate this pilot study. As the first phase of this study, SACEP prepared an inventory of Water Resources Development Projects in Sri Lanka. Assessment of the magnitude of vector-borne disease problems resulting from these projects will commence in early 1985. This project is funded by WHO and, depending on the final evaluation, this project could be extended to other member countries of SACEP.

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*Statement made by, Hon.C.P.N. Singh, Minister of State for Science and Technology (India):*

"Through this forum (SACEP) we expect to receive the benefit of experience of environmental management strategies from the countries in the region with similar problems. It is through co-operation that we can resolve our common problems and mutually support each other's endeavours. In this regard it is important that bilateral links be strengthened and progressively lead to regional co-operation, for we must remember that a chain can only be as strong as the weakest link".

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## THE SECOND GOVERNING COUNCIL OF SACEP

The First Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in January 1983, where seven member countries namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated. Several United Nations agencies and bodies also participated at this Meeting where a number of policy decisions were taken.

In accordance with the Articles of Association of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme viz Article 4 on the Governing Council reads as follows:

- a) The Council shall consist of all the members of SACEP;
- b) Each member shall have one representative on the Council, who will normally be of Ministerial rank;
- c) Unless otherwise agreed upon by members, the Council shall normally meet once a year. The quorum for a meeting of the Governing Council shall be a simple majority of the membership. The Presidency of the governing Council shall be by rotation amongst the members in alphabetical order commencing with the host country; the



*Ministerial Meeting to initiate the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, February 1981.*

Afghanistan: Mr Esmathulia Walli (Director Country & Town Planning, Bangladesh, Hon. Dr. R A Ghani, (Minister of State for Science & Technology), India: Hon. C P N Singh (Minister of State for Science & Technology), Mr C Suriyakumaran, (Director, ROAP/UNEP), Sri Lanka: Hon. R Premadasa (Prime Minister), Sri Lanka; Hon. P C Imbulana (Deputy Minister for Local Government Housing & Construction, Maldives: Hon. Mohamed Mustafa Hussain, (Minister for Health) Pakistan: Air Marshal Hon. Inamul Haque Khan (Minister for Housing Works, Water & Power) Sri Lanka: Hon Lalith Athulathmudali (Minister for Trade & Shipping)

- Chairman shall hold office for a period of one year or till such time as the new Chairman takes office in that year;
- d) The Council shall be the principal review and deliberative body of SACEP and shall be responsible for determining policy and programmes;
  - e) The Council may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of its Articles of Association;
  - f) The meetings of the Council shall proceed in a co-operative spirit, which is the key note of SACEP, and shall endeavour at

all times to reach agreement by consensus;

- g) The Governing Council may formulate its own rules of procedure.

**The Second Governing Council, which was postponed due to administrative and financial reasons, will now be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on the 17th and 18th of April 1985. The Bangladesh Government has very kindly consented to offer host facilities. This meeting would critically examine the requirements to strengthen this organisation in order that it may reap the full benefits of this co-operative effort.**

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*Excerpts from an Address made by the Hon R. Premadasa, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.*

In our South Asian Region, where there was no organisation or machinery for co-operation the countries themselves agreed to establish such machinery. We ourselves forged a basis for co-operation. Not only did we initiate and launch this co-operative action, but we also agreed to contribute funds and expenses towards the success of that effort. The importance of SACEP lies not only in its being the first step towards co-operative action in South Asia. It lies also in the spirit and commitment with which South Asian countries, including some categorised as least developed countries, accepted their financial responsibilities. They unhesitatingly came forward to provide financial contributions to ensure such co-operation.

May I add here, that SACEP should therefore associate itself, in whatever way possible, to strengthen the economic co-operation that is now being contemplated by some of these countries.

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## NEWS ABOUT THE NEXT ISSUE ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

The lack of suitable environmental legislation and the need for enforcing such laws that are in existence have been identified by many UN bodies and sponsored missions, as the twin constraints which tend to nullify all efforts to preserve and improve the environment. This fact was highlighted in the 1972 United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, where a "Master plan" was outlined for the world's environment.

In 1976, the Governing Council of UNEP made specific recommendations in this regard and in 1977, an UNDP task force on human environment, which covered some of the SACEP member countries, recommended extensive re-writing of existing environment laws and training of local talent in draftsmanship and strategies for enforcement. An ESCAP/UNEP Inter Governmental Meeting on Environmental Protection Legislation held in 1978, recommended the re-writing of laws and training of Environmental lawyers.

The SACEP/UNDP Mission in 1982, identified the need to update environmental laws and training of national lawyers in drafting environmental legislation. This proposal was unanimously adopted at the 1st SACEP Governing Council held in

January, 1983 and UNDP indicated their willingness to support this project. The essence of the SACEP environmental legislation project is that National legislation is a field in which extra-national expertise cannot and should not attempt to replace national experts. The attempt should be to only show the path and leave it to the national draftsmen to do the actual formulation, keeping in mind the national ethos, customs and culture.

Apart from reviewing and updating existing laws, there is also a need to enact new laws. The enactment of these laws will not by itself be sufficient. Their effective application has to be ensured by all concerned personnel involved in the formation and implementation of the laws.

Unfortunately most of them, have had little or no exposure to environmental legislation. Thus there is a clear need for orienting these persons in evidentiary and forensic requirements, principles, approaches and practices for the prevention and control of pollution, monitoring, evaluation, standard setting and other details.

It is hoped that on completion of this project a greater awareness and effective environmental legislation will be operative in SACEP member states.

*Statement made by Hon. Mohamad Mustafa Hussain, Minister of Health (Maldives):*

"This meeting of ours addresses to an area which moulds and influences our lives into a particular style or a pattern. That is the environment into which we are born. We are surrounded by it. The environment did, is and will further and improve our lives. It is an umbrella of nature we cannot escape".

## THE GREAT TREE OF PEACE

*And he planted a pine tree  
And he called it the great tree of peace  
And the four roots spread out  
In the four directions.  
Then he uprooted the tree  
And took all the weapons of war.  
And threw them in a hole under the tree.  
Then planted the tree again.  
In the top most branches,  
He placed an eagle to watch and cry out  
If any evil approached the people.  
And it was said: roots have spread out  
From the tree of Great Peace  
One to the North, one to the South,  
One to the West and one to the East,  
And their nature is peace and strength.  
If any man or any nation  
Shall obey the laws of the Great Peace....  
They may trace the roots to their source  
And they shall be welcomed to take  
Shelter beneath the tree.*

*The Great Law of peace · Deganwjdah  
(Iroquois)*



