

EU FUNDING FOR PROTECTING SOUTH ASIA'S CORAL REEFS

The European Union (EU) approved funding in January for a project titled "Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Development for the Long-term Management and Conservation of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPA) Encompassing Coral Reefs in South Asia." This three year project is a collaborative venture between SACEP, International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN), UNEP-Coral Reef Unit, IMM, and regional partners

This new development is timely as South Asia ranks lowest in the world in terms of the area designated as MCPAs in the 2003 United Nations List of Protected Areas, making the region with its wealth of coral reefs, seagrasses, and mangrove forest, one of the most vulnerable areas. As a result, the degradation of coastal and marine resources continues at an unprecedented rate, and despite existing protection measures, one third to half of the coral reefs of the region are now effectively dead, and a further 30% threatened, especially due to over exploitation of the resources and climate change induced El Niño phenomenon. The December 2004 tsunami indicated the important defense role played by intact coral reefs and mangroves for protecting human lives and infrastructure.

The project aims to contribute to the reduction in the rate of marine and coastal biodiversity loss within the South Asia region, and protect the natural resources on which the economic and social development of future generations is based, through the establishment of regionally representative network of MCPAs encompassing coral reefs. The improvement of management outputs from existing MCPAs will be targeted through the development of human and technical expertise, improvement of information and networking services, and the allocation of technical equipment to sites. Training and management processes across the region will be reviewed and rationalized to ensure greater consistency and aptitude for management and conservation, and to formulate a transferable resource base capable of accommodating future MCPA network developments in line with countries Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) commitments.

The main activities under the project include:

- Development of human and technical expertise, improvement of information and networking services, and allocation of technical equipment to sites.
- Review and rationalization of training and management processes across the region to ensure greater consistency and aptitude for management and conservation, and to formulate a transferable resource base.
- Institutional strengthening to mainstream environmental considerations into development policy and re-address the unique situations of poor coastal communities.

- The creation of advisory and coordination capacity through the establishment of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force, developing linkages between all levels of management, focusing existing regional expertise, facilitating coordinated responses to transboundary management issues and improving the representation of South Asian marine and coastal resource management challenges within global discussion fora.

As the implementing arm of the project, SACEP has already convened several meetings to brief government officials. In this regard, Dr. Kristian Teleki, the Managing Director of ICRAN visited Sri Lanka and India in February and together with SACEP DG had discussions with several government agencies of the two countries. The inception workshop of the project is planned to be held in late May or early June this year, where the stakeholders from the five maritime countries of South Asia will meet to take forward the project activities.

DG, SACEP MEETS SAARC SECRETARY GENERAL



Dr. A.A. Boaz, Director General, SACEP met H.E. Chenkyab Dorji, Secretary General, SAARC at Kathmandu on 17th March 2006. The discussions mainly focused on taking forward the MoU between SAARC and SACEP signed recently. The Secretary General stressed on closer cooperation between the two organizations in the field of environment so that the member countries could benefit from the regional approach. He emphasized on the fact that the year 2007 has

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SAICM: A NEW GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT

A new global initiative "Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management (SAICM)", aimed at making chemicals safer for humans and the planet was agreed at the international conference on chemical management held at the Dubai International Convention Centre from February 4th to 6th 2006. This initiative was mandated by several UNEP Governing Council decisions and endorsed by the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. It covers risk assessments of chemicals and harmonized labeling up to tackling obsolete and stockpiled products. It also carries provisions for national centres aimed at helping countries, especially in the developing world, train staff in chemical safety including dealing with spills and accidents.

SAICM, which is a voluntary agreement, comes at a time when global chemical production is set to climb by as much as 80 per cent over the next 15 years. Between 70,000 and 100,000 chemicals may be already in the market with an estimated 1,500 new ones being marketed each year and chemical production is shifting from the developed to the developing world.

The conference was attended by over 100 environmental and health ministers and Dr. A. A. Boaz represented SACEP at the meeting. The governments, meeting in advance of the 9th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, also gave support to a multi million dollar fund called 'Quick Start' Programme aimed at giving financial support to national action plans especially in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

DG, SACEP MEETS

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been declared by SAARC as the "Green South Asia" year and that SACEP should play a pivotal role in this year. Dr. Boaz reciprocated the feelings of the Secretary General and gave a detailed blueprint of the plan of action that could strengthen the MoU between the two organizations. He also said that SACEP will develop a detailed calendar of activities that should take place during the 2007-Green South Asia year and forward it to the Secretary General at the earliest.

SACEP TO DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE IUCN

SACEP is actively trying to benefit from the expertise of the IUCN for the benefit of the region. Recently, in a meeting held on 20th January 2006, at the Regional Office of IUCN at Bangkok, Dr. A.A. Boaz, DG, SACEP met the officials of IUCN and explored on the possibilities of having collaborative arrangements for developing projects in waste management and adaptation to climate change. Issues relating to energy conservation and development with priority to rural energy conservation and development of alternative sources of energy like bio-fuels, and solar energy were also discussed.

While elaborating on the large network of IUCN and its considerable presence in the region, the officials of IUCN expressed their desire to work closely with SACEP to address issues that cross boundaries and that cannot be tackled in one country alone. They also emphasized to develop projects to build national capacities in key environmental issues of South Asia region and to connect and be part of Global Thematic Programmes. It was decided to develop the above collaborative approach by the two organizations entering into a formal MoU at the earliest.

FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S DESK

As we move into the New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to look back at the progress that has been made so far after the 9th Governing Council of SACEP and the 3rd IMM, held at Bhutan last August. This Governing Council in August, will be remembered for the decision taken by all member countries to work towards a new work programme which will cover the period of 2006-2007. This work programme sets out specific targets and time frames and it has already been sent to the National Focal Points for comments and approval. Improving the already existing, private and public sector partnership in the region, is crucial for the region to overcome the complex challenge that we face.

Following the earthquake in Pakistan and north India and the tsunami that affected our region, we are deeply concerned with the Risk Preparedness Strategy for the region. In view of the future strategy that will be beneficial for the region, SACEP is looking forward to new initiatives that will foster regional capacities for this purpose. On my recent missions to Nepal, Bangladesh, Maldives and India, I was able to brief our member states on the follow up activities, after the Governing Council. In each country, high level government officials were met, and briefed on the work programme for the next year. In turn reassurances were given by them for fullest support and cooperation for proposed regional activities.

Protection and management of marine environment and coastal ecosystems has emerged as a key area for regional cooperation. For the purpose of protecting the marine and coastal environment of the region, SACEP has entered into an agreement with UNEP. We are at the moment looking forward to implement the European Commission Proposal on Institutional strengthening and capacity development for the long-term management and conservation of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) encompassing coral reef resources in South Asia with International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN).

Sustainable development, requires a holistic and inclusive form of national governance, as well as educating and engaging people during the process of initiating policy changes, the SACEP has an ideal framework to initiate dialogue. South Asia needs to focus on improving the regional cooperation in specific areas like poverty eradication; trade and economic policies; and natural resource management. This could be made possible by means of strengthening the implementation systems in our member countries. Recognizing this emerging trend, SACEP has agreed to be a partner in EU project entitled "A Practical Approach to Implement of MEAs and Promoting Sustainable Development Planning at Decentralized levels in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka" a partnership programme of International Technology Development Group (ITDG). The 24th regular session of the General Assembly of the International Maritime Organization approved the MoU between IMO and SACEP. I am extremely pleased that SACEP was able to sign this MoU as this will facilitate greater coordination with IMO and help to initiate several activities for the benefit of the region.

I am happy to note that we have reached a remarkable landmark agreement with the UNEP-RRC.AP, Bangkok, for strengthening the SENRIC Programme and developing project proposals for the three new priority areas

identified at the 9th Governing Council, viz., Data management, Waste management and Adaptation to Climate Change. The agreement with WMO to strengthen the capacity in the region for climate change adaptation strategies has resulted in finalizing a Project Proposal that deals with networking and improving awareness and understanding of the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change adaptation strategies in South Asia. Considering the seriousness of the pollution threats, facing the Indian Ocean, SACEP with the technical cooperation of Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA) has developed a project proposal, to strengthen the sea water quality criteria of the region. Taking the issue of climate change into consideration SACEP with Sarwodaya in Sri Lanka has developed a project that deals with energy efficiency through eco-housing (Energy aspects) and seeking possible donor support to fund it. Considering the seriousness of the issue of environmental pollution arising from the dismantling of ships in the region, a project proposal has been developed by SACEP, and has been circulated among the country focal points in the region.

I am happy to announce that SACEP with One World South Asia, will be launching a series of environmental posters to mark the 6th anniversary of the World Environmental Day (WED) in June, this year. The WED theme, will be on "Don't Desert Drylands", and it highlights the challenges raised by desertification due to mismanagement of land. Desertification is truly a major issue with far-reaching economic and social consequences which touches every corner of the globe, not isolating, the South Asian Region. This shows that environmental planning should focus on all aspects of land management which is a limiting resource with a growing population. Our patterns of consumption on the natural resources base has contributed to the expansion of dry land and the deserts and the continued contribution to the Global budget of greenhouse gases is causing the global climate change. Considering the upcoming international days to mark the biological diversity and earth day let me call upon the member states of the SACEP, in the South Asian region to join hands in Conservation and management of dry land in the region and thereby help the marginalized people living in abject poverty conditions in our region.

Dr. A.A. Boaz
Director General

MINISTERIAL MEETING TO CREATE THE ASIA-PACIFIC WATER FORUM

The Asia-Pacific water ministerial meeting took place on 20th March 2006 in Mexico City as part of the 4th World Water Forum. The aim of the meeting was to address the set of water management related issues common to the region. The meeting greatly enhanced the interaction in the implementation of the follow-up activities of the third Water Forum, which was held in March 2003 at Kyoto.

ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL IMPLEMENTERS MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The UN Asia-Pacific Regional Implementers Meeting (RIM) was held from 19 and 20 January in Bangkok, Thailand. It was organized by UNESCAP in partnership with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN agencies UNEP, UNDP, FAO and UNIDO. Dr. A.A. Boaz Director General SACEP, participated from the SACEP secretariat at the meeting. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created in December 1992 to ensure follow-up of outcomes from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

This meeting ended with a pledge to focus on energy use, industrial development, air pollution and climate change. It was attended by 29 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as UN Agencies, NGOs and civil society participants. At this meeting four key areas such as industry, energy, climate change and air pollution, were explored for new approach for harmonizing economic growth with environmental sustainability. The Regional Implementation Meeting is to ensure that issues of importance and uniqueness to Asia and the Pacific are highlighted and duly reflected.

One of the key points raised by Mr. Chung, Chief of UNESCAP's Environment and Sustainable Development Division at this meeting was that the region needs to promote the use of renewable resources, which is amply available for the region and thereby increase the usable output per resource input. This would generate less waste. Energy security in the region has deteriorated as rapid economic growth increased demand for energy resulting in increased net imports to the region.

It was noted that industrial sector should respond by enhancing eco-efficiency and marketing of environmental goods and services. The meeting addressed the issues and concerns on climate and climate-related events and phenomena that could be exacerbated by future climate change event that are already being felt by most countries throughout the region. In this respect adaptation in agriculture, forests and terrestrial ecosystems are considered high priority measures for most Asian countries, while the top priority for small island developing states is adapting water resources and coping with sea level rise.

UNEP LAUNCHES GEO YEAR BOOK 2006

The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) Year Book 2006, which is the third annual survey of the changing global environment produced by UNEP was launched in February. This publication highlights the linkages between environmental well-being, vulnerability and poverty; records recent findings on the value of ecosystem services; and describes new research findings on polar and ocean changes that may prove a turning point in the urgency of our awareness and response to global change.

The publication mainly focuses on the environmental, socio-economic and public health impacts of energy-related air pollution and the emerging scientific and policy challenges of crop production in a changing climate and fish and shellfish farming without damage to marine ecosystems are examined in detail.

The report finding indicates that if existing energy policies continue, the world's energy needs will be almost 60 per cent higher in 2030 than in 2004. From a supply point of view, oil, gas and especially coal could therefore continue to dominate the global energy mix for the foreseeable future, unless we reconsider the environmental implications of this fossil fuel dependency. Alternatively, we could see major changes in global energy patterns driven by concerns about energy security, access, and the negative externalities of current patterns of energy use – particularly climate change and the health impacts associated with air pollution. There is already some action in this direction. Policies for renewable energy exist in at least 45 countries worldwide, and at least 43 countries had a national target for renewable energy supply by mid-2005. Additional action is still needed to stem the growth in energy consumption and to develop efficient technologies and energy sources that are less polluting than fossil fuels.

It further states that in developing countries, indoor smoke from solid fuels is estimated to be the fourth leading high mortality health risk while urban air pollution, is estimated to be responsible for approximately 800 000 premature deaths every year. Despite these high figures, the negative impacts of these air pollutants have received little attention in many parts of the world for a variety of reasons, including insufficient information on the status of the damaging pollutants and their impacts, the costs to the economy of corrective action, and the fact that the affected populations are primarily the poor.

Under long-range transport of air pollution, the report mention the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution in South Asia, which SACEP initiated as a regional effort for addressing the issue. For more information of the GEO 2006 year book please refer the website: <http://www.unep.org/geo/yearbook/yb2006/>.

3RD GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON OCEANS, COASTS AND ISLANDS



The Plenary Session - Dr. Boaz is seated 2nd from the right

SACEP Director General, Dr. A. A. Boaz participated at the 3rd Global Conference on Oceans, Coast, and Islands, “Moving the global oceans agenda forward” held in UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France from 23rd to 28th January, 2006. This was part of the activities of the GEF project on Fostering a Global Dialogue on Oceans, Coasts, and SIDS, and on Freshwater-Coastal-Marine Inter-linkages. This conference was attended by over 400 participants from 78 countries, and brought together members of governments, regional organizations, UN agencies, academia, non- governmental organizations, donor agencies, and industry representatives.

Dr. Boaz, acting as the Co-chair of the dialogue session on Tsunami and Disaster Preparedness, made a presentation on the “Post Tsunami Rehabilitation Efforts with respect to the Environment Sector in South Asia”. At the Plenary session on the 28th of January, Dr. A A Boaz, presenting the report of the Panel on Tsunami Disaster and Disaster Preparedness reported that the post-Asian tsunami debris clean-up was in progress and that the coral reefs were recovering and praised the international community for extending the assistance to the fishery sector. He noted that by coping with the disaster a number of lessons have been learnt. He reported on the progress made so far on establishing the regional tsunami warning systems, and called for more scientific input to address the multiple hazards.

The Global Conference focused special attention on four themes, the two major goals of the World Summit on Sustainable Development: Implementation of the results of the Mauritius Strategy (January 2005), Progress in the implementation of the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA), Lessons Learned From Tsunami Disaster of December 2004 and two emerging or unresolved ocean issues concerning the High seas governance and Oceans and climate.

At the conference, the session on lessons learned focused on coastal disaster management. Some of the lessons reflected on the importance of assessing the severity of impact depending on varied physical parameters and natural barriers. On risk assessment emphasis was given to obtaining susceptibility maps with special focus on bathymetry.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF IMO FORMALLY ENDORSES THE MOU WITH SACEP FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

As a follow-up to the Thimphu Governing Council meeting, SACEP has entered into a mutually supporting agreement with International Maritime Organization (IMO) on 16/12/2005. The MoU with IMO is to facilitate the consultation on matters of common interest to the two organizations, with a view to ensure maximum coordination of the work and activities of the respective organizations, in respect of matters that control and manage the marine pollution.

The MoU was approved at the 24th Regular Session of the IMO Assembly end of last year. Already regional activities are in progress on capacity building for the region. This includes activities that involve the management of waste generated from applying Anti Fouling Systems of ships, and strengthening of the national level capacities to develop the contingency and response plans to mitigate oil spills in the marine environment.

KOFI ANNAN HONOURED WITH ZAYED PRIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

On 6 February 2006, the Zayed Prize was awarded to United Nations Secretary – General Kofi Annan for his personal leadership in sustainable development, Supporting United Nations Environmental initiative that have spurred collective action. The 1,360 scientists who research contributed to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

The biennial Prize was established in 1999 to recognize and encourage environmental achievements in line with the vision of H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan al Nahyan, the late UAE president. Valued at one million US\$, the United Arab Emirates’ Zayed International Prize for Environment is the world’s largest and most valuable environmental prize.

INTER-LINKAGES SYMPOSIUM ON BUILDING KNOWLEDGE, CAPACITY AND INSTITUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

An Inter-Linkages Symposium to Build Knowledge, Capacity and Institutions for Sustainable Development at Regional Level was organized by United Nations University with the support of the Ministry of Environment from 20 to 21 February 2006 in Japan. The meeting was convened to share experiences of regional partnership, facilitate networking and reflect on new governance opportunities for sustainable development at the regional level. It was attended The Symposium was attended by several international organizations and the regional secretariats, namely Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

Convening representatives from these three organisations, as well as regional and international experts and consultants, the Symposium focused on actions that need to be taken to strengthen capacity on Inter-linkages at the regional level through regional organisations, programmes and approaches.

Dr. A. A. Boaz, Director General, SACEP in his presentation titled "SACEPs' initiatives to develop integrated capacity to strengthen development and address global issues in the South Asian region" highlighted the regional environmental and institutional challenges and the role that SACEP is playing

in addressing these issues. He also elaborated on the current focus areas of SACEP to achieve the MDG goals through a sustainable development approach.

The Symposium considered three lead-in discussions on a) Information and Knowledge Management; b) Compliance and Enforcement; and c) National and Regional Capacity Assessment. This set the scene for in-depth consideration of the key question in two working groups focusing on Knowledge Management and Capacity Development and Compliance and Enforcement

The Working groups and the discussions at the Symposium highlighted needs and associated requirements under the areas of Training, Information and Sharing of Expertise, Link into Existing and Ongoing Processes for the Capacity Development related activities. The Symposium specifically recognized the important roles to be observed by the regional organisations in the MEA implementation and attending to the related capacity building within the regions.

The meeting observed the notion that the Inter-linkages Approach needed to go beyond coordinating MEAs, and look at "mainstreaming" environment to make it relevant to all sectors of governance given that this was mandated by the WSSD (2002) and now by directives within the United Nations.

SACEP MEETS UNCRD TO DISCUSS REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

On 22nd February, Dr. Arvind Boaz, Director General, SACEP with SENRIC Project Coordinator, Mr. P.K. Kotta met the officials from the UNCRD at Nagoya, Japan. Meeting was convened to discuss possibilities of cooperation and to identify opportunities in the South Asian region, where both organizations could work together. The areas identified for possible cooperation include (i) 3R principle (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and (ii) Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST). In addition the officials representing both these organizations agreed to develop programmes under the theme area of Disaster Management and the Human Security, since it is one of UNCRD's main program areas.

The meeting resulted in following remarkable outcomes for SACEP. It was agreed

- Ø To collaborate with UNCRD to implement the regional projects on 3 R principles at national level.
- Ø To Facilitate a regional forum to discuss the South-Asian Policy Dialogue on 3R.
- Ø To collaborate with UNCRD to obtain official consensus from the member states (i.e. both Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Transport), in joining the 3rd EST Forum.



- Ø To explore possible collaboration with the Disaster Management (Hyogo) office of UNCRD in environmental responses to natural disasters,
- Ø To assist UNCRD in facilitating any government cooperation that might be required during the implementation of the Human Security activities in Sri Lanka.

REGIONAL SEMINAR/WORKSHOP ON OPRC-HNS PROTOCOL AND AFS CONVENTION

In responding to a regional need, SACEP and International Maritime Organization (IMO) organized a four day training workshop on ratification and implementation of the OPRC-HNS Protocol, the AFS Convention and identification and establishment of Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs) from 16 to 20 January, 2006 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The hosting facilities were granted by the Ministry of Ports and Aviation, Sri Lanka.

The aim of the training workshop was to improve the regional capacity on implementing the Oil Pollution covers marine pollution by hazardous waste and noxious substances. The training course consisted of five modules including lectures, field visit, group discussion and presentations and country status reports on OPRC, which were presented by the participants. Twenty five participants from the government of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Maldives, India and Sri Lanka were trained under



the programme that resulted in addressing regional issues concerning ship breaking and implementation of conventions.

The training workshop also formed an ideal platform to discuss the draft concept note on ship breaking prepared by SACEP with the country delegates.

UNEP-REGIONAL SEAS FUNDING TO PREPARE TWO NEW REGIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE SOUTH ASIAN SEAS REGION

Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNEP Regional Seas Unit and SACEP, two new regional activities on Marine Litter and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) will be prepared.

With regard to the marine litter activity, a review documents on national and regional levels will be prepared, which will include among others: existing institutional arrangements; data and information on marine litter; legal and administrative instruments; programmes and initiatives; identification of gaps and needs in marine litter management; and proposals for changes and recommendations. Under this activity, a regional meeting of national authorities and experts will be organized to assess the regional situation, discuss review report and the proposals for monitoring and assessment programmes. Finally a Framework Document titled "Regional Activity on Marine Litter in South Asia" will be prepared which will highlight the strategic approach, a costed programme of work, potential regional and international partners, a list of operational activities and recommended sources for funding. This document once agreed upon by the SAS member states will be formally presented at the 4th Inter Ministerial Meeting of the South Asian Seas Programme.

The main objective of the POPs initiative is to prepare a GEF PDF A proposal, as the Global Environment Facility has established a programme to help developing countries and countries in transition to deal with the problems of POPs. This project will address the concerns under three Conventions adopted to deal with seriousness

of chemical management in the environment and human health. The three conventions are: Rotterdam Convention on controlling hazardous chemical import; The Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and their disposal; and the Stockholm Convention which focuses on international action on reducing and eliminating twelve POPs.

SACEP Secretariat, with the assistance of member governments is now in the process of recruiting regional and national consultants for the above activities.

THE MALÉ DECLARATION- PHASE III

SACEP will enter into an agreement with UNEP to facilitate the 3rd Phase of the Malé Declaration. This agreement will focus on capacity building within the region and emphasis will be given to research activities that will cover the theme of health and corrosion impacts due to air pollution. The agreement will allow SACEP to constantly monitor the progress made by the respective National Implementing Agencies in the region. After three years, at the end of the project, a progress report will be submitted to the Governing Council of SACEP. Programme will be aimed at strengthening capacities within the region through collaboration within the region. It will also look at possibilities to capacitate the already identified stakeholders within the region.

REGIONAL TRAINING ON ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The UNEP's Regional office for Asia and the Pacific organized a regional training course on "Environmental Management Tools" from 27 to 31 March 2006. The workshop was held at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok, Thailand. The course aimed to offer the participants with a better understanding of the concepts on environmental management tools. Senior policy makers from the ministries of environment of the SACEP member countries were represented. Mr. P.K Kotta, Programme Coordinator, SENRIC represented SACEP at this event. The training course focused on environmental management tools and case studies were delivered by the resource persons from AIT as well as outsiders. Based on the workshop outputs the organizers will be able to compile training manuals for the South Asian Region.



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UP COMING EVENTS

International Biodiversity Day Focuses on Protecting Biodiversity in Deserts

The Convention on Biological Diversity announced, 22 of May 2006, the International Day for Biological Diversity as "Protecting Biodiversity in Drylands". Since most of the poorest countries in the world are affected by desertification, the international community declared 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. This Day was declared in order to draw attention to the need to reduce the rate of loss of biological diversity as a result of human activities. The biodiversity secretariat reports that the transformation of habitats for human use, mostly agricultural, and increases in overexploitation, including overgrazing, has led to the degradation of up to 20% of dryland ecosystems. All member states of SACEP are parties to the convention. For information, please refer to the website at: <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/outreach/awareness/biodiv-day-2006.shtml>

NEW UN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY CHIEF

Achim Steiner, the head of the world's largest environmental network, IUCN was nominated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to be the next Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), succeeding Klaus Toepfer on 15 June.

Mr. Steiner, a German national who is expected to be elected to a four-year term by the General Assembly, is the Director-General of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) which has over 1,000 members that include states, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in 140 countries.

He has worked both at grassroots level and at the highest levels of international policy-making to address the connections between environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic development, a spokesman for Mr. Annan said.

Prior to his assumption of the directorship of the Conservation Union in 2001, Mr. Steiner served as head of the World Commission on Dams, the chief technical advisor of a programme for sustainable management of Mekong River watersheds and as Senior Policy Advisor of IUCN's Global Policy Unit, where he developed partnerships between the environmental community, the World Bank and the UN system.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

SACEP would like to highlight in its newsletter, regional and national initiatives and emerging environmental issues. We welcome articles or information from outside contributors.

We are currently in the process of compiling a database of experts, case studies of best management practices and initiatives in the areas of environmental protection, sustainable resource management and community-based participatory resource management. Any persons/institutions who are interested in being included in our database, please send details with their field of speciality to SACEP.

For details on obtaining this publication, please contact the SACEP Secretariat.

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