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First Meeting - South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF)

21st December 2007 was a red letter day in the history of SACEP and the South Asian Seas Programme. It saw the inauguration of a ground breaking activity – the conduction of the First Meeting of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force, which is the First in Asia and the 3rd in the world. It also marked the beginning of a new era of activity in the management of Coral Reefs in South Asia which at present is facing severe environmental threats, mainly man made

The Inaugural Meeting of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF) was held on 21st December 2007 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Chief Guest on this occasion was Hon. Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Minister of Environment, Energy and Water, Republic of Maldives. Hon. Mr. Patali Champika Ranawaka, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka was the Guest of Honour.

SACRTF has brought together a vast array of expertise and personnel in the region to guide and meet its objectives. Speaking on the occasion, the Hon' Mr Abdullah said that he is extremely happy that this important initiative has been taken by SACEP and that it was extremely important for the preservation of the fragile ecosystem. He emphasized on the importance of this initiative in light of the recently concluded Climate Change conference and said that the decisions taken make him see a new hope for the future. The Hon' Mr. Patali Champika Ranawaka in his address stated that the SACRTF would facilitate the implementation of the regional and international initiatives in the management of Coral reefs and associated ecosystems and to promote collaborative action and trans-boundary responses to shared environmental challenges. The address of the Patron, Hon' Patron, Judge C.G. Weeramantry, former Vice President, International Court of Justice was delivered by Mr Neshan Gunasekara.



Hon. Minister for Energy, Environment and Water, Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Republic of Maldives delivering some publications to Mr. Patali Champika Ranawaka, Hon. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka.

He outlined the inclusive nature of this collaborative effort and congratulated SACEP for this timely and important initiative. Dr Boaz, the Director General, SACEP in his welcome address while thanking the country governments of their firm support to this initiative emphasized that SACEP was indeed honoured by the trust placed by them in SACEP and pledged the fullest support to ensure carrying forward the fulfillment of the objectives of the SACRTF.

The Following major objectives were successfully achieved at the meeting.

- Identify specific activities under each of the SACRTF priority implementation areas and develop a robust work plan
- Inform and update the SACRTF on the Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification (SLED) activities and outcomes in the South Asia MCPA Project
- Identify profile-raising materials required by the SACRTF and the process for their development
- Finalise SACRTF administration issues

The meeting was attended by the national members of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Representatives from IMM and IUCN were also represented at the meeting.



Hon' Ahmad Abdullah and Hon' Patali Champika Ranawake at the SACRTF meeting

The Hon' Ministers released two documents at the meeting viz the Report of the Second Workshop of the MCPA Project and a Brochure on the SACRTF.



Meeting Inauguration, by the lighting of oil-lamp

Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia: Strengthening Management of Hazardous Waste

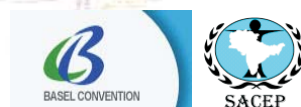
South Asia comprises the countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The region is home to about 1.5 trillion people, more than one-fifth of the world's population. The region covers an area of approximately 42,916,000 km², same as that of the continental United States but with four times the population, it is already one of the most densely settled regions of the world.

South Asia is one of the fastest economic growing regions in the world. Pollution due to industrial activities, use of agro-chemicals, transportation, untreated waste waters pose a very high threat to the environment of the region. The region is situated in the world's major sea route where large number of oil and chemical tankers pass through. The countries of South Asia not only im-

ports much of its own consumption of oil, but India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka lie close to the main shipping route from the Middle East to the Far East. A total of some 525 million tons a year of crude oil pass into or through the region – about 25 per cent of total world movement of crude oil by sea. Additional maritime oil spill risks arise from non-tanker shipping, carriage of refined products, offshore exploration and production operations, and the transfer of oil cargoes at sea. Therefore, threat from possible chemical and oil spills is very high in the region. The ecosystem of the region in a large perspective is exposed to the adverse effects of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and specifically possible dangers of dumping such wastes. The countries in the South Asia have limited capacity to manage the hazardous waste in an environmentally sound manner.

One of the most important factors in the management of hazardous wastes is the awareness and fear of the legislative and enforcement mechanism. Alongside of this, there is a need for the development of adequate infrastructure for testing, storing, handling and monitoring of hazardous wastes to address enforcement. The need for the training of personnel in different department and organisations is of utmost necessity to update them of the latest trends and understanding of issues related to hazardous wastes.

Cont... Page 7



...In Its Place.

Malé Declaration -Ninth Intergovernmental Meeting held in Male

The Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting and the Fourth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting was held on 1 October 2007 in Malé, Maldives. The Inauguration Ceremony started with welcome address by Hon' Mr Abdullahi Majeed Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Water, Maldives. He extended a warm welcome to the participants of the ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting and the Fourth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting. He highlighted the achievements of the Malé Declaration in phases and thanked the institutions involved in the implementation of the Malé Declaration.

The Introduction to the meeting was given by Mr. Surendra Shrestha, UNEP Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific, he pointed out the Malé Declaration adopted by the Environment Ministers of South Asia is important providing the frame work for regional cooperation on atmospheric issues in South Asia.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Arvind Boaz, Director General of SACEP said that the Malé Declaration is one of the significant milestones in the intergovernmental cooperation in South Asia initiated by SACEP and the declaration has provided a frame work for

cooperation not only on air pollution issues but also for other environmental issues in South Asia. He thanked the member countries, Sida, SEI, and UNEP for their efforts in the implementation of the Malé Declaration; and the Government of Maldives for hosting the meeting.

His address was followed by Dr. Johan Kulenstierna, the Director of SEI -York. He indicated that the development of technical capacity has already been initiated in South Asia under the Malé Declaration and the future activities should build on the ongoing activities. He informed that SEI will continue to help the member countries in developing their capacities to address the air pollution issues in South Asia.

The inaugural Address of the Ceremony was given by His Excellency Ahmed Abdullah, Hon. Minister, Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Water, Maldives. He said that it is a privilege for the Government of Maldives to host the Malé Declaration meeting. He thanked UNEP for providing the secretariat for the Malé Declaration; and Sida for continuously providing the much needed financial support.



Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting and the Fourth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting at Male , Maldives

In his presentation Dr.Boaz highlighted the role f SACEP in the Male declaration and emphasized that since Male Decaraion was done at the 7th Governing council of SACEP it should play a .. Role in the 4th Phase of the Project.



From The Director General's Desk.....

The field of Environment was the focus of attention for the world this year. The last quarter was particularly important for it saw several great events happening that brought the conservation and development of the environment in sharp focus and emphasized on the need for mankind to sit up, notice and take corrective action to save the environment from all the ills that it is suffering from their actions and inactions.

It was also an extremely eventful year for SACEP. It started off with the celebration of its twenty fifth anniversary in January at its 10th Governing Council in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Several important initiatives were launched this year. In January we conducted a Scoping Exercise for Climate Change in South Asia and had the honour of having the Vice Chair of the IPCC, Mr. Mohan Munasinghe for the Key Presentation at this event.

The EU funded MCPA Project went fully on stream and the extremely important launch of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force, the first in Asia and only the Third in the world, was done in July under the distinguished Patronage on the Former Vice President of the International Court

of Justice, Judge C.G. Weeramantry.

SACEP signed a MoU with TRAFFIC International to establish the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) for the member countries to collaborate in combating illegal trade in wildlife and facilitate the sustainable trade in wild species. This initiative was fully supported by the US and the UK Governments.

The Secretariat of the BASEL Convention agreed, at the 6th meeting of the Open Ended Working Group in September 2007, to review the proposal and the feasibility study to establish the BASEL Convention regional centre at SACEP and submit to the Conference of Parties at its 9th meeting.

The month of November saw the fruition of SACEP's collaboration with UNCRD when after long deliberations a joint Press release saw the dawn of a new chapter in Sustainable Transportation efforts for South Asia. This Press release was for the conduction of the Environment Sustainable Transport Forum in Singapore in March 2008 in which for the first time the eight member South Asian countries of SACEP were invited to this important forum that is being jointly conducted by UNCRD, SACEP and the

Government of Japan and Singapore.

The year also saw increased collaboration with UN, International Agencies, NGOs and the Private Sector. SACEP signed MoUs with UNESCO, RECOFTC, TRAFFIC, DA, CEE, TRADA, IUCN to take forward various decisions taken at the Governing Councils.

SACEP was also honored with the visit of the Chairman of SACEP Governing Council, Hon' Mr Mahanth Thakur, Minister of Environment of Nepal and the Chairman of the SASP, Hon' Mr Ahmed Abdullah, Minister of Environment, Water and Energy, Maldives in the same year. I am also grateful to the Hon' Mr Patali Champika Ranawaka, Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka and Hon' Thirumigu S. Raghupati, Minister of State for Environment, India for gracing our functions this year.

I am confident that the vigor and vitality that has been infused in SACEP has helped it to be of use to its member countries and I am thankful to the constant support that my member countries has given SACEP to achieve the objectives that it has been established for.

The Future of Forests in Asia and the Pacific: Outlook for 2020

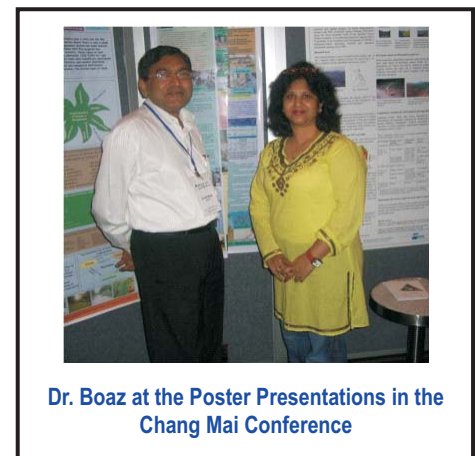
This international conference was organized by the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission in Chang Mai from 16 – 18th October 2007. The main objective of this conference was to enhance the consultative and capacity -strengthening processes of the Second Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study (APFSOS II) by airing a range of perspectives on emerging changes, probable scenarios and their implications for forests and forestry in the region. Forestry and development practitioners, researchers, teachers, students, and representatives from the public and private sectors participated to

- analyse social, economic, institutional and technological trends in

the Asia-Pacific region and their potential impacts on forests;

- identify the opportunities and challenges for forests and forestry in the face of anticipated changes in the way forests are perceived and used in Asia and the Pacific; and
- assess the strategies and set of tools which may be pursued and utilized under different scenarios in order to address the likely changes in the society -forest dynamic in the Asia-Pacific region.

Dr. Arvind Boaz, Director General, SACEP presented a paper titled, 'The Importance of Non Timber Forest Products in the Future role of Forests and Forestry in Reducing Poverty in India.' The paper



Dr. Boaz at the Poster Presentations in the Chang Mai Conference

outlined the initiatives that the Indian government has taken to consolidate and reinforce the role of NTFPs for Poverty reduction especially for people living in and around the forest areas.

9th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans

The 9th Global Regional Seas Meeting was held from 29 - 31 October 2007 in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Conference Palace, organized by Secretariat of the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden PERSGA and the UNEP/GP. The 9th Global Regional Seas Meeting was held from 29 - 31 October 2007 in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Conference Palace, organized by PERSGA and the UNEP/GPA, under the generous hospitality of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting was held according to the invitation of PERSGA Secretary General Prof. Ziad H. Abu -Ghararah to the Regional Seas Secretariat during the 8th meeting in Beijing, China capital in 2006.

The Regional Seas Program was established in 1974 and today its membership exceeds more than 140 countries

working together to protect the Global Seas through 18 regional seas programmes out of which SACEP houses the South Asian Seas Programme. There were 70 participants representing 36 programs and organization. 25 of them represented Regional Seas Programs and 21 participants represented 17 organizations and authorities. In addition to 24 participated as observers, most of them from PERSGA Region.



Inauguration of the Meeting

Dr. Boaz, Director General, of SACEP represented the SASP and presented the progress of the region in the last year. This included the implementation of the EC funded MCPA Project, the launch of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force, the Marine Litter and the MBI Projects. He also held discussions with Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of the DEPI, UNEP on further support to the SASP. The meeting approved the Regional Seas Action Plan for 2008-2013.



SACEP Publications of SACRTF and EC Project Reports on display at the Meeting



2007 IUFRO All-Division-5 Conference

The 2007 All -Division-5 conference was held in Taipei, Taiwan, October 29 to November 2, 2007. This year's chosen theme was "Forest Products and Environment – A Productive Symbiosis".

This Conference in Taipei not only promoted the interaction among professionals in the research areas of forest utilization, wood engineering, and marketing of wood- and bio -based products, but it also offered a great opportunity for scientists to develop collaboration and networks across national boundaries.

The South Asia Co -operative Environment Programme (SACEP) expressed its interest to the livelihood support that the forest ecosystems afford to the fringe forest area population. The Director General, Dr Arvind Boaz, presented a paper on the ' Regional Initiatives for Sustainable Non Wood Forest Products Management in South Asia '.

South Asia has been the second fastest growing region in the world, after East Asia, with annual economic growth averaging over 5%. Yet the region contains 40% of the world's poor, most of whom live in rural areas and many depend on a fragile natural resource base for their survival. The region covers an area of approximately 4,485,000 Km² and supports a dense human population of about 1,207 million people. However, over the years there has been a rapid loss of NWFP resources in this region due to large scale deforestation, forest fires and unsustainable harvest of these resources due to increasing demand for the herbal industry. Urgent and decisive action is needed to conserve and maintain the large NWFP species that are the basis

of not only the extremely lucrative and fast developing Herbal Industry but also is the backbone of the very survival of the large indigenous population that is dependent on these resources.

Despite the impressive growth of regional and national economies, rapidly increasing population, weak and unsustainable livelihoods, a high incidence of poverty and poor access to basic services and support characterize many of rural and urban communities. Forests suffer when decisions are geared to commercial interests. Planting mono -cultural oil palm, tea and rubber trees on cleared land in South Asia might provide a higher quality of life for forest -dwelling peoples – at least in the view of some governments – but such reforestation cannot restore the biodiversity lost from the destruction of wild forest and consequently the NWFP resources of the region.

In some instances, policies that advocate sustainable development have been detrimental to wise use of forest resources. For example, attempts to improve productivity of the forests of the region have resulted in the replacement of natural forests with a large number of intensively managed non-native species.

Non-Timber Forest Products constitute a critical component of food security and an important source of income for the poor in many South Asian countries. NTFPs underpin the livelihoods of huge numbers of rural people in the region, as they are used for food, medicines, Fibres, Fuel Wood, Thatching and Plaiting plant materials, Rattan, Charcoal, Dye plants,

resins and other materials for consumption, barter and income generation. However, challenges such as insecure land tenure, inequitable access to markets, elite -capture of high value NTFPs and the potential danger of low value NTFPs as poverty traps will have to be addressed immediately. Exploring the lessons learned from various approaches and the implications for collective management, livelihoods and the forests are some of the main focus areas of SACEP.

SACEP is collaborating with several International agencies like UNEP, UNCRD, RECOFTC, IUCN, UNESCO and FAO to initiate various programmes in the forestry sector in the South Asian Seas Programme region. It has also collaborated with the Secretariats of CBD and the Royal Belgium Government to develop the Clearing House Mechanism in South Asia. Recently, we have entered into an MoU with TRAFFIC International to develop the South Asia Wildlife enforcement Network for combating illegal trade in Wild flora and Fauna. These initiatives by SACEP will go a long way in the sustainable Management of NTFP resources in the region and augmenting the livelihood support that is available to the fringe forest area population from these re-



Dr. Boaz with Mr. Chris Reibrudt, Conference Chair

International Workshop “Ensuring the Future of Drylands: Towards Implementing the MAB Agenda for a Sustainable Future of Drylands”

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme has a long tradition of promoting dryland studies within and among its Member States, in particular through its MAB Project Area 4: Impact of Human Activities on the Dynamics of Arid and Semi-Arid Zones' Ecosystems.

A new impetus for dryland studies was provided by the United Nations in the year 2006 that proclaimed it as "International Year of Deserts and Desertification". As its main contribution towards observing the Year, UNESCO organized the international scientific conference on "The Future of Drylands" which was held in Tunis (Tunisia) from 19 to 21 June 2006. More than 400 participants from all world regions, in particular from the scientific community, attended the conference.

The "Tunis Declaration" of the conference called upon governments to use scientific knowledge for policy formulation and implementation; it also requested scientists that their findings be made available and understandable to decision-makers and local dryland communities.

Accordingly the International Workshop on "Ensuring the Future of Drylands

Towards Implementing the MAB Agenda for a Sustainable Future of Drylands" was held in Jodhpur (India) from 12 -15 th November 2007 it aimed at identifying the specific research priorities for Asian dryland countries in a regional and inter -regional context. The workshop also aimed at spelling out specific dryland research and education themes, and identification of pilot/field demonstration projects as study sites for national and international dryland collaboration.

The new MAB drylands research agenda will serve as an international platform for collaboration among scientists and government officials to better understand human - environment interactions in drylands, to promote environmental conservation and to foster sustainable development based on scientific findings and education schemes

The presenters of workshop reflected in their presentations which biosphere reserves or similarly managed areas in their countries .The participants for the workshop were primarily invited from MAB National Committees of the region whose scientific and practical work is specifically targeted at dryland ecology and conservation of dryland ecosystems. In particular

member countries of the "South and Central Asian MAB (SACAM) Network" attended the workshop, i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Moreover, Representatives of international organizations working on dryland issues also attended the workshop.



Dr. Boaz with Dr. Thomas Schaf, MAB Programme, UNESCO, France



SACEP signs a MoU with TRAFFIC International

TRAFFIC was established in 1976 and has developed into a global network. It works in wildlife monitoring and ensures that trade in wild plants and animals are not a threat to the conservation of nature. TRAFFIC's partner organizations are WWF and IUCN. It works in close co-operation with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). TRAFFIC's vision is of a world in which trade in wild plants and animals is managed at sustainable levels without damaging the integrity of ecological systems and in such a manner that it makes a significant contribution to human needs, supports local and national economies and helps to motivate commitments to the conservation of wild species and their habitats. The 10th Governing Council of SACEP decided to incorporate a work programme for combating illegal trade in wildlife and its products with a view to strengthening enforcement of CITES in the region and in controlling illegal domestic and international trading in wild fauna and flora which is seriously impeding biodiversity

conservation efforts by all countries. In order to take the 10th Governing Council decision forward, SACEP entered into a MoU with TRAFFIC International in July 2007 to jointly work on this initiative. The main aims of this MoU were to develop and implement a South Asia Regional Strategy for combating illegal trade in wild flora and fauna and to ensure that the legal trade is maintained at sustainable levels in South Asia and to establish the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) and strengthen partnerships, alliances and other cooperative mechanisms to foster impacts of the progress at the national and regional level. Under the MoU SACEP and TRAFFIC developed a South Asia Regional Strategic Plan on Wildlife Trade and circulated it for comments and suggestions to member countries and other key stakeholders. SACEP and TRAFFIC have also decided to hold the Inter -government consulta-

tions and finalize the strategy by holding the 1st Regional Workshop in Kathmandu on 31st January and 1st February 2008. The workshop will be organized by SACEP with TRAFFIC International, WWF -Nepal and it was hosted by the Government of Nepal. WWF - UK and the United State Department of State will financially support this workshop. Senior Government officials and key stakeholders of all the eight member countries of SACEP will be invited at this workshop. The aims of this workshop are to follow-up on the 2004 Kathmandu Wildlife Trade Workshop, development of a South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative and to finalize the South Asia Regional Strategic Plan on Wildlife Trade. This workshop will approve the draft statement for adoption at the Ministerial level at the 11th Governing Council of SACEP.



4th International Conference on Environmental Education

Centre for Environment Education (CEE) organised the Fourth International Conference on Environmental Education (ICEE) during 24-28 November 2007 at Ahmedabad, India. The conference was co-sponsored by UNESCO and UNEP and hosted by the Government of India.

Around 1500 participants from all over the world from 97 countries including government officials, representatives of UN agencies, educators from the field of environment, health, water and sanitation, human rights, gender, peace, citizenship, social justice, civil societies/NGOs, corporate, academics and the media participated in the above conference.

The Conference focused at how Environmental Education (EE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can partner and strengthen each other towards building a sustainable future.

Thirty Working Group Sessions with different major themes were held during the conference. Recommendations were made by each of the groups through discussions during their respective sessions.

The event marked the fourth international conference in the journey of EE since Tbilisi and help setting the roadmap for progress through the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD).

The Winner of the SACEP's school Environmental Awareness Programme was awarded a scholarship to attend this event.

Dr. Boaz, Director General, SACEP in his Special Valedictory address emphasized that the role of environmental education was crucial in sustainable development as without putting in wholehearted efforts to arrest forest and biodiversity degradation, we will be unable to arrest the impact that forests have on nearly all vital areas of development like water, energy and land management, arresting erosion, maintaining soil fertility and serving as safety nets to a large human population in our region. He elaborated that environmental education should now try to focus on this issue of mainstreaming forestry into National development issues and not only talk of educating the masses for sustainable development but also lay greater emphasis on environmental education for the policy and law makers and other stakeholders to educate



Valedictory Session of the Conference (L-R)

Dr. A.A. Boaz, DG SACEP, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, DG-UNESCO, Mr. Charles Hopkins, UNESCO Chair Education in Sustainability and Mr. Kartikeya Senabhai, Director CEE.

them about the environmental services of the forests and biodiversity and divert adequate resources for their conservation and development. The time has also come to develop mechanisms to educate bureaucrats and lawmakers to not only to put market based instruments in place to generate funds for the sustainability of the natural resources but also establish mechanisms to make such funds available for utilization for the development of this sector.

He further stated that "I am convinced that the time is

now ripe for us to take a fresh look at the whole approach to sustainable development and mainstream the 18.6% forest area in the development agenda as this area is the most productive renewable resource that can not only provide sustainable livelihoods to the dependent rural population but can also be a highly productive area for supply of various natural renewable resources that are being exploited on an unsustainable basis without due investments from the end-users in these areas."



UNFCCC COP-13

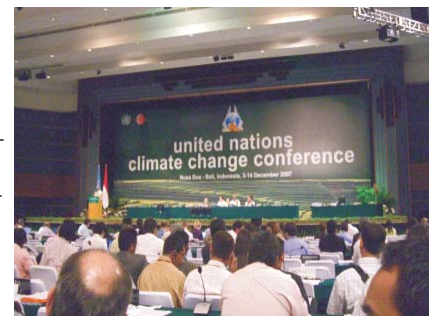
Deforestation is estimated to have occurred at the alarming rate of 13 million hectares per year in the period 1990-2005, accounting for 20% of global annual greenhouse gas emissions in the late 1990s and making it the world's second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions.

COP-13 Meeting of the UNFCCC was held during 03-14 December 2007 in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia.

The Conference, hosted by the Government of Indonesia, took place at the Bali International Convention Centre and brought together more than 10,000 participants, including representatives of over 180 countries together with observers from intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and the media. The two week period included the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, its subsidiary bodies as well as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. A ministerial segment in the second week concluded the Conference.

The conference culminated in the adoption of the Bali roadmap, which charts the course for a new negotiating process to be concluded by 2009 that will ultimately lead to a post-2012 international agreement on climate change. Ground breaking decisions were taken which form core elements of the roadmap. They include the launch of the Adaptation Fund as well as decisions on technology transfer and on reducing emissions from deforestation. These decisions represent various tracks that are essential to achieving a secure climate future.

Dr. Boaz, Director General, represented SACEP at the meeting and held discussions with the various stakeholder-sand representatives of member country



The Meeting in Progress

governments on issues regarding the Climate Change Initiatives in South Asia especially those relating to the priority issue of Adaptation as identified by SACEP's Governing Council. Further Info: http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_13/items/4231.php



.....Cont P.2 Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia: Strengthening Management of Hazardous Waste

The Basel Convention is the world's multilateral environmental agreement on hazardous wastes. Over 170 national governments signed the Convention and it aims to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects resulting from the inappropriate management of waste. The Convention regulates the movement of hazardous waste and obliges its members to ensure that such wastes are managed and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. In order to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in reaching the objectives of the Convention, it was decided to establish Basel Convention Regional Centres (BCRC) through out the world. The BCRCs are designed to bring technical and legal expertise and experience where it is most needed in a manner that is

best adapted to regional contexts.

The establishment of Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia is long waited and much needed for the region due to the uniqueness of the problems of this region. Therefore, SACEP, being an intergovernmental environmental organization of the region, expressed its interest to the Secretariat of the Basel Convention (SBC) to host the Regional Centre for the region comprising the countries of South Asia under Article 14 of the Basel Convention in June 2005. After obtaining the consent of the member countries, SACEP placed a proposal for establishing the Regional Centre for South Asia at SACEP, Colombo, Sri Lanka to the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (COP8) in November/December 2006. The COP 8 by its Decision VIII/3 has requested SACEP to

submit a detailed proposal and the report on the feasibility study carried out for the region to the Open Ended Working Group in its Sixth Meeting (OEWG 6). It also mandated the Open-ended Working Group at its next meeting to consider in detail the proposal for the establishment of the regional centre for South Asia in the SACEP based on the feasibility study. The Tenth Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP held in January 2007 agreed to the proposal to establish a regional centre in the intergovernmental institution of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

A needs assessment for training in environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes in countries of South Asia region was carried out and the findings of the needs assessment study were facilitated in developing a comprehensive program to address these needs. The needs

Up to date, there are 14 BCRCs established in various regions of the world and out of those only one Centre established under intergovernmental body. The BCRC South Asia will be the second BCRC which establish as an intergovernmental body.

We believe that the establishment of the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia will go a long way in strengthening capacity at the regional and national levels in the area of hazardous waste management. The centre will also help countries in the region to embark upon a collective approach, towards enhancing environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and the minimization of their generation.

3rd EST FORUM- JOINT INITIATIVE OF UNCRD & SACEP SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES INVITED TO ATTEND FOR FIRST TIME

For the first time in the history South Asian Countries SACEP has negotiated the participation of its eight member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in the 3rd Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum scheduled to be held in Singapore from 17-19th March 2008.

Looking in to the grave problem of EST in south Asia lessons of the fast economic growth & rapid urbanization SACEP had coordination with The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) to facilitate the participation of the South Asian countries in this valuable forum with an objective to further strengthen and expand the scope and coverage, of the forum

which is a joint initiative of UNCRD and the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan. The Regional EST Forum provides a strategic and knowledge platform for sharing experiences and disseminating among Asian countries best practices, policy instruments, tools, and technologies in relation to various aspects of EST.

In order to facilitate this event UNCRD, Ministry of the Environment, Japan and SACEP released a Joint press release on 1st of November 2007.

In this forum Senior representatives from the Ministries of Environment, Transport and Urban Development from SACEP member countries will participate to deliberate on this important issue along with 14 other East and North Central Asian countries, It is expected that participation by the SACEP member countries in this forum will open a new era of their collaboration with UNCRD and Government of Japan in EST in South Asia.





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SACEP

Future editions of this Newsletter will highlight regional and national initiatives and emerging environmental issues. We would like to receive related articles or information to share with our readers. Any information published will be duly acknowledged.

We look forward to receive information that could be part of our database of experts and institutions in the region. We also request for information on case studies of best management practices and initiatives in the areas of environmental protection, sustainable resource management and community -based participatory resource management.

The SACEP Newsletter is published quarterly and can be downloaded from the website.
#10 Anderson Road, Colombo -5,

New Publications



Report of the “ Sobasankalpana’ School Environmental awareness Programme 2007 and Pannel Discussion on “Adaptation to Sea Level Rise in South Asia” 16th July 2007



SACRTF ADMINISTRATION
The SACRTF was established in 2007 to lead the SACRTF. The SACRTF is a regional body that will be responsible for the coordination and implementation of the SACRTF in the region.



Introductory Brochure of the SACRTF First meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

SACEP Calendar Jan-March 2008

31st Jan and 1st Feb 2008

First Regional Workshop to Facilitate Sustainable Wildlife Trade and Combat Illegal Wildlife Trade in South Asia

In fulfilment of the decision taken at the 10th Governing Council held in January 2007 in Kathmandu, SACEP has signed a MoU with TRAFFIC International to establish a South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI). TRAFFIC International is a wildlife trade monitoring network; works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature and is a joint programme of WWF and IUCN.

SACEP, and TRAFFIC International has proposed to organise the above workshop on 31st January and 1st February 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Government of Nepal, as Chairman on SACEP Governing Council, will be hosting the event formally. This workshop aims to follow up on the 2004 Kathmandu Wildlife Trade Workshop which was co-organised by the Government of Nepal and TRAFFIC. The official delegation from each member country will comprise of a total of three attendees, comprising of one (1) Focal Point for SACEP; one (1) CITES Management Authority and one (1) CITES Enforcement representative.

March 9 to 12, 2008

International Workshop on Climate change and it's impact on Flora” to be held at NBRI, Lucknow, India

SACEP and National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) are conducting the above workshop on 9-12, March, 2008 (four days) at National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow, India. Government delegates from all eight member countries besides eminent scientists will be attending this workshop that aims to develop a strategy for climate change and its impact on flora in South Asia

17-19 March 2008

Third Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum, Singapore

The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), National Environment Agency (NEA) of the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources of Singapore, Land Transport Authority (LTA) of the Ministry of Transport of Singapore, and the Ministry of the Environment - Government of Japan, will be hosting the Third Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum on 17 -19 March 2008 in Singapore. The SACEP is collaborating with UNCRD to facilitate the participation of the member countries in this forum for the first time.

The regional EST forum aims to provide a strategic/ knowledge platform for sharing experiences and disseminating among Asian Countries best practices, policy instruments, tools, technologies, in relation to various aspects of EST.

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