

### Session 3

#### **Statement by the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme on SDGs Road map in South Asia**

The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) appreciates the opportunity to make statement on the ADGs roadmap in South Asia. SACEP welcome the UNESCAP endeavors for achieving the targets of SDGs in Asia and pacific and supports holding of the APSDF. As you are aware the South Asian Sub-region comprises of eight countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka is hosting 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the total global population and is one of the fastest growing sub-regions of the world. It is blessed with the oldest civilizations of the world, rich and diverse natural resource base, which has historically supported economic development and sustained rural livelihoods. South Asia is faced with a host of environmental challenges linked to poverty and hunger as nearly 40 percent of the world's poorest population lives in South Asia, rising inequality, poor levels of human development, wide infrastructure gaps, widespread food and energy insecurity and high risk of disasters. Consequently, natural resources are under extreme pressure due to increasing human population and urbanization.

The negative effects of unsustainable urbanization and industrialization leads to poor ambient air quality, loss of Bio-diversity, poor solid waste management and unsustainable production and consumption pattern & resource inefficiency. The water availability and water quality is also affected by rapid urbanization, population growth and industrialization. Amid these emerging challenges, capacities of the public sector policy formulation and implementation institutions are weak coupled with very weak civil society and private sector institutional base. The common citizens are not aware of the gravity and severity of environmental problems and are therefore not taking part in any such initiatives. The private sector contribution towards environment protection is negligible and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has rarely focused environment protection in South Asia. Baseline data on environmental SDG indicators is not available at one place and it is therefore not possible to undertake holistic

planning for them in South Asia. Therefore, implementation of SDGs appears to be a real challenge in in South Asia.

SACEP understands that the global commitments associated with Agenda 21, the MDGs and JPOI and now SDGs would require developing an appropriate strategy for capacity development in South Asia. With a view to help support member countries in establishing an enabling environment for the achievement of SDGs and in South Asia, SACEP offers support to member countries in assessing the SDGs indicators and baseline and establish harmonized and aligned enabling environment in the eight SACEP member countries based on the following specific objectives:

- To support SACEP member countries to develop the baseline data base and indicators of environment related SDGs in South Asia.
- To assess capacity of policy, planning and implementing institutions in member countries and identify gaps for improvements
- To develop capacity of the relevant policy, planning and implementation professionals in member countries
- To establish harmonized enabling environment in member countries for the achievement of SDGs and objectives in South Asia.
- To help SACEP member countries in establishing linkages among the existing policy, programmes and projects in member countries at sub-regional level in South Asia.
- To coordinate environmental SDGs issues among member countries in South Asia
- To raise Awareness among member countries in South Asia.

Dr. Muhammad Khurshid,  
Director General,  
South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme,  
Colombo, Sri lanka,  
[www.sacep.org](http://www.sacep.org).  
[khurshid@sacep.org](mailto:khurshid@sacep.org)