The Malé Declaration

The Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia is an inter-governmental agreement to tackle regional air pollution problems, established in 1998 by the South Asian countries at a meeting of the SACEP Governing Council. It is the only environmental agreement covering all the countries of South Asia. Participating countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The present project is a part of the 2001-2004 phase of the Sida-funded Programme on Regional Air Pollution in Developing Countries (RAPIDC) which is co-ordinated by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

Implementation of the Malé Declaration

Implementation is co-ordinated by the UNEP Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RRC-AP) and the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in collaboration with the national governments from the eight participating countries. The countries are providing national resources for the implementation of the Declaration. SEI provides technical support to the Declaration.

Phases of the Malé Declaration Implementation

The implementation is currently divided into three phases:

Phase I Agreement and awareness raising
Establishment of the National Focal Points (NFP) in Ministries of Environment and the designation of National Implementing Agencies (NIAs) by the NFPs was completed by 1999. The NIAs developed baseline studies and national action plans for each country. The baseline studies were developed to ascertain the status of air pollution knowledge and research in the countries and identified gaps. The action plans outlined activities to fill the gaps in order to build a firm basis for future agreements on air pollution emissions. Phase I has been completed.

Phase II Capacity building
Phase II (the current phase 2001-2004) includes the following capacity building activities:
- Further development of the NFP/NIA network, including the development of National Advisory Committees;
- Initial development of a monitoring network;
- Carrying out parallel studies on integrated assessment modelling and emission inventory methodologies.

Phase III Tackling air pollution problems
This phase will use information and knowledge concerning air pollution problems in South Asian countries as a basis for the further development of the policy cycle in the region. Studies informing the policy process will continue into pollutant emission inventories, modelling atmospheric transfer of air pollutants, monitoring pollutant depositions and concentrations, assessing the risk of impacts to health, crops, materials and ecosystems, mitigation options, and developing/using integrated assessment models.

Network Development
The established network is to be expanded during this phase at national, sub-regional and regional levels. The decision-making body of the Malé Declaration is the Steering Committee made up of the NFPs, UNEP and SACEP. Technical implementation is carried out under the auspices of the Technical Committee, comprised of the NIAs, the Monitoring Committee (MoC), UNEP, SACEP and SEI. Each year a network meeting of members of the Steering and Technical committees and invited technical experts is held to review progress. At the national level NIAs will incorporate more national experts and institutions into the process by developing National Advisory Committees and they will broaden participation through the development of national stakeholder meetings. More collaboration will be effected with other related activities in South Asia, e.g. Indian Ocean Experiment (INDOEX). At a regional level, close links will be forged with other major players in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the East-Asia Network on Acid Deposition (EANET), Integrated Monitoring Program on Acidification of Chinese Terrestrial
Pollution Monitoring for the Malé Declaration
A network of monitoring stations is being developed to provide the Malé Declaration with information about the level of regional-scale air pollution. The monitoring sites will be located in rural areas remote from point sources of pollution and will be able to provide information about long-distance transport of air pollutants. The activities are being technically supported by the Monitoring Committee (MoC) who are responsible for advising national monitoring institutions, creating manuals and ensuring the quality and sustained development of the monitoring network. At each station, rainwater, particulate matter and certain gaseous pollutants will be sampled. The Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL) will provide technical support for monitoring.

Parallel Studies to the Malé Declaration Implementation
A number of parallel studies will be carried out to prepare information and tools required by the policy process in South Asia. Currently, the emphasis is placed on the development of an integrated assessment tool which combines emissions, atmospheric transfer of pollutants, regional impacts (such as acidification) and mitigation options. As part of this process an emissions inventory manual is being produced. All these tools are being developed with intense consultation and collaboration of the NIAs (see factsheets).

Collaborators
UNEP/RRC-AP and SACEP co-ordinate all areas of this activity. The logistics will be developed in consultation with the National Focal Point (NFP) and NIA of each country.

UNEP/RRC-AP
UNEP’s Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP/RRC-AP) will be the key agency in the Asia Pacific region for environment data and information. The vision of UNEP/RRC-AP is the accessibility of relevant and appropriate environment and natural resources information to decision-making processes at national and regional levels; and the capacity of existing national and regional institutions to manage environment and natural resources information and improve delivery to decision-making processes. UNEP/RRC-AP is implemented in collaboration and partnership with a collaborative assessment network comprising of national, sub-regional and regional institutions in the Asia Pacific region.

SACEP
The South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is an intergovernmental sub-regional organisation. The aims and objectives of SACEP are to promote and support the protection and enhancement of the environment of South Asia individually, collectively and co-operatively and to encourage the judicious use of the resources of the environment with a view to alleviating poverty, reducing socio-economic disparities and improving the quality of life of the people. Among the key functions of SACEP are promoting co-operative activities in environmental protection and management, which are beneficial to the member states, and providing resources for project implementation through donor assistance and project support.

Regional Air Pollution In Developing Countries
RAPIDC is a Programme funded by the Department of Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation (INEC) of Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. It is co-ordinated by SEI and carried out in collaboration with Swedish universities and research organisations together with inter-governmental agencies and research organisations in Asia and Africa. The aim of RAPIDC is to facilitate the development of agreements/protocols to implement measures which prevent and control air pollution. Projects are carried out to facilitate international co-operation on air pollution issues and develop relevant knowledge to support decision making. Activities are carried out in Asia (mainly South Asia) and in Southern Africa.

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