

Update on the activities of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) – South Asian Seas Programme (SASP) – for the 2020 Report of the SG on oceans and the law of the sea

1.

Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) stated that anthropogenic inputs are the most important contributors to nutrient pollution in South Asian Seas (SAS) region. To halve this in sustainable manner, the Government of India on behalf of the SACEP Member States submitted a resolution to UNEA-4 titled, 'Sustainable Nitrogen Management for considerations. The Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management was adopted by UNEA while giving recognition to SACEP for initiating the process (UNEP/EA.4/L.16). The resolution recognizes the multiple pollution threats resulting from anthropogenic reactive nitrogen, with adverse effects on the terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems and contributing to air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and highlights ways to manage nitrogen.

SACEP secretariat is a partnering organization for South Asian Nitrogen Hub (SANH) along with its

develop the National Marine Litter Action Plan for the Governments of Bangladesh and India, which will be extended to the other member states too.

3. Ratification London Protocol

With the decision of the IMM.6-SASP, SAS member states are working for implementation of London Convention and Protocol on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matters, which actively respond to the decades of dumping into the oceans, dredging and incineration at sea. SACEPSAS partnership with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) assist to achieve this great challenge to protect the national coastal and marine environment of the Member States. SACEPSAS and IMO have planned to organize a national level workshop of LC/LP ratification for India, but has been delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions.

4. Ballast Water Management Convention

SACEPSAS joined the GloFouling Project of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) a Regional Coordinating Organization (RCO). This is a sub-activity of the Ballast Water Management strategy. As the RCO, SACEP participated and presented in National Awareness raising workshop on Biofouling Management and National Task force meetings of Sri Lanka held in February, May and November of 2020. SACEP is in the process of developing regional webpage on the activities related to Glofouling Project.

5. Regional Oil spill Contingency plan:

Regional Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan was consolidated in August, 2016. As of year 2018 all SAS member countries viz. Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have signed the MoU. SACEPSAS has been coordinating with IMO on implementing activities in the SAS region for achieving

as well as in its implementation. The strategy also contributes strengthening regional coherence in planning for, implementing and tracking progress towards the 2030 Agenda for SDGs, particularly SDG14.

UNEP and the European Commission (EC) organized the virtual workshop on the Regional Seas Programme and the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework on 28 October 2020. The workshop focused on the regional seas indicators used for the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and policy uptake of the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework developed by regional seas programmes. SAGEP SASP actively participated at this workshop.

7. Development of Sea Water Quality Criteria in South Asian Seas Region

Development of Sea Water Quality Criteria for South Asian Region funded by United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) and Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

The objective of this activity is for reduction of and control of various types of pollution by developing threshold values for various parameters of marine and coastal waters to maintain healthy and resilient ecosystem for the common benefit of the SAS region. The SAS member countries will develop threshold values of the significant polluting parameters that are degrading their marine and coastal waters and validate those values with relevant stakeholders.

The work has been initiated in Bangladesh and India with the first round of meetings organized virtually in September 2020 and October 2020 respectively to know the progress of the activity. Activity would be further expanded to other member countries of the South Asian Seas region.

8. SACEP-SAS and IOCINDIO collaboration initiatives

The intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Regional Committee for the Central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) organized Workshop on Coastal Vulnerability and Regional Planning of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2020-2030) for Northern and Central Indian Ocean Countries as well as ROPME Seas Area, which was held on 30 January 2020. SACEP-SAS presented the regional action plans and expressed the interest to collaborate with IOCINDIO to avoid duplication and pool expertise, knowledge and best practices available in the region.

SACEP-SASP shared valuable inputs to UN Decade report that brings visibility for mitigating the environmental management of the region and has held meetings on a regular basis since February 2020.

9. South Asian Seas (SAS) Regional Coral Reef Monitoring for Adaptation and Resilience

ICRI-GCRMN invited SACEP-SASP

Ecosystems Integration Branch of UNEP invited SAS to the Project Steering Committee meeting of the Global Coral Reef Partnership on 6th November 2020. The aim of the meeting was to breathe new life into the Partnership to help secure a future with coral reefs for people and planet. SAS presented about coral situation analysis in the SAS regional and shared the major Gaps, Challenges and Solutions.