

SAARC ACTION PLAN ON CLIMATE CHANGE

(Adopted by the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change)

Dhaka, 3 July 2008

A. Introduction

The Fourteenth SAARC Summit (New Delhi, 3-4 April 2007) expressed "deep concern" over the global climate change. As a follow up action, the New Delhi Declaration called for pursuing a climate resilient development in South Asia. As a way forward and a first step, Bangladesh proposed to organize an expert meeting.

At the Twenty-ninth session of the SAARC Council of Ministers (New Delhi, 7-8 December 2007), the issue of climate change, particularly the increasing vulnerability of the region due to environmental degradation and climate change were discussed. The ministers felt that given all vulnerabilities, inadequate means and limited capacities, we need to ensure rapid social and economic development in our region to make SAARC climate change resilient. They welcomed the offer of Bangladesh to hold a SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change to be preceded by an Expert Group Meeting on Climate Change.

After detailed discussion, the Expert Group Meeting recommended a draft SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change as follows:

B. Objectives of the SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change

The action plan would seek to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify and create opportunities for activities achievable through regional cooperation and south-south support in terms of technology and knowledge transfer.
- To provide impetus for regional level action plan on climate change through national level activities.
- To support the global negotiation process of the UNFCCC such as the Bali Action Plan, through a common understanding or elaboration of the various negotiating issues to effectively reflect the concerns of SAARC Member States.

C. Thematic Areas of the Regional Action Plan on Climate Change

Specific areas of action in the regional action plan for climate change for SAARC region are to be identified according to the priorities outlined and actions envisaged in the national action plan of the SAARC Member States. However, with a view to facilitate the process of formulating Action Plan, consistent with the national action plans of SAARC Member States, possible thematic areas are, below:

Thematic area one: Adaptation to Climate Change

- Adaptation to climate change impacts and risks in vulnerable communities, locations and ecosystems,
- Adaptation in sectors (e.g. water, agriculture, fisheries, health and biodiversity)
- Adaptation to extreme climate events (e.g. flood, cyclone, glacial lake outburst, droughts and heat and cold waves)

- Adaptation to climate change impact (e.g. sea level rise, salinity intrusion, glacial melt and coastal and soil erosion,)
- Adaptation suited to urban settlements, coastal structures and mountain terrain.

Thematic area two: Policies and Actions for Climate Change Mitigation

- Sharing of best practices on nationally appropriate mitigation actions (e.g. energy, waste management and transport)
- Capacity building for developing CDM projects including DNA and stakeholders.
- Sharing of best practices on sustainable forest management based on experiences.

Thematic Area Three: Policies and Actions for Technology Transfer

- Technology needs assessment including R&D and capacity development
- Assessing barriers to technology development for adaptation and mitigation options.

Thematic Area Four: Finance and Investment

- Methods for assessing financing needs to deal with climate change in the short, medium and long term,
- Climate change projects should be given priority and be financed as per SAARC norms.
- Determine the quantum of additional funding required to implement the action
- Plans as identified under various thematic areas.

Thematic Area Five: Education and Awareness – New Delhi Work Program

- Development of a tool kit on mass awareness raising on climate change
- Incorporating climate change awareness in educational curricula
- Involvement of the mass media on climate change issues with adequate information

Thematic area Six: Management of impacts and risks due to climate Change

- Climate risk modeling and capacity building in the region on impact assessment of climate change.
- Sharing of information and capacity building in the management of climate change impacts and risks through cooperation among SAARC member states in early forecasting, warning and adaptation measures,
- Cooperation amongst the SAARC member states in exchange of information on climate and climate change impacts (e.g. sea level rise, glacial melts, droughts, floods, etc.).
- Cooperation and sharing of good practices in disaster management.

Thematic area Seven: Capacity building for international negotiations

- Capacity building of Member States in the international negotiation process.

D. Priority Action Plan

- Capacity building for CDM Projects
- Exchange of information on disaster preparedness and extreme events
- Exchange of meteorological data.
- To consider capacity building and exchange of information on climate change impacts (e.g. Sea level rise, glacial melting, biodiversity and forestry).
- Mutual consultation in international negotiation process.

Media briefing as and when required.

E. Duration – Time Line

The Action Plan is proposed for an initial period of three years (2009-2011) .

F. Implementation Responsibility

The primary responsibility for implementing the Action Plan on Climate Change rests with the national governments. With regard to regional cooperation, a mechanism should be agreed upon to effectively use the existing institutional arrangements of SAARC by giving clear directions and guidance. As for national level implementation, each government has to undertake its regulatory measures, technological interventions, stake holder’s participation and institutional arrangements.

G. Reporting and Reviewing

The review of the action plan should be periodically undertaken by the appropriate institutional mechanism in SAARC at the technical level. Their national reports on the implementation will be submitted to the SAARC Secretariat for subsequent consideration by the Ministers.
