



**Malé Declaration
on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution
and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia**

The Fourteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG14)
25 November 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

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**REPORT OF THE SESSION
Final**

I. Introduction

1. The Fourteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG14) of the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia (Malé Declaration) was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 25 November 2015.
2. Representatives of the eight participating countries, namely: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka participated in the Session. Experts from the following organizations: Asian Institute of Technology, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), United Nations Environment Program, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP ROAP), and the Secretariat, the Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RRCAP) also attended the Session. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

Opening of the Session

3. The Session was opened by the Secretariat. Mr. Osamu Mizuno, Director, RRC.AP delivered the Opening Remarks. He highlighted the current problems on air pollution regionally and globally and pointed out that improvement in air quality need to be considered as part of a larger sustainable development context. He mentioned that the Malé Declaration will play great roles on the international calling to combat air pollution, as set forth at the decisions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution which was adopted in June 2014 for protecting air quality and the newly adopted global United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) in September 2015.
4. Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Regional Director and Representative, United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP ROAP) gave the Welcome Remarks. He stressed that the biggest agenda, currently is the SDGs where the 3 goals pertain to air pollution. He pointed out that targets at SDGs have been set up in terms of eliminating health impacts of air pollution by

2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, and access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

5. Dr. Muhammad Khurshid, Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) made the remarks. He stressed that controlling air pollution could be of considerable benefit to South Asian economies, environment and population. By controlling emissions, damage could be reduced and major societal benefits will accrue for individual countries, the region at large and beyond.

Introduction of the Regional Facilitator

6. Mr. Jatinder Singh Kamyotra, Director, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Ministry of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India was introduced as the newly appointed Regional Facilitator of Malé Declaration. He gave the Introduction to the Meeting. He requested the Session for a one-minute prayer and silence for the soul of Mr. Raghunathan Rajamani, the former Regional Facilitator Malé Declaration who passed away in this year.

II. Review on the progress of implementation of the Malé Declaration at the national level (Agenda Item 1)

7. Each country made a presentation on the progress of implementation of the Malé Declaration (15 minutes per country) at the national level. The presentation included: 1) updates on country activities regarding Malé Declaration; 2) identification of gaps in meeting the targets and possible solutions to overcome the constraints; 3) updates on the country specific information (e.g. list of experts, list of institutions working in the area, environmental concerns and success stories); and, 4) the financial contribution updates in the participating countries.
8. The following points summarized the presentations:

Bangladesh

9. Mr. Farid Ahmed, Deputy Director, Department of Environment, Bangladesh reported that the country has benefitted from the health and crop impact studies and awareness-raising activities implemented under the Malé Declaration. People have now become more aware on the impact of air pollution to human health. They are continuously doing the monitoring activities, but faced some challenges on maintenance and calibration of equipment, replacement and procurement of materials, and analysis of data due to lack of funds. They have identified further studies on health and crop impacts and development of more awareness raising materials as priority activities once funding is available.

Bhutan

10. Mr. Tenzin Khorlo, Chief Environment Officer, National Environment Commission Secretariat, Bhutan reported that they are continuously monitoring PM₁₀ and initiating an upgrade towards automatic online monitoring system. He also briefed about the country's Air Action Plan highlighting the inclusion of PM_{2.5} in the monitoring system, increasing the number of monitoring stations and improvement of vehicular emission system, as among the priority areas. He suggested that improved networking and information sharing among member countries are key factors for the sustainability of Malé Declaration.

India

11. Dr. Sanjeev Agrawal, Scientist 'D', Central Pollution Control Board, India reported that they have been actively implementing Malé Declaration activities, including monitoring, impact studies on health, crop, corrosion & ecosystems, emissions inventory, among others. They had identified inadequate monitoring network and infrastructure as among the gaps and suggested for an expansion of monitoring in smaller cities. They also recommended the development of appropriate softwares for data management and reporting, capacity building, and strengthening of the network. As the Regional Centre for Wet and Dry Deposition Monitoring, CPCB in India is keen to provide capacity building, demonstration and training to other member countries, if requested.

Iran

12. Mr. Masood Zandi, Deputy of Air Pollution Office, Department of Environment, Iran reported that eight megacities in Iran have faced tremendous air pollution problems, the major source being the transport sector. He highlighted the eleven goals of Iran's Clean Air Action plan to reduce air pollution which include phasing out of old vehicles and standardization of new vehicles, improving fuel quality, promoting public transportation, among other priorities. Under Malé Declaration, he reported that the main activity is emission inventory.

Maldives

13. Mr. Ahmed Murthaza, Director General, Waste Management and Pollution Control, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Maldives reported that monitoring stations of Malé Declaration have been decommissioned due to machine defects but a new government-supported project to establish new monitoring stations with fully automated monitoring systems is underway. He also informed about the ongoing process of formulating the national policy on pollution in Maldives. They had identified capacity-building and proper budget allocation as crucial to an efficient and continuous implementation of air quality monitoring and other Malé Declaration activities.

Nepal

14. Mr. Shankar Prasad Paudel, Senior Divisional Chemist (Under-Secretary), Department of Environment, Nepal, reported that six monitoring stations in the capital have not been operational although government tried to re-establish some of them. He informed of the recent emission inventory which showed that transport sector has been the largest contributor of the emission loads. He also highlighted that the plan for Nepal's Air Pollution Monitoring Network has been initiated suggesting the establishment of 56 new and upgraded air quality monitoring systems. With the increasing challenge on vehicle emissions, measures to regulate and control vehicular emissions by improving fuel quality, and on-road monitoring of vehicle mass emission needs to be in place.

Pakistan

15. Mr. Zia Ul Islam, Director, Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency, Government of Pakistan conveyed that the implementation of Malé Declaration activities in Pakistan had been hampered due to lack of capacity, unavailability of funds and some institutional issues. Malé Declaration monitoring stations have not been functional. They recommended that capacity building and improvement of the monitoring systems are priority areas for ensuring continuity of air quality monitoring.

Sri Lanka

16. Mr. H.L. Kamal Priyantha, Assistant Director, Air Resource Management and Monitoring Unit, Central Environmental Authority, Sri Lanka reported that they are continuously conducting the ambient air quality monitoring activities in Sri Lanka but the wet deposition monitoring has been temporarily suspended due to instrument failure. He mentioned the difficulty in continuously implementing monitoring and other Malé Declaration activities due to financial constraints. He also informed that air quality network involving all stakeholders in Sri Lanka has now been established and good emission control programs being set up with full support from the government.

III. Consideration on the implementation of Malé Declaration at the regional level, including financial status and updates (Agenda Item 2)

17. Ms. Adelaida B. Roman, Senior Programme Specialist, RRCAP, Malé Declaration Secretariat presented the "Report on the Progress of Malé Declaration after the Thirteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG13) (Malé Declaration/IG14/2/1)" and the "Updates on Status of Financial Contribution to the Malé Declaration (Draft) (Malé Declaration/IG14/2/2)". The Session discussed, reviewed and provided guidance on the activities of the Malé

Declaration, including strengthening the financial contribution for continuous operation of the network.

18. Major discussions during the Session included:

- Air pollution is a global issue and Malé Declaration is the only initiative and network in South Asia tackling transboundary air pollution, therefore, the network needs to continue its future development and the way forward.
- It was suggested that Secretariat shall find a way of getting more financial support and work with the UN agencies.
- The Secretariat explained, with appreciation that four countries, namely: Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan have made contributions to Malé Declaration and the total contributions have been increasing over the years. However, it was stressed that still the total financial contribution received was well below the level of the committed amount and it did limit the possible activities of the network.
- Other countries which had not yet done so were encouraged to make the financial contributions.
- It was also highlighted that for the proper function of the regional monitoring under the Malé Declaration, it is essential that each country should fulfil their own responsibility to finance and manage their own monitoring systems in addition to the contributions to the Malé Declaration, as decided by the IG13.

19. The Session acknowledged the Progress Report and the Updates on Status of Financial Contribution to the Malé Declaration, Malé Declaration/IG14/2/1 and Malé Declaration/IG14/2/2, respectively.

IV. Consideration on strengthening the framework on air pollution reduction in South Asia (Agenda Item 3)

20. The Secretariat presented the Terms of Reference (TOR) of Expert Group on Strengthening the Framework of the Male' Declaration (Draft). The Session was invited to review and adopt the TOR.

21. Major discussions on this topic included:

- It was commented that timeframe for emission standards setting and activities is too short for such a tough job.
- It was requested for a week to internally deliberate and give feedback.

- It was suggested to let the expert group prioritize the activities. TOR can be revised according to the requirements.
 - Standards are important and countries shall not only rely to World Health Organization (WHO) standards. For countries, it is good to have air quality standards, though challenging to set up.
 - It was stressed that harmonization of emission standards could be done in the future.
22. The Secretariat shall compile all member countries air quality emission standards, consolidate and circulate to member countries and let countries decide on the priorities.
23. The TOR was endorsed, in principle with the suggestion that it will be circulated to the participants for further comments, in a one week period, if any.

V. Consideration on the Work Programme and Budget of Malé Declaration in 2016 and the Future Development (Agenda Item 4)

24. The Secretariat made a presentation on the draft Work Programme and Budget in 2016 of Malé Declaration. The emphasis covered the needs and areas relevant for the member countries utilizing the resources, for future development. The Session was requested to discuss, review and approve the Work Programme and Budget in 2016.
25. Major recommendations on the agenda items included:
- Strengthen networking and information sharing among member countries;
 - Improve emission inventory;
 - Replicate success stories in the region;
 - Monitoring facilities should be upgraded;
 - Capacity building on air quality management;
 - Financial constraint is a concern, need for innovative financial solutions; and
 - Necessity for developing emission standards.
26. Participants noted the explanations of the Secretariat that there is no ambiguity of the current institutional arrangement of the Malé Declaration such that the RRC.AP, which is an independent entity of UNEP, is the Secretariat of the Malé Declaration as it was so decided at IG13. At the same time, participants stressed the importance of partnership with UNEP ROAP and SACEP for the future of Malé Declaration and requested the Secretariat to have close communication with them to find a way of further cooperation.
27. SACEP confirmed that it will keep providing support, as appropriate, to the implementation of Malé Declaration under the close collaboration with the Secretariat.

28. The operation of the established Regional Technical Centers shall be pursued, and consider mobilizing and generating resources. It was suggested to generate funds locally and making use of local resources and experts.
29. Good project proposals will be developed depending on the request of the countries.
30. It was urged that regular updates on the status of monitoring shall be done not only during meetings.
31. The Session approved the Work Programme and Budget in 2016.

VI. Other Issues (Agenda Item 5)

32. The SEI representative highlighted that the Short-Lived Climate Pollutant (SLCP) is presently a global concern and he advised to look at good practices and opportunities on SLCPs since the funding schemes are available. Furthermore, he pointed out that the Malé Declaration shall look for opportunities and chances to link to new funding regarding air pollution and SLCPs.

VII. Closing of the Session

33. Mr. J. S. Kamyotra, Regional Facilitator, summed up the session. He expressed his appreciation to the IG14 and emphasized that the Malé Declaration shall go forward. He expressed his appreciation to the member countries for taking steps to make financial contributions to the network. Finally, he thanked all the participants, Secretariat, and experts for the active participation and contribution during the Session.
34. The Regional Facilitator closed the Session.

Annex 1

List of Participants

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