



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

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The Fifteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG15)  
16 October 2016, Colombo, Sri Lanka

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### REPORT OF THE SESSION (Final)

#### I. Introduction

1. The Fifteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG15) of the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia (Malé Declaration) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 16 October 2016.
2. Representatives of the member countries, namely: Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in the Session. Experts from South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) and 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 stressed that the global environment now runs through the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. He pointed out that air pollution and climate change are not a separate issue in the current scientific understanding and opportunity for co-benefits for air pollution and climate change in emission reduction policy is of particular importance in South Asia as well as in other developing regions around the globe. He expressed his sincere gratitude to all member countries for continuous cooperation and support to Malé Declaration activities.
4. Mr. Janaka Gunawardana, Director, Air Resource Management and Ozone Unit, Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Sri Lanka delivered the Welcome Remarks. He emphasized on the importance of the continuous air quality monitoring and expressed consideration on upcoming Phase VI that will support the network's reengineering and continuous operation. He mentioned that their Ministry has developed the program entitled "Clean Air Everywhere 2025" to reach the objective of air quality in the region. He mentioned that Sri

Lanka is continuously conducting the air quality monitoring and has conducted the emission inventory.

5. Dr. Muhammad Khurshid, Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) also delivered Remarks during the meeting. He stressed that capacity building shall continue in the Malé Declaration activities as it is important component and seeking financial support from donor agencies shall be utmost consideration. He made mention that on technical side, shall work on reduction of air pollution and greenhouse gases. He pointed out that at the upcoming SACEP Governing Council, tentatively scheduled in December 2016, the progress of Malé Declaration will be reported. SACEP will continue to support the Malé Declaration. Also, SACEP will have a side event in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22) and they will reach out for some resources for South Asia.
  
6. Mr. Jatinder Singh Kamyotra, Director, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Ministry of the Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India and Regional Facilitator of the Malé Declaration made the introduction to the meeting. He pointed out that only the member countries and the network could provide the most accurate and reliable data on air pollution necessary for regional assessment as well as mitigation and control of air pollution in South Asia. He stressed that the Malé Declaration should continue its monitoring in order to have a good quality of data, have regional database and gather information and expertise. He reiterated that the Malé Declaration is the right forum and he urged all member countries to continuously work together for improvement of the air quality in the region.

## **II. Review on the progress of implementation of the Malé Declaration(Agenda Item 1)**

7. The Secretariat presented the “Report on the Progress of Malé Declaration after the Fourteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG14) (Malé Declaration/IG15/1). The Session was invited to discuss, review and provide guidance on the activities of the Malé Declaration.
8. Subsequently, the member countries made the presentation on the implementation of activities at the national level which include updates on country activities regarding Malé Declaration and the Regional Centre, air pollution challenges and implementation of standards.
9. The following points were the highlights of the presentations.
  - Financial support from donors shall be sought;

- Need a better interaction with the neighboring countries; and
- Shortcoming in the monitoring was emphasized.

### **Bhutan**

10. Ms. Kunzang, Deputy Chief Legal Officer, National Environment Commission Secretariat, Bhutan, reported that monitoring and other activities of the Malé Declaration in their country had been discontinued, due to financial and capacity issues. Specifically, challenges include dysfunctional equipment/instrument, logistical arrangement for passive sampling, and limited capacity, both manpower and technology. Other initiatives undertaken on air pollution in the country include banning importation of second hand vehicles, enhancing public transport and road system, and moving towards cleaner fuel and technology. She mentioned that national policies and legislations on environment are in place, highlighting the country's carbon neutral commitment at all times. Ms. Kunzang also acknowledged and emphasized the important partnership with ICIMOD (Nepal) and CPCB (India), on air quality monitoring initiatives. She stressed that in Bhutan, where national priority is more on social development, the political will in the implementation on air pollution control and programmes, must be backed by adequate resources.

### **India**

11. Mr. Vijay Prakash Yadav, Scientist 'E', Central Pollution Control Board, India, reported of having continuously implemented the Malé Declaration activities, including ambient air quality monitoring, corrosion and health impact studies, emission inventory, among others. The country has planned to expand its ambient air quality monitoring network, proposing to establish 11 more transboundary monitoring stations in bordering areas. The monitoring data from 2010-2015 were presented, highlighting that the results mostly met the national air quality standards. Some recommendations for improved implementation of Malé Declaration activities include development of software for data management and reporting, capacity building for QA/QC, interlinking of monitoring results and policy decisions, and strengthening the Malé Declaration to include all SAARC countries.

### **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. Mostly affected are the capital Tehran and Isfahan. The major source of air pollution (about 80%) is the transport sector. He informed on the country's Air Action Plan which highlighted phasing out of old vehicles and standardization of new vehicles, improving fuel quality, promoting public transportation, among other priorities. The specific programmes include development of public transport system, upgrading vehicles standard to Euro 5, utilizing renewable energy, developing electrical and hybrid vehicles, and others. He also mentioned the dust phenomena which has also become a transboundary air pollution issue and

reported an enhanced cooperation among relevant ministries and institutions and all sectors have been working to find solutions to the problem. Under the Malé Declaration, he expressed the need for cooperation for emission inventory, capacity-building for air pollution modelling, and strengthening of air pollution management.

### **Maldives**

13. Ms. Aminath Nizar, Engineer, Environment Protection Agency, Maldives reported that air pollution is significantly less in the country, mostly contributed by land and sea vehicles, diesel power generation, and open burning of waste and construction materials. Transboundary air pollution has become a seasonal issue. She reported that the air quality monitoring stations established under the Malé Declaration is currently not functional. She informed that Maldives has not yet established air pollution standards. Although, there has been a strong policy framework for environmental protection in the country, legal framework needs to be strengthened with respect to air pollution control. They do not have the necessary equipment, testing facilities and trained personnel to carryout air quality monitoring. Ms. Nizar also updated on the country's air quality policies, highlighting the current status, and the current/planned policies and programmes to reduce emissions from industries, transport and open burning of waste.

### **Nepal**

14. Ms. Bidya Banmali Pradhan, Atmospheric Environment Specialist, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal, presented on the air quality initiatives in Nepal, including the status of the monitoring activities. Constitutional policies and legal arrangements regarding environment and pollution in Nepal, including national air quality and emission standards, are in place, but they faced issues in the enforcement, implementation, and monitoring. She reported that currently, none of the air quality monitoring stations are functional, due to equipment breakdown and lack of capacity to operate. She updated on the government's initiative of a nationwide extensive network of 56 air quality monitoring stations and the ongoing programmes for air quality assessment in the country. She highlighted some recommendations for successful implementation of air quality programmes, which include enhancing capacity, reviewing national policies and legal instruments, enhanced networking for data information sharing, technology transfer and enhanced monitoring.

### **Sri Lanka**

15. Mr. H.L. Kamal Priyantha, Assistant Director, Air Resource Management and Monitoring Unit, Central Environmental Authority, Sri Lanka shared the updates on the implementation of air quality monitoring and other Malé Declaration activities in Sri Lanka. He reported of having continuously conducting wet monitoring of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> and presented the data results for 2015-2016. He also reported the completion of the emission inventory report for 2005-2010 and that preparation for the 2012 report is in progress. He mentioned the current initiative

to include monitoring of indoor air quality and reported that the country has upgraded its ambient air quality standards, hence monitoring capacity has to be enhanced. He informed that air quality network involving all stakeholders in Sri Lanka has now been established and good emission control programs has been set up with full support from the government. He also mentioned that the government has initiated the process on making financial contribution to Malé Declaration.

16. The Session acknowledged the Progress Report (Malé Declaration/IG15/1).

### **III. Consideration on the Draft Report of the Expert Group on Strengthening the Framework of Malé Declaration (Agenda Item 2)**

17. The Secretariat presented the Draft Report of the Expert Group on Strengthening the Framework of Malé Declaration. The meeting was invited to discuss, make comments and provide guidance on the document.

18. Major discussions on this topic included:

- Development of standards is a very difficult task, we could not have all standards, it requires infrastructures in laboratory side/monitoring and manpower, should have the technology for controlling and capacity to monitor, etc.
- Consider what is feasible in the scenario and how we gradually proceed in achieving standards, prioritize areas for developing standards.
- We shall think what is required and not copied like WHO standards which are stringent.
- Achieve what is realistic with time targets, with a road map and economic consideration.
- Suggestion to look at countries organizations websites for air standards.
- Countries presented the capacities in their countries, their available standards, issues and challenges in implementing the standards.
- Need to set standards that suit for local situations.
- Implementation of standard is important.
- It was explained that compilation of standards was requested and tasked to Secretariat.
- There are large gaps of the knowledge and we need to use the internal resources, capacities and capabilities in the region.
- Newsletter on standards was suggested to be developed in the region.
- Issues and gaps are important and what we have to do in the next phase.
- The Secretariat was requested to do a manual on resources available in the region, so that we could tap on the knowledge of countries like India's experiences with regards to standards development.

19. The IG15 acknowledged and provided guidance on the Draft Report on Strengthening the Framework of Malé Declaration, so as to prepare the roadmap

for emission reduction in South. The Session approved the hiring of the consultant to do the report.

**IV. Consideration on the Plan for Phase VI of the Malé' Declaration. (Agenda Item 3)**

20. The Secretariat presented the draft Plan for Phase VI of the Malé Declaration. The Session was invited to review and endorse/adopt the document.
21. Major discussions on this topic included:
  - a. A question was raised on budget for project proposal development.
  - b. Impact assessment was also suggested to be prioritized and not only limited to impact assessment workshop.
  - c. Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) was also suggested, however it was clarified that it is only for certain organization, e.g. Ministry and not for a regional network.
  - d. It was urged to come up with good project proposals. It was stressed that good resources could be mobilized through United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
  - e. As a regional network, SDGs link shall be regional in nature so that we have focus, unique as Malé Declaration. Importance to link with SDGs, and good resources shall be mobilized under the name of SDG's. Paris agreement has a tangible resource in the world. So in addition to links SDGs, it is important to highlight co-benefits, also highlight co-financing in order to promote Malé Declaration.
22. The Session suggested to have a "Strategy for Malé Declaration", might be short-term and long-term strategy so as to give direction to the network and also could be used to mobilize funding support to international donors and other agencies.
23. Points to consider the Strategy are as follows:
  - Declaration Vision, Mission and Objectives integration with general views shared by IG15 participants.

*General Points for Strategy:*

- Linking SDG goals and targets with the provision of Malé Declaration for developing synergies amongst relevant MEAs, SDGs and Malé Declaration;
- Co-benefits to address climate change and air pollution issues in the region; utilize existing expertise and capacity, focusing on the practical and feasible priorities; and explore opportunities for partnership in the region; and
- Enhance regional cooperation in addressing the issue of transboundary movement of air pollution, in synergy with the national planning process.

*Capacity building*

- Control of air pollution and development of standards;
  - Initiating health impact assessment and economic impact of air pollution;
  - Development of integrated air quality monitoring network, including monitoring of greenhouses gases;
  - Transfer of knowledge, technology and experience sharing;
  - Generate knowledge on transboundary air pollution through regional cooperation which contribute to effective policy measures;
  - Develop regional database to share with other countries;
  - Monitoring and evaluation system; partnership not only the region but beyond; and
  - Awareness raising on energy efficiency and resource conservation.
24. The IG15 suggested to engage a consultant for preparing the Strategy Paper for submission to SACEP Governing Council as a way forward of Malé Declaration and also for seeking approval, and subsequently taking up with donor agencies, e.g. UNEA for funding. It was also suggested to arrange a meeting for donors to present the Strategy for the region, either in Bangkok or in other side meetings and events.
25. The Session endorsed the Plan for Phase VI (2017-20120), taking into account the preparation of the Strategy as described above.

**V. Consideration on the Work Programme and Budget of Malé Declaration for 2017**

26. The Secretariat made the presentation on the draft Work Programme and Budget for 2017 of the Malé Declaration. The Session was invited to discuss, review and endorse the document.
27. Major recommendations on the agenda items included:
- a. It was suggested to convene the donors meeting by first quarter of next year so as to mobilize funding resources for Malé Declaration.
  - b. For 2017, impact assessment component shall be prioritized.
  - c. The consultant to do the Strategy will be engaged in early 2017.
28. The Session endorsed the Work Programme and Budget of the Malé Declaration for 2017.

**VI. Other Issues (Agenda Item 5)**

29. There were no other issues raised during the meeting.

## **VII. Closing of the Session**

30. Mr. J. S. Kamyotra, Regional Facilitator, summed up the session. He expressed his appreciation to the IG15 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.
31. The Regional Facilitator closed the Session.



**Annex I**

**List of Participants**

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