

Malé Declaration

on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution
and its Likely Transboundary Effect for South Asia



Malé Declaration/IG 10/7

**Fifth Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting
Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting**

English Only

19 August 2008, Colombo Sri Lanka

INAUGURATION CEREMONY

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Inauguration Ceremony of the Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting and the Fifth Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting was held on 19 August 2008 in Colombo Sri Lanka.

II. LIGHTING OF TRADITIONAL OIL LAMP

2. A Sri Lankan traditional oil lamp was lighted as a symbol of the opening of the meetings.

III. WELCOME ADDRESS

3. The opening ceremony started with welcome address by Mr. Udaya P. Gammanpila, Chairman of Central Environmental Authority (CEA), Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka. Mr. Gammanpila, during his welcome address, extended a warm welcome to the participants of the Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting and the Fifth Session of the Regional Stakeholders cum Coordination Meeting. He expressed appreciation to UNEP for granting Sri Lanka the opportunity to hold the meetings. The achievements of the Malé Declaration in the last ten years were highlighted. Mr. Gammanpila expressed his gratitude to UNEP, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) for their support to the Malé Declaration. He stressed the need of coordination among countries and the need to link the policy and science communities in addressing the transboundary air pollution issues. Mr. Gammanpila expressed the commitments of CEA in implementation of the Malé Declaration, which is not only for the current but also for the future generations.

IV. INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING

4. Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, provided an introduction to the meetings. He thanked member governments, Mr. Raghunathan Rajamani, the Regional Facilitator, Monitoring Committee, SACEP, Swedish International Cooperative Development Agency (Sida), and SEI for their commitment and continued support for the implementation of the Malé Declaration. During his introduction, Mr. Iyngararasan indicated that the current energy consumption increase, which is much greater than in the agriculture society, is mainly due to industrialisation and urbanisation. The atmospheric emission has already exceeded the capacity of the earth to absorb the pollutions. He briefly introduced the existing agreements

on air pollution issues in other regions such as the Central Asia Environment Framework, ASEAN Haze Agreement and the EANET. He briefed the formulation and implementation of the Malé Declaration, pointed out that Phase I was to develop baseline studies and networking, Phase II was for capacity building on monitoring, and Phase III started in 2005 with a focus on impact assessment studies. He also briefed the agenda and expected outcomes of the Fifth Regional Stakeholder cum Coordination (RSC5) meeting and the Tenth Session of Intergovernmental (IG10) meeting. He thanked the Government of Sri Lanka for hosting the RSC5 and IG10, which is being held 10 years after the adoption of the Malé Declaration.

V. OPENING REMARKS

5. Dr. Arvind Boaz, the Director General of SACEP, during his opening remarks, highlighted that health impact of air pollution is the key drive for tackling air pollution issues to the policy makers. He mentioned that the Malé Declaration is one of the significant milestones in the intergovernmental cooperation in South Asia, which provided a framework for cooperative policy process on air pollution issues in South Asia. Dr. Boaz expressed SACEP's commitment in participating and supporting the Phase IV implementation of the Malé Declaration. He briefed the history of the Malé Declaration and SACEP's active participation and support to the Declaration. He thanked member countries, Sida, SEI, and UNEP for the efforts in the implementation of the Malé Declaration, and the Government of Sri Lanka for hosting the meeting.
6. Dr. Johan Kulenstierna, the Director of SEI-York, during his opening remarks briefed the successful story of Europe in addressing the air pollution issues through regional cooperation. He briefed the history of Malé and the studies have been carried out under Phase III such as, air pollution impact on crop, health and materials. He indicated that the development of technical capacity has already been initiated in South Asia under the Malé Declaration and the future activities should build on the ongoing activities.
7. Mr. W.R.M.S. Wickramasinghe, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resource, during his opening remarks, stressed the need to have national, regional, and global approaches to tackle the air pollution issues. He indicated the diversity and similarity of the countries in South Asia and highlighted Malé Declaration as an example of handling regional air pollution issues. Mr. Wickramasinghe mentioned the air pollution problem in the western provinces in Sri Lanka the corresponding national level actions. He highlighted the fiscal mechanism introduced in Sri Lanka to cope with the air pollution issues. He briefed some good practices in China and India in reducing air pollutions and stressed the need to share experience in the region as well as beyond the region. He highlighted Sri Lanka's initiative on clean fuel and clean vehicles, through which the cases of asthma have been reduced in some area. He expressed appreciation to UNEP, SEI, SACEP, and Sida for providing technical and financial support for the success of the implementation of the Malé Declaration. He appreciated UNEP's initiative to bring the networks in the region of Asia forward through linking all the existing networks together.

VI. INAUGURAL ADDRESS

8. His Excellency Patali Champika Ranawaka, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka, during the inaugural address, expressed his appreciation to the stakeholders from UNEP, SEI, SACEP and Sida for the support to the Malé Declaration. His Excellency highlighted clean air is an essential need for human-being. With industrialisation and urbanisation, air pollution has been identified as one of the most critical issues on national, regional as well as global level. His Excellency indicated that air pollution will actually affect the economic development. He highlighted Malé Declaration as the key approaches in south Asia in tackling the air pollution issues. His Excellency indicated the linkage between climate change and air pollution and noted that the contribution from developed countries to assist the developing countries in tackling these issues has been insignificant. His Excellency urged the continuation of assistance from developed countries in assisting the developing countries. His Excellency expressed commitments of the government of Sri Lanka to ensure the success of the Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental meeting and the Fifth Regional Stakeholder cum Coordination Meeting, as well as the implementation of Malé Declaration. He believed Malé Declaration could not only serve the air pollution issues but also the other environment and sustainable development issues.

VII. LAUNCHING OF MALÉ DECLARATION PUBLICATIONS

9. Three publications were launched in the meeting: (i) The Youth for Clean Air, (ii) Malé Publication: past, present and future, and (iii) Compendium of Good Practices for Prevention and Control of Air Pollution. Mr. Iyngararasan, on behalf of the Malé Declaration Secretariat at UNEP, presented a set of the publications to His Excellency Patali Champika Ranawaka and the key stakeholders, as well as the local organiser.

VIII. VOTE OF THANKS

10. Mr. Pasan Gunasena, Director General, Central Environment Authority of Pakistan, during his vote of thanks, express his appreciation to UNEP, SACEP, SEI, Sida, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, as well as the Medias for coming for the event. He expressed his appreciation to the organisers in CEA and wished a success full meeting.