

Ninth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Malé Declaration

REPORT OF THE SESSION

Introduction

1. The Intergovernmental Meeting (IG) on the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and Its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia held its Ninth Session in Bandos, Maldives on 3 October 2007.
2. The meeting was attended by the Ministries of Environment (NFP) and National Implementing Agencies (NIA) of the participating countries, members of Monitoring Committee (MoC), South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and an independent facilitator. A list of the participants is enclosed.
3. Mr. R. Rajamani, former Secretary of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India chaired the meeting as the Regional Facilitator.

Progress reporting (Agenda item 1)

4. Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP presented the key progress made during the past one year after the Eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IG8) which was held in September 2006 in Thimphu, Bhutan (Malé Declaration/IG 9/1). Major discussions included:
 - significant improvement in monitoring capacity has been made and Pakistan has established it's the monitoring site on a permanent location.
 - there is a need to have data review groups at the national level as had been suggested during IG8.
 - NIAs could identify centre/institution at the national level for participation in the capacity building on emission inventory to ensure continuity of efforts and capacity building.
 - NIA's could nominate the people already trained for follow up trainings.
5. The Session acknowledged the Progress Report as presented (Malé Declaration/IG 9/1)

Review of the data report and monitoring activities (Agenda item 2)

6. Ms. Naw Wah Wah Htoo, UNEP and Ms. Karin Sjoberg, IVL, member of the monitoring committee, presented the status of the data report and monitoring activities (Malé Declaration/IG 9/2). Highlight of the presentation include:
 - 8 monitoring stations are already in operation and 2 new monitoring stations are being established in Sri Lanka and Bhutan.
 - Meteorological parameters have been obtained from 3 countries. Other countries are encouraged to send the meteorological data to the Secretariat. Ozone monitoring has been

- initiated in Phase 3.
- AAS has been provided to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
 - Overall there is a significant improvement in the data that is being submitted to Secretariat.
 - Actions are being taken to rectify equipment problems experienced by Nepal and Bhutan for wet deposition monitoring.
 - Countries were encouraged to send data regularly and in the suggested data format.
 - To improve data quality site audits and inter-laboratory comparison would help. Site audits have been arranged for few countries and it would be discussed with the other countries. If countries are ready, the blank samples would be sent to initiate the inter-laboratory comparison in October 2007.
 - MoC would update and combine existing Malé Declaration monitoring manuals, and make it user friendly.
 - The wet and dry deposition monitoring manual is being revised. IC and AAS would be included in the recommended methods.
 - A new design of IVL's Bulk Sampler would be implemented
 - Suggested changes in data reporting template was highlighted.
7. The Session was invited to provide comments on the proposal. Major discussions included the following:
- Participants highlighted the need for more sites in each country. This could be achieved either through the Government agencies or through non-government institutions such as academic institutions.
 - The need to make the Monitoring personnel aware of the broader picture of how the data would be used, was stressed. The proposed manual for data analysis being prepared by MoC, would help formalize the process of informing the monitoring personnel about how the data would be used. From the site audits so far, it was noted that in some instances the manuals were not available at the sites and in some other cases the monitoring personnel could not use the manuals, since they did not understand English. It was suggested that a brief working instruction in local language could be provided by the NIA's at the monitoring stations.
 - Representative from Iran mentioned that the battery needed for wet deposition monitoring is not available in the country. Representative from Bangladesh mentioned the need for nitrous oxide controller for the AAS and battery for wet only collector. This was noted by the Secretariat.
 - There was a discussion on whether TSP monitoring is relevant and should be continued, and if the network needs to include PM_{2.5} monitoring. Monitoring committee will study the possibility of including PM_{2.5} in the monitoring Network.

Consideration of the Malé Declaration public awareness material (Agenda item 3)

8. Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP, presented the comments from the stakeholders cum coordination meeting on the Malé Declaration public awareness material, Youth for Clean Air, compiled by SAYEN. The comments include:

Content

- The number of deaths attributed to air pollution in Pakistan mentioned in the page 23 of the draft publication is debatable. The box on page 23 will be replaced to mention that air pollution is one of the contributing factors to mortality in different countries at the global or regional level.
- Presently forest fire is mentioned as part of the land use. Other issues related to forestry sector could be highlighted. Specially, ground fires in Himalaya should be included.
- In page 40 of the publication, only major Acts and Policies have been mentioned, it is necessary to mention initiatives by private sector, civil society, and NGOs.
- Government efforts in Bangladesh and in Nepal, mentioned in the draft, need to be revised.
- South Asia's efforts on the implementation of Kyoto should also be included

Process:

- It was suggested that Iran youth could be involved in the preparation of the Malé Declaration awareness material for youths.
 - The document could also be made available in local languages.
 - Existing networks on awareness among youth could be involved in the dissemination process.
9. The Session endorsed the Malé Declaration public awareness material (Malé Declaration/IG9/3) with the above changes. SAYEN will incorporate these changes and send the updated version to the Secretariat for circulating among the NIA's for final comments, if any.
10. The chair, Mr. Rajamani, concluded the discussions on this agenda item by suggesting that major journalists as also audio visual media person from participating countries be briefed about the Malé Declaration and its activities. It was also suggested to establish a network for knowledge sharing at the regional level.

Review of draft documents for decision support information for policy formulation and air pollution prevention (Agenda item 4)

11. Prof. Ram Shrestha, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, presented a draft report "Compendium of best practices on Prevention and Control of Air Pollution" which has been prepared based on the request of the eighth Session of the Intergovernmental meeting (Malé Declaration/IG 9/4). He gave a broad outline about the issues faced by South Asia, approaches for mitigating air pollution and examples of these approaches.
12. The session was invited to provide comments on the draft compendium. Major discussions included the following:
- Regarding the projections quoted in the report on India, the following suggestions were made:
 - To take into account the introduction of new technologies in power plants and other large point sources, such as the low NOx burner
 - The study on the introduction of CNG vehicles in Delhi by CSE was based on results from a single kerb side station, and results from other stations were not

considered.

- It was commented that one of the main problems in South Asia was due to the fact that the polluters were not penalized.
13. Participants were requested to go through the draft report “Compendium of best practices on Prevention and Control of Air Pollution” and provide their inputs by November 15.
 14. The Session endorsed, in principle, the draft Report and instructed the Secretariat to incorporate the comments from the countries, if any, to the extent possible and publish it.

Considering the proposal for implementing Phase IV of the Malé Declaration (Agenda item 5)

15. When this agenda item was taken up Ms. Sara Stenhammar, Sida informed the meeting about the on-going changes regarding development cooperation in Sweden and in Sida. She mentioned that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not increased the budget for Sida as was anticipated. This might endanger Sida’s continued financial support to the Malé Declaration. If resources would be available, Sida’s priorities would be: poverty reduction and climate change.
16. While regional member countries could continue in the effort to argue financial resources for the programme, it was felt that the continuing support of Sida would be important at this stage when the data flow has started and some capacity have been build up and impacts and responses have been taken up. Continuation of the programme is well within the priorities of the Swedish ministry as it is also linked to global warming and air pollution, when it occurs, impacts the poor people more. In view of this, the meeting requested the Malé Declaration Secretariat at UNEP to communicate to the Minister of Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden the need for the continuation of Sida funding for the implementation of the Malé Declaration in Phase 4.
17. Dr. Arvind Boaz, DG of SACEP wanted the partnership role of SACEP in the Malé Declaration process to be strengthened. As SACEP GC has approved the Malé Declaration, SACEP should work closely with UNEP. SACEP should play greater coordination role unlike SAARC. SACEP should thus play a greater coordinating role with UNEP as the facilitator. The regional facilitator pointed out that this has been mentioned by the DG during the inaugural session also. The Minister for Environment, Energy and Water, Government of Maldives, who had spoken after the DG had expressed the satisfaction with the present arrangement. Some participants said that this matter need not be discussed in this meeting, having already been reviewed and discussed in the IG meeting in Bhutan.
18. The draft proposal for implementing Phase IV of the Malé Declaration_(Malé Declaration/IG 9/5) was presented by Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP. He gave a brief of the history of the Malé Declaration and mentioned that the proposal has been developed based on a series of consultations with the participating countries, culminating in a final consultation at an Exchange programme with the Project Managers of the Malé Declaration. Phase IV activities include 3 key components: (i) continuation of the capacity building activities initiated thus

far; (ii) conduct an assessment of the impact of air pollution; and (iii) policy developments for control and prevention. The Session was invited to discuss the proposal. Major discussions included:

- Facilitation of technology transfer should be a priority.
- It was suggested that training and education for journalists and radio broadcasters should be incorporated in the proposal.
- There was a query on how new areas like indoor air pollution studies could be taken up with limited resources. It was agreed that the ongoing activities will receive priority in relocation of limited resources.
- It was suggested to focus on key question: “Are we winning the battle against air pollution?” It was agreed that this question may be put forward to the proposed Task Force that would study the future of the Malé Declaration.

19. The Session adopted the proposal, with the comments received during the discussions, and requested the Secretariat to use the proposal for the resource mobilization.

Review of work programme in 2008 (Agenda item 6)

20. The draft Work Programme in 2008 for Malé Declaration (Malé Declaration/IG 9/6) was presented by Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP. The Session was invited to discuss the work programme. Major discussions included:
- The meeting suggested that in the next 2 years more focus might be given to air pollution prevention
 - It was agreed that the Secretariat will develop a calendar of events under the Malé Declaration and share with the NFPs and NIAs.

21. The Session adopted the document.

Closing of the Session

22. His Excellency Mr. Abdullahi Majeed, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Environment and Water (MEEW) of Maldives gave his concluding remarks, thanking all the participants. He stressed the need for collective action to tackle air pollution issues.
23. Dr. Arvind Boaz of SACEP during his closing remarks thanked the Government of Maldives, the Regional Facilitator and participants for the success of this meeting.
24. Dr. Johan Kuylenskierna of SEI mentioned that it was the best network meeting that he had attended, and felt that the scientific understanding had improved, as well as the commitment by the countries.
25. Mr. Mylvakanam Iyngararasan, UNEP during his closing remarks noted the improvement made in monitoring and the wide range of stakeholders. He thanked the Government of Maldives for their support for holding this meeting.

26. The Chair, Mr. R. Rajamani noted that this had been a very significant meeting. He closed the Session, thanking each and every one for making this meeting a success.