



SUN Photo — Eerty Mendis

Dr. Leslie Herath, director of SACEP handing over the report of the proceedings of the SACEP Governing Council sessions to Prime Minister R. Premadasa at his office in Flower Road. Others in the picture are Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform of Afghanistan Abdul Ghafar Lakhnawai and Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Bangladesh, Obaidullah Khna.

The delegates of the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme met the Prime Minister and discussed the details of the conference, following the handing over of the report.

Sun

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DOWN TO EARTH

The Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is meeting in Colombo at a very crucial time for South Asia the home of most of the poor people in the world.

The persistent economic crises that seem to deteriorate almost with every dawn continues to plague their threadbare coffers. Compounding the socio-economic confusions that inevitably ensue are the diversified environmental hazards.

Lamentably for a long time these countries in South Asia just like most other Third World nations have continued to either overlook these impediments or remained hopelessly complacent about the imminent dangers arising from them.

The so-called 'down to earth' action now being initiated by SACEP is most welcome and a meaningful step in the right direction.

The grand design now being spelt out by SACEP will guarantee a better tomorrow for the millions who live in this part of Asia. It will indeed save them from falling into a pit with their eyes wide open, (that is a common-sense warning from our own Trade Minister).

In fact, this fledgling organisation has already achieved stupendous success particularly in motivating decision makers in South Asia to commit themselves for realistic programmes of action.

On Friday, Minister Gamini Dissanayake made a laudable proposition, to have a special year of the trees and the participating nations resolved unanimously to accept it.

Dr. Leslie Herath, the dynamic director of SACEP, has been quite outspoken about the objectives of his organisation. With an almost missionary zeal he underscored the futility and the counterproductivity of the loads of reports that normally follow conferences. Governments are sick and tired of these things and are looking desperately for action, is what he also stressed. How right he is.

The participants in the Colombo parley are obviously determined to ensure that a new environment-oriented green revolution will soon be launched. The plans chalked out should see the light of day without any delay. It is already too late.

The projects dealing with re-cycling of waste are most vital for this region as they have all the potential of not only providing new sources of raw material in the all important development programmes but also in saving valuable foreign exchange.

Recycling of waste in helping the industrialised west to have sustainable societies in their countries. For instance, Munich, a model city in this respect, derives over twelve per cent of its electricity from recycled garbage. If that is not a 'down to earth' system what is?