

**APN Networking & Capacity Building Workshop
(APN 2000-NC02)**

Project Leader:

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APN Funding

US \$32,050

Participating countries

Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Introduction/Background

The APN sponsored workshop on Networking and Capacity Building in Global Change Research for South Asian countries was held in Islamabad, Pakistan on 20-22 November 2000. The workshop was organized in pursuance of the decision of the APN 5th Inter-Governmental Meeting (IGM) held in Islamabad on 29-30 March 2000 to strengthen networking and capacity building in selected countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia that had not effectively participated in APN activities so far. Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were identified as the countries to participate in the workshop.

A total of 44 persons participated in the workshop. This included 11 resource persons from international organizations and within the region, 5 from Bangladesh, 5 from Nepal, 4 from Sri Lanka, and 19 from Pakistan.

Outline of activities conducted

Inaugural Session

The inaugural session started with a welcome address by Dr. Amir Muhammad, Chairman SASCOM and project leader of the workshop. He emphasized the deteriorating environmental conditions in Pakistan and the urgent need for research in global change aspects in the South Asia region. He stated that the main purpose of the workshop was to promote networking between the research scientists interested in global change (GC) research in various countries of South Asia and to strengthen capacity for GC research with the objective of enabling research scientists from the target countries to participate effectively in APN activities especially the annual competitive grants for GC research.

Dr. Gerhard Breulmann, Programme Manager, APN Secretariat, described the set-up of the APN and its various activities especially the networking and capacity building programme that was financially supported by the Environment Agency of Japan. Dr. Hassan Virji, Deputy Director, International START Secretariat, outlined START and its main on-going activities; and Dr. Wendy Broadgate, Deputy Director, International Geosphere Biosphere Program (IGBP), briefly described the mission of IGBP and its core projects.

The workshop was inaugurated by His Excellency Mr. Omar Asghar Khan, Minister for Environment and Rural Development, Government of Pakistan, who applauded the initiative to hold this workshop within a short period after the decision was taken at the

IGM. He expressed full support of plans for capacity building in global change research in the region, especially in Pakistan.

International Perspective

Papers presented in the technical session dealing with international programs in global change research included the following:

- Research program of BAHC - Dr. Holger Hoff, Executive Director, BAHC;
- GHG Emissions and Climate Change Perspective for South Asia - Dr. Taufiq Siddiqi, President GEE-21;
- On-going Activities and Future Plans of SASCOM - Dr. Amir Muhammad, Chairman, SASCOM;
- Activity Report of the South Asian START Centre, New Delhi - Dr. Sumana Bhattacharya, APN Liaison Officer, SASCOM; and
- Funding Opportunities for Global Change Research Projects - Dr. Gerhard Breulmann, APN, and Dr. Hassan Virji, START.

National Priorities for Research and Capacity Building

Leading experts from the participating countries of the region presented the national perspective regarding on-going research on global change issues and the national priorities for research on different subjects dealing with global change. The following presentations were made:

- Current Status and Future Priorities of Global Change Research in Bangladesh Including Flood and Draught Aspects - Dr. A. M. Choudhry, Chairman SPARRSO and SASCOM Member, Bangladesh;
- Global Change Research Activities in Nepal - an Overview - Dr. K .L Shrestha, SASCOM Member, Nepal;
- National Priorities for Global Change Research and Capacity Building Needs in Pakistan - Dr. Asif Shuja Khan DG, Environment Protection Agency, Pakistan; and
- Global Change Research in Sri Lanka - Current Status and Future Priorities - Dr. J. Ratnasiri, SASCOM Member, Sri Lanka.

Outcomes/Products

National Priorities

The national priorities were discussed extensively in the discussion on national and regional priorities for global change research. It was agreed that agriculture and water related issues were of highest priority for the region in the context of global change. The economy of all the countries of the region is intimately linked to agriculture production which in turn is dependent on availability of irrigation supplies in most parts of the region. The group therefore decided that while other aspects of global change are also very

important, this workshop should concentrate on the highest priority issues dealing with agriculture and water.

Breakout Groups

The participants divided into two groups to deal with issues related to agriculture and water. The breakout groups had in-depth discussions about the impact of global change on various aspects of agriculture and water sectors. After extended discussions, the groups prepared priority lists of research topics in these two main areas. The groups also discussed measures for strengthening networking and capacity building in future and prepared a list of such measures for considerations in the plenary session.

Future directions/Follow-up work

Various recommendations made at this workshop include:

- 1) To facilitate development of research projects for submission in the APN Project Cycle, scientists from the participating countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) may be supported through the organization of scoping workshops on promising research projects developed by scientists of these countries. The scoping workshops may be organized by April 2001 so that revised projects are submitted to APN by the September 2001 deadline.
- 2) Closer liaison between the APN Focal point and SASCOM member in the country so that they can collaborate in promoting the common objectives of APN and START within the country.
- 3) Each country may designate a relevant research group in an existing institution as the “National Global Change Research Centre/Cell” in order to provide a focus to the national activities in global change research.
- 4) In order to improve capacity in the region, a web based DIS system needs to be introduced which will contain:
 - A reference list of recently published papers on related issues;
 - Information on upcoming events;
 - Links to international project offices of IGBP, BAHC, IHDP, START, APN, etc.;
 - A meta data directory of related data bases available in the region with links to original source; and
 - Eventually data might be formatted on GIS platform.
- 5) Curricula at school and university level do not include much information about global change. Besides developing curriculum content for inclusion at various levels, attempts may be made to have at least one university in each of the countries impart post-graduate education in global change aspects.

The successful outcomes of the Capacity Building and Networking Workshops held in Sri Lanka and now in Pakistan, where a large number of scientists working within the respective countries on GC issues have participated, indicate that such meetings greatly stimulate research activity in GC in the respective countries. It is therefore suggested that APN provide financial support in future for organizing such workshops at the national scale, in the region, where all scientists working on GC projects, in different disciplines, present their work besides invited lectures from leading international organizations.

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