

# Energy & Environmental Security

## A Cooperative Approach in South Asia



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A COSATT Project by IPCS&KAS

### I BACKGROUND

Notwithstanding high expectations or aspirations, the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has completed the first quarter century of its existence in remarkably good shape. It has expanded to eight countries, accepted observers from around the world and in spite of the rise of global terrorism or the sudden collapse of the international financial system, have emerged with credible growth patterns. Democracy is a reality across the region. The SAFTA is a reality and South Asian cooperation in a number of critical areas of counter terrorism, trade and connectivity are proceeding well. However, two impending and related concerns of energy availability and environmental impact of climate change are posing major challenges.

#### Cooperation in Clean Energy

All countries of South Asia are deficient of energy and per capita availability is among the lowest in the world. Most of the available supply is based on fossil fuels and expendable sources even though the potential of renewable sources are very high. What restricts its exploitation is lack of cooperation and a shared approach across the region. Be it river waters with their hydroelectric potential, wind energy or solar energy, there have been little cooperative approach in the region to develop their true potential in SAARC. Newer sources of energy peculiar to the region also hold out some promise. These may be from oceanic tides, wind energy farms in the oceans, exploiting natural plant growths and others may be some possibilities. Before any of these ideas can be practicalised, it is necessary to develop consensus, carry out studies, engage scholars and experts and develop a greater understanding of national and regional requirements.

#### Environmental Security

While exploring the possibilities of energy self-sufficiency, there needs to

### PROJECT DESIGN

Phase 1 was a Planning Conference of heads of collaborating think tanks held in Kathmandu, Nepal during January 2011.

The meeting deliberated over the issues concerned, and identified the framework of the entire study.

Phase 2 will be a conference held with prepared papers in the middle of 2011. These papers will then be subject to discussion and peer review.

Phase 3 will be the release of the study shortly before the next SAARC summit at an appropriate capital of the region



The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) is an independent think tank committed to research on peace and security in the region. The Institute conducts independent research on conventional and non-conventional security issues in the region and shares its findings with policy makers and the public.

It provides a forum for discussion with the strategic community on strategic issues and strives to explore alternatives. Moreover, it works towards building capacity among young scholars for greater refinement of their analyses of South Asian security.



The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany that seeks to employ political education to promote peace, freedom, and justice at the national and international level.

Spread across 120 countries, the main concerns of the foundation include consolidating democracy, promoting the unification of Europe, intensifying transatlantic relations, and development-policy cooperation.

With its newly established SAARC Regional Program, the foundation puts special emphasis on transnational questions and integration in South Asia.

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evolve a regional approach at environmental security. Unless this is achieved, independent national endeavours may well lead to adverse impact on the environment cutting across borders. These in turn will not only impede the utilization of resources, but will also seriously impede development on a sustainable basis. Indeed, energy availability and environmental security can no longer be separated and taken out of a regional context. Besides, the global discussion on global warming and energy supply is confronting the region today with many challenges that need a cohesive regional approach

### II

#### PROJECT DESIGN

**Phase 1** was completed in January 2011, with a Planning Conference of Heads of collaborating think tanks to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal in January 2011. The meeting deliberated over the issues concerned, and identified the framework of the entire study and then lay out the research questions for each topic. It will also identify the specific topics to be addressed from the perspective of each member state.

**Phase 2** will commence with preparation of country papers, to be presented at another conference held during the middle of 2011. These papers will then be subject to discussion and peer review. Subsequently, these will be published as a COSATT study and forwarded to all members at an appropriate level.

**Phase 3** will be the release of the study shortly before the next SAARC summit at an appropriate capital of the region.

### III

#### PLANNING CONFERENCE, KATHMANDU

During the conference, there was a discussion from different countries of the region.

#### Perspectives from Bangladesh

- Common problems need common solutions
- Cooperation among the countries of the region can help to ensure the human security in the region by mitigating the energy and environmental problems

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- Improved relations among the countries of the region
- Regional peace and security

## Perspectives from Bhutan

- Bhutan's hydropower potential highly vulnerable to global challenge of climate change i.e. its fate is not completely in its own hands
- High dependence on one source i.e. hydropower for electricity generation & for national revenue
- Plugging electricity demand-supply gap during lean periods
- Dependence on petroleum imports from India
- Little choice of other energy sources (other renewable sources such as biomass, solar & wind not as economically feasible/attractive)
- Bhutan's hydropower potential presents opportunity for regional cooperation in clean energy, but arrangement currently with India only
- With the 10,000 MW plan underway, Bhutan not able to commit to anymore hydropower development arrangements with others for some time
- Constraints to exploring full hydropower potential: technical, environmental, financial factors



Delegates from Bangladesh



Delegate from Bhutan

## Perspectives from India

Key issues of potential cooperation are:

- Integrated water resources management
- Ecosystem approach to management of land, water and forest resources
- Management of biodiversity
- Sharing of traditional knowledge
- Organic farming practices
- Cooperation in adaptation including in technology



Delegate from India

- Management of risks and disasters (important particularly for smaller countries)

**Existing Mechanisms which can be expanded are:**

- South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) 1982
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) 1983
- SAARC 1985
- Meteorology Research Centre in Dhaka
- Coastal Zone Management Centre in Male
- Disaster Management Centre in Dhaka
- Forestry Centre in Thimphu



Delegate from Nepal

**Perspectives from Nepal**

- Biogas, solar and micro-hydro power accounts for mere 0.61 percent at the national level
- Renewable energy is neither a commercial nor a fully monetised energy source
  - No incentive from the govt.
  - A dire need to reform the whole system of oil supply



Delegate from Sri Lanka

**Perspectives from Sri Lanka**

- Diversify the energy mix. Concentrate more on renewable energy resources
- Increase energy Efficiency and Conservation
- Educate the public to save energy – change of life styles
- Construction of energy saving and environment friendly buildings
- Have good urban planning in order to reduce congestion

**Regional Electricity Grid and Regional Energy Trade**

- National Grids should be more integrated. The idea of establishing a regional Electricity Grid should be promoted

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2010 model must be formulated, based on the discussions in the conference.

Individual reports on country perspectives from all the SAARC member country representatives to COSATT forum, in the form of essays defining the policies of their respective governments on the issue under discussion.

- The individual reports from the countries will focus on the following:
  1. Focus of the country perspectives this year will be on what constitutes **E n e r g y a n d Environmental Security**. For other alternative perspectives, COSATT must come up with a list of suggested broad topics.
  2. A Long View: Given the growing population and expanding needs, what is required?
  3. A critique of individual governments' efforts to meet Energy and Environmental Security in the region and recommendations and conclusions.
  4. Recommendations for the sustainability and continuity of COSATT projects of past and future must also be borne in mind while arriving at these recommendations.
- Besides the country reports, it is also agree to have certain special essays on the following subjects:
  1. Regional Electricity Grid
  2. Gas Lanes
  3. Studying and Preparing for Climate Change
  4. Regional Disaster Management



**The COSATT delegation in front of the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu**

III

**KATHMANDU DIALOGUE, COSATT 2011**

**MAJOR OUTPUTS**

The COSATT agreed to the following in Kathmandu:

- A road map for the future was chalked out during the COSATT conference on “Energy and Environmental Security: A Cooperative Approach in South Asia,” held on 22-23 January 2011.
  - A consolidated recommendation report of about 8-12 pages on the 2010 model must be formulated, based on the discussions in the conference.
  - Individual reports on country perspectives from all the SAARC member country representatives to COSATT forum, in the form of essays defining the policies of their respective governments on the issue under discussion.
- The individual reports from the countries will focus on the following:
  1. Focus of the country perspectives this year will be on what constitutes Energy and Environmental Security. For other alternative perspectives, COSATT must come up with a list of suggested broad topics.
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**The COSATT delegation presenting its publications to the SAARC Secretariat Library, Kathmandu**

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2. Gas Lanes
3. Studying and Preparing for Climate Change
4. Regional Disaster Management
5. Alternative Energy Sources
6. Nuclear Energy for the Region
7. Water Management



**The COSATT Delegation in Kathmandu, January 2011**

- It has been agreed to have the essays highlighting country perspectives and special issues submitted, latest by June 2011. These draft essays will be discussed in a conference, following which final set of recommendations will be drawn up.
- The above recommendations will be released in November 2011 on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit in Male, Maldives
- Between January and March 2012, a full report and a book will be released after compiling the papers presented in the capitals of all the SAARC countries.

#### **IV COSATT: A ROAD MAP**

Besides 2011 initiative, there was also a discussion on the future of the COSATT.

- A website for COSATT along with a unique logo must be set up at the earliest to give COSATT more visibility and keeping member countries in loop of latest developments. This should contain a short note on the members,



The COSATT partner from the KAS

meetings and publications so far, three to six Policy Briefs or Recommendations of about 3000 Words each to the SAARC on subjects relating to the current and previous COSATT projects and short commentaries of about 1000 Words.

- At least two meetings of COSATT must be organised on rotation basis in each of the member countries on issues of current focus. COSATT could hold government and media briefings during these meetings.
- South Asian parliaments must be given the policy papers after being translated in the local language.
- A plan for further capacity building for COSATT to make it a stronger organisation was also discussed.
- COSATT must identify young scholars from the SAARC countries, encouraging them to take part in country meetings during publication releases and write short commentaries for the website along with the relevant background papers. COSATT could invite them in a series to some of the COSATT regional meetings.
- In addition, it was decided that the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung will be organising a visit to EU secretariat in Brussels, Germany between 2 – 10 July 2011 along the sidelines of the South Asia Conference by KAS.
- COSATT could explore getting the membership of SAARC as a recognised or apex body status which will enable COSATT to use the SAARC logo on all publications. Logistical details of this were discussed and it was decided to get COSATT registered in India as for seeking SAARC recognition, membership of all member countries and registration of COSATT in at least one country is mandatory.