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Plastic Free Rivers and Seas: A Vision for South Asia

Regional Roundtable Meeting

Cinnamon Life City of Dreams Hotel

Colombo, Sri Lanka

7 - 8 April 2025

All times given in Sri Lanka Standard Time SLST [= UTC+05:30]

Time (SLST)	Day 1: Monday, 7 April 2025
09:30 – 11:00	<p>Lighting of traditional oil lamp</p> <p>Welcome speech by Norbu Wangchuk, Director General, SACEP</p> <p>Welcome speech by K R Uduwawala, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka</p> <p>Opening speech by Cecile Fruman, Director, Regional Integration and Engagement in South Asia, World Bank, and Acting-Country Director, Bhutan</p> <p>Speech by Charles Callanan, Director, South Asia Multi-Country Office, UNOPS</p> <p>Address by Hon. Anton Jayakodi, Deputy Minister of Environment, Sri Lanka</p> <p><i>Group Photograph of all participants</i></p>
11:00 – 11:30	Tea/Coffee/Networking
11:30 - 12:30	<p>Thematic Panel 1 Policy and regulatory challenges of managing plastic waste: South Asian experiences</p> <p>Panellists: High-Level Government representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have been invited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farhina Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh ● Sachin Limbu, Chief Environment Officer, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Bhutan ● Pravir Pandey, Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India ● Hon. Ahmed Nizam, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Maldives

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Time (SLST)	Day 1: Monday, 7 April 2025		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shailesh Kumar Jha, Joint Secretary, Department of Environment, Ministry of Forests & Environment, Nepal Hon. Shezra Mansab Ali Kharal, Minister of State, Ministry of Climate Change & Environment Coordination, Pakistan R. H. M. P. Abeykoon, Additional Secretary (Environment Policy & Planning), Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka <p>Moderator: Nalaka Gunawardene</p>		
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break		
14:00 - 15:30 Parallel mini-workshops	Mini workshop 1 Alternatives for Single-Use Plastics in South Asia Exploring trajectories of SUP ban policies and regulations in the South Asia Region; understanding the challenges and bottlenecks involved; and what viable choices are available to both consumers and manufacturers. Facilitator: Jane Gilbert , Carbon Clarity, UK <i>[Via Virtual]</i> Co- facilitators: Nina Tsydenova , World Bank Group & Prakriti Kashyap , Plastics Expert, PLEASE Project	Mini workshop 2 Plastic Disclosure Data: Experiences in plastic data collection, plastic flow analysis, as well as riverine and marine litter monitoring in South Asia and beyond. Facilitator: Shantanu Srivastava , ThinkThrough Consulting (TTC), India	Mini workshop 3 Plastic Recycling: making sense of many ways to process, finance, and export recycled plastics There are many ways to process plastic, and many export standards. Trying to make sense of recycling standards, guidance and certifications. Facilitator: Thierry Sanders , Founder – KOLEKT, The Netherlands
15:30 – 16:00	Tea/Coffee/Networking		
16:00 - 17:30	Thematic Panel 2 Seas of Plastic: Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) is a growing concern due to environmental and economic impacts. This panel will		

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	<p>explore challenges of assessing the extent of the ALDFG problem and tackling it. The discussion will draw on the key findings of 2023 World Bank study <i>Tangled Seas: A Snapshot of Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear in South Asia</i>.</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Gayathri Lokuge, Team Leader - Livelihood and Employment, Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Sri Lanka • Dr Gawsia Wahidunnessa Chowdhury, Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; researcher on marine plastic pollution • Dr Janaka de Silva, Independent Consultant, Fisheries biologist specializing in marine and coastal issues, Sri Lanka <p>Moderator: Zofeen T Ebrahim</p> <p><i>Panel conversation will be followed by a moderated Q&A with the audience</i></p>
17:30	End of sessions for Day 1
19:00 - 21:00	<p>Welcome dinner reception</p> <p>Hosted by the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)</p>

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Time (SLST)	Day 2: Tuesday, 8 April 2025
09:00 - 11:00	<p>Lightning Talks Session: PLEASE Community Sharing</p> <p>The PLEASE Project has been supporting 28 grantee organizations in the 6 eligible South Asian countries. Companies, civil society organizations and research groups active in the waste management sector have competitively won regional block grants (RBGs) or innovation grants (IGs) supporting specific work related to plastic circularity. In this session, the grantee organizations share highlights of their project accomplishments. More information and images will be on display throughout the 2-day event at their booths at the meeting venue.</p> <p>Presentations to be made in country alphabetical order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh: 2 RBGs & 3 IGs (total of 5 grantees) • Bhutan: 2 RBGs & 3 IGs (total of 5 grantees) • Maldives: 2 RBGs & 2 IGs (total of 4 grantees) • Nepal: 2 RBGs & 3 IGs (total of 5 grantees) • Pakistan: 2 RBGs & 2 IGs (total of 4 grantees) • Sri Lanka: 2 RBGs & 3 IGs (total of 5 grantees) <p><i>Each grantee gets 3 minutes of talk time. Transparent countdown to be provided.</i></p> <p>Joint Moderators: Zofeen T Ebrahim & Nalaka Gunawardene</p>
11:00 - 12:00	<p>Thematic Panel 3</p> <p>Market-based solutions for plastic waste: In this session, we focus on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and plastic credits and ask key questions: What are the best practices and cautions South Asia can learn from other regions? How can South Asian countries effectively develop their own plastic waste markets while positioning themselves to tap into global opportunities?</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athalie Reyes, EPR & Consulting Manager, PCX Solutions • Kartik Kapoor, Waste & Resource management professional, India • Komal Sinha, Senior Director of Government & Policy Engagement, Verra • Richa Malik, Senior Project Manager, Dalberg Advisors • Thierry Sanders, Founder, KOLEKT <p>Moderator: Nalaka Gunawardene</p>

Soft drinks will be served at tables during this session. Tea and coffee will be available in the foyer.

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Time (SLST)	Day 2: Tuesday, 8 April 2025		
	Panel conversation will be followed by a moderated Q&A with the audience		
12:00 - 13:00	<p>Thematic Panel 4</p> <p>Fostering greater regional collaboration to tackle plastic pollution: Challenges, and opportunities for cross-border collaborations and partnerships in South Asia to be discussed from the perspectives of different stakeholders.</p> <p>How can countries learn from each other's experiences?</p> <p>What peer-to-peer learning and sharing is possible?</p> <p>Can South Asians do more collectively than at individual country level?</p> <p>How best to facilitate this process?</p> <p>Panellists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shahadat Hossain, Professor, Department of Marine Sciences, University of Chattogram, Bangladesh • Karma Yonten, Co-founder Greenerways, Bhutan • Shantanu Srivastava, ThinkThrough Consulting (TTC), India • Hafsath Aleem, Clean Maldives, Maldives • Anjana Singh, Professor, Former Head, Central Department of Microbiology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal • Zillay Mariam, Founder and CEO, ISP, Pakistan • Chaminda Rajapakse, Project Director, Island Climate Initiative (ICI), Sri Lanka <p>Moderator: Zofeen T Ebrahim</p> <p>Panel conversation will be followed by a moderated Q&A with the audience</p>		
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break		
14:00 - 15:30 Parallel mini-workshops	<p>Mini workshop 4</p> <p>Working with the International Finance Corporation (IFC): IFC is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets, and a member of the World Bank Group.</p> <p>Facilitator: Ajeya Bandopadhyay South Asia Lead - Climate Change, IFC India</p>	<p>Mini workshop 5</p> <p>Value chain of recycling fishing nets: Sharing and discussing the findings of World Bank led case study in Bangladesh [published in 2024]</p> <p>Facilitator: Gawsia Wahidunnessa Chowdhury, Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh</p>	<p>Mini workshop 6</p> <p>Development of High Functioning EPR Schemes—Focusing on Accountability Systems. [While panel 4 explores the same topic in general, this workshop will go deeper into some technical details.]</p> <p>Co-facilitators: Komal Sinha, Senior Director of Government & Policy Engagement, Verra; Kartik S Kapoor, Waste & Resource management professional, India</p>

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Time (SLST)	Day 2: Tuesday, 8 April 2025
15:30 – 16:00	Tea/Coffee/Networking
16:00 - 16:30	<p>Special Event: Meet South Asian Youth Innovators! Top 3 winners of the PLEASE Hackathon – held on April 6 - will present their innovative solutions to tackle plastic pollution in rivers and seas. <i>Each winner gets 5 mins to summarize their innovation.</i></p> <p>Moderated Q&A engagement with the audience (10 - 15 mins) <u>Joint Moderators:</u> Zofeen T Ebrahim & Nalaka Gunawardene</p>
16:30 – 17:45	<p>Thematic Panel 5 Beyond PLEASE: Sustaining Momentum As the 5-year PLEASE Project nears its end, how can grantees and other partners across South Asia sustain the momentum to tackle plastic waste management and promote plastic circular economy? What are grantees' plans to make their interventions more sustainable financially and institutionally? A few PLEASE grantees representing the diversity of countries and grant categories share their thoughts.</p> <p><u>Panellists:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imamul Azam Shahi, Head of Programme, Urban development, BRAC, Bangladesh • Ugyen Yeshe Dorji, Project Implementor, Bhutan Ecological Society, Bhutan • Dr Mizna Mohamed, Director Science and Innovation, SIGS, The Maldives • Pankaj Panjiyar, CEO, Doko Recyclers, Nepal • Salman Tariq, Co-Founder and CEO, Davaam, Pakistan • Buddhika Batheegaman, Project Manager, Ecocycle Lanka (Pvt) Limited, Sri Lanka <p><u>Moderator:</u> Nalaka Gunawardene <i>Panel conversation will be followed by a moderated Q&A with the audience</i></p>
17:45 – 18:00	<p>Closing remarks By Priyankari Alexander, Programme Officer, SACEP</p>
18:00	End of Regional Roundtable