



**SMALL STATES
CONFERENCE ON
SEA LEVEL RISE**
MALE', 14 - 18 NOVEMBER 1989

Statement delivered

by

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at the

Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise

Male', Republic of Maldives

14 - 18 November 1989

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a privilege and an honour for me to be representing SAARC, the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, at this important conference being held amidst these beautiful surroundings in the Maldives. SAARC feels particularly happy in participating in this conference inasmuch as its theme is highly relevant to an exercise we in SAARC are presently engaged in - that of a study of the problems relating to the protection and preservation of the environment.

At the Third SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu, Nepal in November 1987, the SAARC leaders had expressed their deep concern at the fast and continuing degradation of the environment in the South Asian Region and over the danger posed by the global sea level rise and its effect on South Asian countries. They also decided to commission a study for the protection and preservation of the environment and on the causes and consequences of natural disasters in a well-planned comprehensive manner.

Accordingly, a group of coordinators constituted by the SAARC Secretary General has finalized a format for the study. The Group has noted and I quote "the causes of Greenhouse effect are global in nature and are predominantly due to the activities in the developed countries. The resultant global warming could have an impact on several vital areas such as agriculture including fisheries and sea level rise in member countries. Response strategies would have to promote reduction of global warming as

well as meet the consequences of global warming as it occurs" unquote.

The threat of global rise in sea levels and its serious implications for the international community particularly the small island states has engaged world wide attention in recent years. In this process, His Excellency Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives has played an important role. SAARC is happy to see that one of its member states, the Maldives has taken the initiative in calling for the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise. The grave and understandable concern of the Maldives in this matter is now shared by many countries around the globe, particularly the small island states. Mr. Chairman, I am convinced that this Conference will go a long way in highlighting the serious problems and grave dangers the small states will have to face due to sea level rise. Time has come for a concerted effort at international level to face the threat. I hope this Conference will come up with specific measures and recommendations for initiating timely actions in this regard.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to convey the greetings and best wishes of Secretary General K K Bhargava for the success of this Conference.

Thank you.