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South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics (SANDEE)

The SANDEE regional network, based at ICIMOD, aims to strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions to undertake research on the interlinkages of economic development, poverty, and environmental change and to disseminate practical information for development policies.

In 2011, SANDEE supported research on climate change, biodiversity conservation, and policy analysis. In particular, we launched three cross-country studies on climate and migration in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. We seek to understand how migration may be an autonomous adaptation strategy and the extent to which the impact of weather on agriculture influences the movement of people.

This research complements on-going projects to understand why farmers in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan burn agricultural residues during wheat and rice harvesting. This burning causes substantial emissions of trace gases and particles that can have adverse health and climate impacts. The study in India examines farmers' adoption of technology that reduces rice residue burning. The findings of these studies can be used to design incentive programmes to help farmers forego burning.

SANDEE's environmental policy research support includes an examination of price subsidies, in particular for non-timber forest product pricing policy in India and renewable energy subsidies in Nepal.

As part of this effort, SANDEE organized a training programme on policy analysis for its senior researchers. The workshop by Professor Nancy Olewiler provided analytical tools that enable economists to think more broadly about the policy process. It was also an opportunity for senior SANDEE researchers to come together and discuss SANDEE's next decade.

In 2011 SANDEE trained about 100 colleagues on a range of issues. An annual three-week course in Environmental and Resource Economics continues to be SANDEE's flagship course, strengthening economics teaching in South Asia and helping to link research with training. To build capacity in regions underserved by teaching and research, SANDEE conducted four training workshops. These included a five-day training programme for northeast Indian researchers in partnership with the OKD Institute of Social Change and Development in Guwahati, a workshop in Shillong on 'Proposal Writing for Environmental Economics', and two research and writing training programmes in Bangladesh.

Cambridge University Press published SANDEE's second book – *Environmental Valuation in South Asia*. It gives an overview of environmental problems in South Asia and examines how economic valuation techniques could be used to assess these problems. Ten working papers and associated policy briefs were published in 2011, in addition to numerous refereed journal articles based on SANDEE research.

As South Asia makes economic strides, it is critical to ensure that measures of growth account for changes in natural assets. The Government of India took an important step in this direction by appointing an expert group to develop a framework for greening India's national accounts. SANDEE's founder, Sir Partha Dasgupta, is chairperson of the group and several SANDEE researchers are members. This initiative provides an opportunity to measure growth while addressing issues of how national accounts can be 'greened', how national data can be collected, what should be valued, and whether empirical estimates of the value of non-market environmental goods and services are accurate. As countries take small steps forward to account for the environment, SANDEE hopes that its future work will be defined by this need.