



United Nations Environment Programme

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة • 联合国环境规划署
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

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Dear Mr. Ramanathan, *dear friend,*

In the spring of 1999, scientists from the Indian Ocean Experiment (INDOEX) discovered a dense brownish pollution haze layer, about the size of the continental United States, over the Indian Ocean. On the basis of these findings and of further discussions with the lead scientists of INDOEX, UNEP commissioned a study on environmental impact.

I am pleased to enclose herewith, the paper which has undergone "peer review" by experts worldwide and which illustrates the potential impact of the haze on the Asian region's climate, water budget and agriculture. It also demonstrates the great need for more scientific understanding of this important environmental issue affecting a large part of the Asian region and possibly beyond.

UNEP has decided to launch a project entitled the Asian Brown Cloud (ABC) in partnership with INDOEX scientists and the Governments of Asia. This project will make further observations, conduct analysis and identify the impacts of the Cloud on the health, agriculture, and water budgets. Various agencies from the United States, Europe and Asia will support the US \$15 million project over a five-year period following a capacity building and participatory approach.

I would like to invite you to participate in the first meeting of the ABC project and the launch of the Impact Study. This meeting will take place in London on 9 August. Surendra Shrestha (surendra@ait.ac.th) will liaise with you directly with regard to documentation and logistical arrangements for the Meeting.

I look forward to receiving your advice on this very important project and to discuss these issues personally with you during the launch of the report.

~~Yours sincerely,~~

Klaus Töpfer
Executive Director

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