



# Declarations of SAARC Summits

1985-1998

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation  
Kathmandu, Nepal

August 2001

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## P R E F A C E

Ten Summits of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have been held since its establishment in 1985 and at time of writing, dates are being finalised for the Eleventh Summit to be held in Kathmandu.

The Summit Declarations of the Heads of State or Government of SAARC remain the paramount policy documents for collective action by Member States of the Association. Each Declaration reflect the political commitment of Member Countries to the promotion of peace, stability, amity and progress in the region, assesses regional and international developments affecting the interests of Member States and reviews progress of SAARC programmes.

Joint Press Releases were also issued at the conclusion of each of the first five Summits but the practice was discontinued from the Sixth Summit onwards.

It is hoped that this compilation of the Declarations would serve as a reference guide to the process of regional cooperation in South Asia.

(Nihal Rodrigo)  
Secretary-General

*SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu  
August 2001*





First SAARC Summit  
Dhaka  
7-8 December 1985





## Dhaka Declaration

*The Dhaka Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 7 December 1995.*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the President of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka met in Dhaka on 7 and 8 December 1985.

2. The Heads of State or Government underscored the historic significance of their first ever South Asian Summit meeting. They considered it to be a tangible manifestation of their determination to cooperate regionally, to work together towards finding solutions towards their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding and to the creation of an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits.

3. They recognized that periodic meetings at their level were central to the promotion of mutual trust, confidence and cooperation among their countries.

4. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed that their fundamental goal was to accelerate the process of economic and social development in their respective countries through the optimum utilization of their human and material resources, so as to promote the welfare and prosperity of their peoples and to improve their quality of life. They were conscious that peace and security was an essential prerequisite for the realization of this objective.

5. The leaders of the South Asian countries reaffirmed their commitment to the UN Charter and the principles governing sovereign equality of States, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs and non-use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of other States. They reiterated that the United Nations constituted the most important forum for the resolution of all issues affecting international peace and security.

6. They also reaffirmed their deep conviction in the continuing validity and relevance of the objectives of the Nonaligned movement as an important force in international relations.

7. The Heads of State or Government acknowledged that the countries of South Asia, who constituted one-fifth of humanity, were faced with the formidable challenges posed by poverty, underdevelopment, low levels of production, unemployment and pressure of population compounded by exploitation of the past and other adverse legacies. They felt that, bound as their countries were by many common values rooted in their social, ethnic, cultural and historical traditions, regional cooperation provided a logical response to these problems. They were conscious of their individual and regional strengths, their potential as a huge market, their substantial human and natural resources and the complementarities of their economies. They were confident that with effective regional cooperation, they could make optimum use of these capacities for the benefit of their peoples, accelerate the pace of their economic development and enhance their national and collective self-reliance. They were convinced that their countries, which had made important contributions to the enrichment of human civilization, could together play their due role in international relations and influence decisions which affected them.

8. The Heads of State or Government emphasised that strengthening of regional cooperation in South Asia required greater involvement of their peoples. They agreed to increase interaction and further promote people-to-people contacts at various levels among their countries. To this end, they decided to take steps to create awareness and public opinion in the region.

9. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the progress already made in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action in the nine mutually agreed areas. They expressed their desire to consolidate and further expand cooperative efforts within an appropriate institutional frame work in a spirit of partnership and equality.

10. The leaders were convinced that they could effectively pursue their individual and collective objectives and improve the quality of life of their peoples only in an atmosphere of peace and security. In this context, they expressed concern at the deteriorating international political situation. They were alarmed at the unprecedented escalation of arms race particularly in its nuclear aspect. They recognized that mankind today was confronted with the threat of self extinction arising from a massive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced. The arms race intensified international tension and violated the principles of the UN Charter. The leaders called upon the nuclear weapons-states for urgent negotiations for a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty leading to the complete cessation of testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons. In this connection, they welcomed the recent meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Geneva and expressed the hope that the meeting would have a positive effect on international peace and security.



11. The Heads of State or Government expressed deep concern at the continuing crises in the global economy. They underscored that deteriorating economic and social conditions had seriously retarded developing countries. Sharply falling commodity prices, deterioration in the terms of trade, intensification of protectionist measures, spiralling debt burden and a decline in the flow of external resources, especially concessional assistance, had caused a serious setback to the economic development of the developing countries. These had been compounded by natural disasters and precarious world food security situation affecting developing countries. They also expressed concern over the diminishing capacity of international financial and technical institutions to respond effectively to the needs of the disadvantaged and poorer countries and regretted that the spirit of multilateral cooperation had begun to falter and weaken. This was particularly disturbing in the face of increased interdependence of developed and developing countries and the fact that economic revival of North was closely linked to economic progress in South. They believed that developments during the past decades had clearly demonstrated the structural imbalances and inequities inherent in the existing international economic system and its inadequacy to deal with problems of development.

12. They strongly urged that determined efforts should be made by the international community towards realization of the goals and targets of the International Development Strategy as well as the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. They called for urgent resumption of the North-South dialogue and early convening of an International Conference on Money and Finance for Development with universal participation.

13. The Heads of State or Government were conscious of the historic importance of the Dhaka Summit and reiterated their conviction that the launching of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which they had established at this meeting, would place regional cooperation on a firm foundation, play an important role in accelerating the pace of economic and social development of their countries, promote the objectives of individual and collective self reliance and further the cause of peace, progress and stability in their region and the world.

14. The Heads of State or Government of Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were deeply appreciative of the exemplary Chairmanship of their Meeting by the President of Bangladesh. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of Bangladesh and for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting.



## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

*(issued at the conclusion of the First SAARC Summit in Dhaka on 8 December 1985)*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the President of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka met in Dhaka on 7 and 8 December, 1985.

2. The Heads of State or Government signed a Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation on the 8th of December, 1985. They also adopted the Dhaka Declaration.

3. They approved that the Standing Committee should set up a Study Group to examine the problem of terrorism as it affects the security and stability of Member States of SAARC. They further directed the Council of Ministers to consider the report of this Study Group and submit recommendations to them as to how best the Member States could cooperate among themselves to solve this.

4. They also approved that a similar exercise be carried out with regard to the problem of drug trafficking and abuse.

5. They decided that the Member Governments should concert their views on the ongoing discussions on New International Economic Order and the improvement of the World Trading System through GATT taking particularly into account the interest of the least developed among the developing countries. For this purpose it was decided to convene a Ministerial level meeting. The Standing Committee should convene a meeting to prepare for it. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the President of Pakistan to host both these meetings.

6. The Heads of State or Government emphasized that women should increasingly participate in activities at the regional level within the framework of SAARC and that Programmes and Projects should be devised to ensure their active participation in the development process. They therefore directed the Standing Committee to convene a Ministerial Level Conference on the subject to identify the areas of activities and plan a Programme of Action. They gratefully accepted the offer of the Prime Minister of India to host such a conference.

7. The Heads of State or Government who have decided that the Association shall have a Secretariat directed the Foreign Ministers to consider details regarding its location, structure, functions and financing and submit those for the consideration of Heads of State or Government.

8. The Heads of State or Government decided to hold their next meeting in November, 1986. They gratefully accepted the offer of the Prime Minister of India to host that meeting. They also gratefully accepted the offer of the King of Bhutan to host the Annual SAARC Summit of 1987.

9. The Heads of State or Government unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Fourth Meeting of Foreign Ministers on the emblem of SAARC.





Second SAARC Summit  
Bangalore  
16-17 November 1986



# Bangalore Declaration

*The Bangalore Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 17 November 1986.*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka assembled at the second SAARC Summit in Bangalore on 16 and 17 November, 1986.

2. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their desire of promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and Non-alignment, particularly respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful settlement of disputes.

3. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the will of their peoples and Governments to work together in accordance with the SAARC Charter to devise common policies and approaches for finding common solutions to the shared problems that all of them face. They stressed that mutual trust, goodwill and understanding must animate their cooperative effort under SAARC. Progress and prosperity in each country would redound to the benefit of others. This was what constituted the SAARC spirit.

4. The leaders reaffirmed that the principal goal of SAARC was to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia, to improve their quality of life, to accelerate economic growth, social programmes and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potential.

5. The Heads of State or Government recalled that the countries of South Asia had been linked by age-old cultural, social and historical traditions. These had led to enriching interaction of ideas, values, culture and philosophies. These commonalities constituted solid foundations for regional cooperation for addressing more effectively the economic and social problems.

6. The Heads of State or Government recalled that the South its immunization by 1990, universal primary education, maternal and child nutrition, provision of safe drinking water and adequate shelter before 2000 A. D. They also believed that it should be possible to ensure at the end of the century, that no child need die or be denied development, for reasons of material poverty in the family. They directed the Standing Committee to undertake annual reviews of the situation of children in the SAARC countries, monitoring of programmes and exchange of experience.

7. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the great importance of the increasing involvement of the people for ensuring the success of regional co-operation. They emphasized the need for promoting greater contacts among the peoples of the region through such action as regular and frequent interchange of scholars, academics, artists, authors, professionals and businessmen as well as facilitation of tourism

8. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that considerable progress had been achieved in the implementation of SAARC Integrated Programme of Action. They expressed their firm commitment to consolidate and streamline further the implementation of the IPA. They agreed that a progressive movement towards more concrete and action-oriented projects and programmes was essential to ensure more tangible benefits from SAARC to the peoples of the region. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of expanding cooperative endeavours under SAARC. They welcomed the establishment of the Technical Committees on Women in Development, and on the Prevention of Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse.

9. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the SAARC Secretariat by the Council of Ministers and their decision to locate the Secretariat in Kathmandu and appoint Ambassador Abul Ahsan of Bangladesh as the first Secretary-General of SAARC. They were convinced that the establishment of the Secretariat would assist in the coordination of SAARC activities and more fruitful implementation of its programmes and projects.

10. The Heads of State or Government recognised that meeting the needs of all children was the principal means of human resources development. Children should, therefore, be given the highest priority in national development planning. The Heads of State or Government underlined the importance of enhancing public consciousness and building a national political consensus on the rights of the children. In this context they called for an early conclusion and adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They subscribed to the goals of universal immunization by 1990, universal primary education, maternal and child nutrition, provision of safe drinking water and adequate shelter before 2000 A. D. They also believed that it should be possible to ensure at the end of the century, that no child need die or be denied development, for reasons of material poverty in the

family. They directed the Standing Committee to undertake annual reviews of the situation of children in the SAARC countries, monitoring of programmes and exchange of experience.

11. The Heads of State or Government agreed that co-operation among SAARC States was vital if terrorism was to be prevented and eliminated from the region. They unequivocally condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and deplored their impact on life and property, social economic development, political stability, regional and international peace and co-operation. They recognized the importance of the principles laid down in UN Resolution 2625 which among others required that each State should refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorist acts in another State or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts.

12. The Heads of State or Government expressed their concern at the crisis facing the United Nations system. They reiterated their deep commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and their support for and faith in the United Nations as the most important international forum for addressing issues of peace, disarmament and development and an essential instrument for bringing about justice and equity in international political and economic relations. They resolved to concert their efforts in all multilateral fora within the United Nations system to preserve and strengthen the Organisation and to prevent erosion of its role, functions and principles.

13. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their deep commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-aligned Movement and underlined the historic role the Movement had been playing in strengthening international peace, promoting development, establishing equitable and just economic relations and strengthening international co-operation in all fields. The success of the Harare Summit of the Non-aligned countries was yet another demonstration of the strength and unity of the Movement and the increasing respect that it had come to command in the international community. They affirmed full support for the decisions adopted at the Summit and called for their early implementation.

14. The leaders of the South Asian countries were convinced that an environment of peace, security and respect for international law was essential for their growth and stability. Unfortunately, this environment had become increasingly adverse for the pursuit of their cherished goals. The international political scene was marred by strife and tension due to Great Power policies and practices of domination and intervention as well as the increased resort to the treat or use of force, aggression, occupation, pressure, economic coercion and interference in flagrant violation of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race, had escalated to a point where it jeopardizes the most fundamental of all human rights - the right to live.

15. The Heads of State or Government noted with deep disappointment that the promise held out by the Reykjavik Summit could not be realized. They, however, noted with satisfaction that the proposals made at the Summit were still on the table. They expressed the earnest hope that the negotiations would be resumed without delay so that a decisive step could be taken towards realizing the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons altogether. The Heads of State or government called for the early conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

16. The Heads of State or Government were deeply concerned that the world economy continued to be in the throes of crisis, with particularly harsh and severe consequences for the economies and development prospects and aspirations of the developing countries. They endorsed the Declaration of the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues held in Islamabad and its analysis of the exceptionally adverse external economic environment which retards the development of the South Asian and other developing countries. These negative factors include depressed commodity prices, rising protectionism, global recession, lower export earnings, net outflow of financial resources from developing countries and an aggravated debt crisis.

17. The Heads of State or Government noted that the rates of growth in the developed countries had turned out to be much lower than what was earlier projected and that the projection for future growth in these countries was not at all encouraging. They expressed their concern at the implications of these trends for the development prospects of the developing countries. They welcomed the recent recognition by the developed countries that the chronic problems of massive payment measures and to roll these back under multilateral surveillance. They also expected that the principles of transparency and differential and more favourable treatment for the developing countries would be applied systematically and in concrete terms in the negotiations. They decided to concert their positions in these negotiations with a view to deriving maximum benefits from them in accordance with their national objectives and priorities.

18. The leaders urged that the recent retreat from multilateralism should be urgently reversed through a revival of the North-South dialogue which is responsive to the changed circumstances in the world economy. This must include a process of reform of monetary and financial system, through an International Conference on Money and Finance for Development, and urgent measures for preserving and strengthening the multilateral trading system. In the search for revival of global growth, priority must be accorded to exploiting the vast potential for



expanded production, consumption and trade which exists in the developing countries. In all these endeavours, high priority should be accorded to supporting the development of the least developed countries, in particular, through the full and effective implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1980s.

19. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that at the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues a number of priority objectives of the SAARC countries have been identified. These include: enlarged concessional assistance, the doubling in three years of the financial flows for the development of developing countries, amelioration of official debts, trade liberalization, especially in textiles and agriculture, commodity price stabilization, transfer of technology and special treatment for least developed SAARC countries. The Heads of State or Government agreed that the SAARC members should closely and regularly consult and co-operate in relevant international economic conferences and institutions in order to promote the above mentioned objectives. They recognised that an important opportunity in this context would be provided by UNCTAD VII.

20. The Heads of State or Government were of the view that the forthcoming New Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations posed a challenge for their countries as well as an opportunity to accelerate their development through the expansion of their exports. They underlined the importance of the effective implementation with immediate effect and continuance until the formal completion of the negotiations, of the commitment to observe a standstill on protectionist measures and to roll these back under multilateral surveillance. They also expected that the principles of transparency and differential and more favourable treatment for the developing countries would be applied systematically and in concrete terms in the negotiations. They decided to concert their positions in these negotiations with a view to deriving maximum benefits from them in accordance with their national objectives and priorities.

21. The Heads of State or Government expressed their conviction that the Bangalore Summit had helped in consolidating the gains of regional co-operation activities so far undertaken by SAARC while, at the same time, exploring new avenues and possibilities for such co-operation. The Bangalore Summit had made a significant contribution to strengthening and streamlining the institutional basis for such co-operation.

22. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their determination and will to expand and strengthen their co-operation under SAARC. They underlined their belief that SAARC reflected a resurgence of the South Asian consciousness which had inspired the peoples of this region over several millenia. The leaders expressed their deep conviction that South Asian regional co-operation would not only have a salutary effect on bilateral relations between the countries of the region, but also impart strength and stability to these relations.

23. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were deeply appreciative of the exemplary manner in which the Prime Minister of India discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and people of India and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

*(issued on 17 November 1986 at the end of the Second SAARC Summit, Bangalore)*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka met in Bangalore on 16 and 17 November, 1986.

2. They issued the Bangalore Declaration. A Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the SAARC Secretariat was signed by the Foreign Ministers of the SAARC countries in their presence.

3. They welcomed the announcement by His Majesty's Government of Nepal that the Secretariat would be inaugurated in Kathmandu on 16 January, 1987. They decided that the first Secretary-General of the SAARC Secretariat, His Excellency Mr. Abul Ahsan, would assume charge of this office from that date.

4. They also considered several new ideas for expanding and strengthening the co-operative programmes under SAARC. While approving the following ideas in principle they directed that these be elaborated and concretized through expert level examination to be completed by March 1987, so that the reports there on could be considered at the next Meeting of the Council of Ministers :

- (a) A South Asian Broadcasting Programme covering both radio and television should be launched.
- (b) In keeping with the emphasis that the Heads of State or Government have laid on people-to-people contacts concrete steps should be taken to facilitate tourism in the region, including facilities for limited convertibility of national currencies for tourists from SAARC countries.
- (c) The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance they attach to students, scholars and researchers in their countries having ready access to reliable and up-to-date information on technical, scientific and developmental matters. This need could be best met by a SAARC Documentation Centre as the repository of such information.
- (d) The Heads of State or Government considered that it was essential to promote increasing cross-fertilization of ideas through greater interaction among students, scholars and academics in the SAARC countries. They, therefore, directed that a concerted programme of exchange of scholars be formulated and action taken for an early institution of SAARC scholarships, SAARC Fellowships and SAARC Chairs.
- (e) The Heads of State or Government stressed that the idealism of youth must be harnessed for regional co-operative programmes. Nothing would be more conducive to the resurgence of South Asian consciousness than the involvement of the youth of each country with the development programmes of the other. An Organized Volunteers Programme should be established in SAARC under which volunteers from one country would be able to work in other countries in the fields of agriculture and forestry extension work.

5. The Heads of State or Government recalled that the planners of the SAARC countries had met in 1983. This had provided a useful opportunity for an exchange of ideas and experience in the formulation of development strategies and methods of plan implementation. They directed that another meeting of the planners of the SAARC member countries be convened at the earliest.

6. The Heads of State or Government took note of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on the financing of the institutional costs of regional institutions. They decided that for regional institutions where all the Member States are directly involved and benefit, the formula proposed by the Standing Committee should be used. However, in the case of projects which affect only a certain number of Member States, the formula should be used as an indicative one, which could be suitably modified on the basis of consultations among the Member States.

7. The Heads of State or Government also decided that the next Meeting of the Council of Ministers would be held in India in May 1987. They directed that this Meeting should undertake a detailed review of the proposals for the establishment of regional institutions. The member countries which have undertaken to prepare concept papers, pre-easibility or feasibility studies on these proposals, should complete them well before the convening of the Meeting. The SAARC Secretariat should establish and submit to the Ministers, an order of priority among these proposals having regard to their costs, benefits, readiness for implementation, and other relevant factors.

8. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the King of Nepal to host the Third SAARC Summit in 1987.

9. They also accepted with gratitude the offer of the President of Sri Lanka to host the Fourth SAARC Summit in Sri Lanka in 1988.



Third SAARC Summit  
Kathmandu  
2-4 November 1987



# Kathmandu Declaration

*The Kathmandu Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 4 November 1987.*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka assembled for the Third Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Kathmandu on 2-4 November, 1987.

2. The Heads of State or Government recalled with pleasure the launching of SAARC which marked the beginning of a new era of regional cooperation for the promotion of peace and progress, mutual trust and goodwill in South Asia and underlined the importance of annual meetings at their level, as a prime mover, in consolidating and accelerating the pace and process of overall social, economic and cultural development in the region. They renewed their commitment to the SAARC Charter. They reiterated their desire of promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and Nonalignment, particularly respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful settlement of disputes.

3. The Heads of State or Government emphasized that a fundamental goal of SAARC was to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to provide them with the opportunity to live in dignity and realise their full potential. They were conscious of the formidable tasks ahead of eradicating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment and alleviation of environmental degradation facing South Asia today. They were convinced that the peoples and governments of South Asia could, acting in unison, surmount these challenges.

4. The Heads of State or Government expressed their faith in and commitment to the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nation Charter. They further believed that the United Nations has an important role to play in promoting universal trust, understanding and concerted actions for the attainment of lasting peace, global development and general disarmament. They reiterated their concern at the crisis facing the United Nations. They expressed their commitment to the multilateral negotiating process and called upon all states to help strengthen the UN system. They reaffirmed their belief that SAARC will reinforce this process by promoting South Asian cooperation.

5. The Heads of State or Government also reaffirmed their deep commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement. They underscored the validity of its philosophy and the historic role the Movement has been playing and continues to play in strengthening world peace and harmony as well as in promoting development with justice and equity. They also noted that institutionalization and strengthening of regional cooperation in South Asia had further nurtured the spirit of South-South cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, equity and common benefit. They expressed satisfaction over the result of the Ministerial Conference on Nonaligned Countries held in Pyongyang in June 1987 and urged the Non-aligned and other developing countries to take action to implement effectively the Pyongyang Declaration and Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation.

6. The Heads of State or Government recognised that the external environment had a critical bearing on the development of the economies of the South Asian Region. They noted with deep concern that growth in the world economy had again slowed down with adverse consequences for South Asia and other developing countries, especially for the least developed and landlocked countries. They observed that equitable participation of the developing countries in international trading and economic systems and in arrangements for the coordination of global macro economic policies was essential for enhancing prospects and performance of the world economy.

7. The South Asian leaders noted that the world economy had long suffered from a structural disequilibrium. The pace of global economic expansion had further slowed down. The downward trend in commodity prices had continued. The net export earnings had fallen aggravating payment imbalances in developing countries. The terms of trade had further deteriorated with enormous losses to developing countries. At the same time, the diminishing financial flows to developing countries remained unchanged with contraction in new lendings and growing burden of debt servicing. In fact there had been a reverse flow of resources from developing to developed countries. The trade conflicts had also sharpened with the rise of protectionism thus further weakening the international trading system and eroding the principle of special and differential treatment in favour of developing countries.

8. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the urgent need for resumption of North-South Dialogue with a view to promoting coordinated actions by developed and developing countries to channel trade surpluses for development, revive growth in flagging economies, overcome debt difficulties, expand export access to the developing countries and stabilise commodity prices, regulate capital flows and exchange rates more closely, and provide emergency relief and assistance to the poorest countries. They called for an early convening of the International Conference on Money and Finance for Development. They also stressed the need for preserving and

liberalizing the multilateral trading system with renewed efforts both within and outside the GATT Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. They also underscored the importance of the developed countries fully respecting the commitments made in Punta del Este on “standstill and rollback” and called for the early and effective implementation of this commitment. The Heads of State or Government also reviewed the outcome of UNCTAD VII. They hoped that UNCTAD would play an increasingly effective role in promoting harmonious and equitable international economic relations.

9. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the need for special measures in favour of the least developed countries in order to strengthen their resource capabilities and structural transformation and urged the international community, in the light of recent decisions at UNCTAD VII, to speed-up tangible assistance including increased resource flows to these countries within the framework of the Substantial New Program of Action (SNPA) for the Least Developed Countries for 1980s.

10. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern at the deteriorating international political environment which was due to great power policies and practices of domination and intervention as well as the increased resort to threat or use of force, aggression, occupation, pressure, economic coercion and interference in violation of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. These destabilising measures were creating a climate detrimental to the policies of peace, goodwill, stability, prosperity and respect for each other.

11. The Heads of State or Government believed that the escalation in military expenditure was a major constraint on world development. In this regard they noted that the UN Conference on Disarmament and Development had clearly established a link between disarmament and development and had provided a valuable frame work for future action in this vital area.

12. They welcomed the understanding reached between the United States and the Soviet Union on Intermediate Nuclear Forces. This should be a precursor of further accords between them to reduce drastically their strategic nuclear missiles and to refrain from extending the arms race to Outer Space. They called for the early conclusion in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a Convention to Ban Chemical Weapons. They declared their intention to continue their efforts to contribute to the realisation of the objective of halting the nuclear arms race and eliminating nuclear weapons. They declared their resolve to support every effort to conclude a treaty prohibiting vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

13. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep concern at the fast and continuing degradation of the environment, including extensive destruction of forests, in the South Asian region. They also noted that South Asia was afflicted with such natural disasters as floods, droughts, landslides, cyclones, tidal waves which have had a particularly severe impact recently, causing immense human suffering. At the same time they expressed concern over the danger posed by the global sea level rise and its effects on South Asian countries. These natural disasters and the degradation of the environment were severely undermining the development process and prospects of the member countries. They, therefore, decided to intensify regional cooperation with a view to strengthening their disaster management capabilities. They also decided to commission a study for the protection and preservation of the environment and to the causes and consequences of natural disasters in a well-planned comprehensive framework. They entrusted the Secretary-General with this task.

14. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their conviction that the region being most populous in the world and having age-old socio-cultural links, rich and varied human and natural resources, offered immense scope and potential for regional cooperation and that the growing interaction among its people had added stimulus towards this end. They reiterated their determination to pursue their individual and collective efforts for the optimal utilisation of the vast human and untapped natural and other material resources.

15. The Heads of State or Government reviewed with satisfaction the progress made so far in the implementation of the SAARC Integrated Programme of Action and emphasised the need to further consolidate and streamline the process. They were conscious of the need to exercise greater discretion in the selection of activities in different sectors. They took note of the criteria and procedures relating to administrative structuring and financing of regional institutions endorsed by the SAARC Council of Ministers. They directed that the establishment of such regional institutions should proceed only after taking into account their viability and benefits to the member countries with due consideration to economy and efficiency.

16. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction at the launching of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange programme coinciding with the opening of the Third SAARC Summit in Kathmandu. While taking note of the dates for the institution of the SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships and the commencement of Organised Tourism among SAARC member countries, they directed that the schemes for the SAARC Documentation Centre and the SAARC Youth Volunteer Programme be implemented at the earliest.

17. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the signing of the Agreement establishing a South Asian Food Security Reserve and expressed confidence that this will provide a much-needed cushion against

food shortages and scarcity situations in the region.

18. The Heads of State or Government expressed happiness at the signing of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and considered it a historic step towards the prevention and elimination of terrorism from the region. In this regard, they also reiterated their unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practice of terrorism as criminal and expressed their abhorrence of their impact on life and property, socio-economic development, political stability, regional peace and cooperation.

19. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their agreement to expand SAARC activities in other concrete areas of cooperation in order to ensure more tangible benefits from SAARC to the peoples of the region. They were convinced that regional cooperation could be consolidated and expanded on the basis of growing regional complementarities and inter dependence. They believed that the SAARC long-term perspective should, therefore, focus on measures to expand and strengthen such areas of regional complementarities and interdependence not only through formulation and implementation of more concrete and action-oriented programmes but also through coordination of national policies and approaches for finding common solutions to their common problems.

20. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the first annual review of the Situation of Children in the SAARC member countries. They reiterated their commitment made in the Bangalore Declaration to accord highest priority to the needs of children in national development planning and emphasised that more intensified action should be taken for the welfare and well-being of children. They further reiterated their call for an early conclusion and adoption of a United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

21. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction at the establishment of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, strengthening further the process of regional cooperation in South Asia. They expressed their gratitude to His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev for most graciously inaugurating the SAARC Secretariat.

22. The Heads of State or Government were conscious of the aspirations of the peoples of South Asia to communicate and cooperate with each other at the people-to-people level. They recognised that academics, researchers, non-governmental organizations and others have an important role to play in promoting the SAARC spirit and giving impetus to regional programmes and projects. They further observed that the interest and enthusiasm so far demonstrated by the increased interactions and exchange of information at the inter-governmental level should be capitalised and translated into tangible programmes and projects. They recognised the vast potential for the generation of friendship, goodwill and trust through interactions between the peoples which would foster harmonious relations in South Asia.

23. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep conviction that the Kathmandu Summit has further consolidated the gains of SAARC and given a renewed thrust and direction to the future course of regional cooperation. They were also convinced that the Kathmandu Summit has helped to create an atmosphere conducive to strengthening this process, besides generating further goodwill and friendship among the member countries in the larger interest of the region.

24. The Heads of State or Government were conscious that SAARC should be increasingly oriented to the people's needs and aspirations so that the masses of the region could be drawn to a greater extent into the mainstream of SAARC activities. This, they firmly held, would help bring about a qualitative improvement in the general atmosphere of the region contributing to peace, friendship and cooperation in the areas.

25. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their firm commitment to the spirit and objectives with which the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was launched and reaffirmed their determination to work, individually and collectively, towards the attainment of these objectives.

26. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were deeply appreciative of the exemplary manner in which His Majesty the King of Nepal discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by His Majesty's Government and the people of Nepal and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

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## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

*(issued on 4 November 1987 at the end of the Third SAARC Summit, Kathmandu)*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and President of Sri Lanka met in Kathmandu during November 2-4, 1987. Their meeting was marked by warmth, cordiality and mutual understanding.

2. They issued the Kathmandu Declaration providing a renewed thrust and direction to the future course of regional cooperation in South Asia.
3. They considered several issues of common concern, both regional and international, and assessed the overall progress in the context of SAARC objectives.
4. They expressed their happiness at the signing of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and the Agreement establishing South Asian Food Reserve by the Foreign Ministers of the SAARC Member States in their presence. They firmly believed that the Convention and the Agreement constituted landmarks in their collective endeavours to eradicate terrorism and hunger from the region.
5. They declared their intention to initiate the process of dealing with the causes and consequences of natural disasters and decided to commission a study on natural disasters and the protection and preservation of the environment in a well planned and comprehensive framework. They entrusted the Secretary-General with this task.
6. They expressed their satisfaction with the progress achieved in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action in the eleven agreed areas of cooperation and also with the concrete programmes related to the Five New Ideas identified at the last Summit for expanding and strengthening cooperative programmes under SAARC.
7. They also reaffirmed their view that measures for expanding regional cooperation should be progressively carried out within a broad framework of long-term perspective and stressed, in particular, the need for further consolidation and rationalization of the on-going activities pursued within SAARC framework.
8. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the need for strengthening inter-governmental efforts with increased people-to-people cooperation and called for greater participation of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including professional bodies in the private sector, in the process of promoting socio-economic and cultural development of South Asia as envisaged in the SAARC Charter, under the auspices of the SAARC Secretariat.
9. They further welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu as well as the assumption of office by the SAARC Secretary-General with effect from 16 January, 1987 and considered these as important events in strengthening the institutional framework of regional cooperation in South Asia. They expressed their appreciation to His Majesty's Government of Nepal at the cooperation and assistance extended and facilities provided to the SAARC Secretariat.
10. The Heads of State or Government took note of the Report submitted by the Council of Ministers relating, inter alia, to administrative structuring and financing of regional institutions and directed that for economy and efficiency all sectoral programmes should justify the establishment of such regional institutions.
11. They instructed that in its examination of the question of the admission of new members and the grant of observer/guest status in the Association, the Standing Committee should also include the aspect of the establishment of relations with similar organisations.
12. They gratefully accepted the offer of the President of Sri Lanka to host the Fourth SAARC Summit in 1988 in Sri Lanka.
13. They also gratefully accepted the offer of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the Fifth SAARC Summit in Pakistan in 1989.
14. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were deeply appreciative of the exemplary manner in which His Majesty the King of Nepal discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by His Majesty's Government and the people of Nepal and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.





Fourth SAARC Summit  
Islamabad  
29-31 December 1988



# Islamabad Declaration

*The Islamabad Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 31 December 1988.*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka met at the Fourth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Islamabad from 29-31 December, 1988.

2. The Heads of State of Government expressed their deep satisfaction at the progress achieved by the Association since the last Summit. They reiterated their commitment to the SAARC Charter and renewed their determination to cooperate in promoting the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improving their quality of life by eradicating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and environmental degradation.

3. They recalled that their countries were linked by cultural, social and historical ties and they had at their disposal substantial human and natural resources. They recognised that these provided a sound basis as well as immense opportunities for regional cooperation. They therefore expressed their determination to make optimal use of their resources for the benefit of their people by working jointly to pursue their shared objectives. They were aware that by acting in concert they could realise the full potential for regional progress, taking into account complementarities and growing inter-dependence.

4. The leaders endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers that any country in the region subscribing to the objectives and principles of the SAARC Charter may be admitted as a member of the Association by a unanimous decision of the Heads of State of Government.

5. The Heads of State of Government expressed satisfaction at the progress so far made in the implementation of the SAARC Integrated Programme of Action. They underlined the need for closer cooperation in the activities undertaken under this programme. They took note of the measures to streamline and re-orient various SAARC activities to make them more action-oriented so as to improve the quality of life of their peoples. They directed that the Secretary General may submit recommendation to the Standing Committee which should in turn decide how to streamline SAARC activities and make them more effective. They welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC), as well as the steps being taken for the establishment of other regional institutions.

6. The Heads of State of Government lauded the smooth functioning of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) Programme which had proved to be a useful medium for promoting a South Asian consciousness amongst the peoples of the region. They decided that SAVE Programmes should also emphasise social, economic and technical themes. They also noted with satisfaction the successful launching of the Youth Volunteers Programme and the SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships Scheme. They decided that Education may be included as an agreed area of cooperation.

7. The Heads of State of Government expressed satisfaction that the South Asian Food Security Reserve had become operational on 12 August 1988. The Reserve would serve as a cushion against food shortages and was a tangible manifestation of the spirit of cooperation in the region.

8. The Heads of State of Government noted with satisfaction that the SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism had been ratified and had come into effect on 22 August 1988, thus reflecting the sincere desire on the part of the Member States to enter into meaningful cooperation to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from the South Asian region. They called for the adoption of enabling measures by Member States to implement the Convention at the earliest.

9. The Heads of State of Government expressed grave concern over the growing magnitude and the serious effects of drug abuse, particularly among young people, and drug trafficking. They recognised the need for urgent and effective measures to eradicate this evil and decided to declare the year 1989 as the "SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking". They agreed to launch a concerted campaign, as suited to the situation in their respective countries, to significantly augment SAARC efforts to eliminate drug abuse and drug trafficking. These included closer cooperation in creating a greater awareness of the hazards of drug abuse, exchange of expertise, sharing of intelligence information, stringent measures to stop trafficking in drugs and introduction of more effective laws. They directed that the Technical Committee concerned should examine the possibility of a Regional Convention on Drug Control.

10. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep sense of sorrow and profound sympathy at the loss of valuable lives and extensive damage to property suffered during the year by Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan as a result of unprecedented floods, cyclones and earthquakes. In this connection, they recalled their

earlier decision at Kathmandu in November, 1987 to intensify regional cooperation with a view to strengthening their disaster management capabilities and took note of the recommendations of the meeting of the SAARC Group of Experts on the Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment, that met in Kathmandu in July 1988. They expressed the conviction that identification of measures and programmes as envisaged by the Group of Experts would supplement national, bilateral, regional and global efforts to deal with the increasingly serious problems being faced by the region as a result of the recurrence of natural disasters and the continuing degradation of the environment. They urged that the study should be completed in the shortest period of time so that it could provide a basis for the member countries to draw up an action plan for meaningful cooperation amongst the Member States. They decided that a joint study be undertaken on the "Greenhouse Effect" and its impact on the region.

11. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that modalities for studies to be carried out for cooperation in the areas of trade, manufactures and services had been worked out by a Group of Experts, which met in Islamabad recently. They emphasised the need for the completion of the studies within the agreed time schedule. They directed that the Fourth Meeting of Planners should examine the possibility of cooperation in agreed areas of trade, manufactures and services, which would promote the objectives of meeting the basic needs of the peoples of the region. The report of the Planners should be considered at the next Council of Ministers meeting, with a view to making specific recommendations to the next Summit.

12. The Heads of State or Government reviewed the progress on the Situation of Children in SAARC countries. They reiterated their commitment made in the Bangalore Declaration to accord the highest priority to the needs of children in national development planning and stressed that the concept of Human Resource Development should lay particular emphasis on the welfare and well-being of children, especially in the literacy and health spheres. They called for the conclusion and adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. They decided to declare 1990 as the "SAARC Year of the Girl Child".

13. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the effective functioning of the SAARC Secretariat and its role in coordinating SAARC activities. They also noted that a Headquarters Agreement had been signed between the Secretariat and the host Government. They thanked His Majesty's Government of Nepal for the assistance and cooperation extended to the Secretariat.

14. The Heads of State or Government noted that the decision to involve regional NGOs or professional bodies in SAARC activities, taken at the Fifth Session of the Council of Ministers, pursuant to the direction given by the Kathmandu Declaration, was an important step towards the promotion of people-to-people contact which has always been emphasised by the Association.

15. The Heads of State or Government stressed the need for closer and more frequent contacts among the peoples of SAARC. As a beginning, they decided that Supreme Court Judges and Members of the National Parliaments of each member State would be entitled to a special SAARC travel document which would exempt them from visas. They further directed the Council of Ministers to examine what other categories of persons should be given this facility and to submit their recommendations.

16. They further noted with satisfaction the mandate given to the Secretary General by the Council of Ministers at its Fifth Session on the question of contacting organisations with similar aims and purposes.

17. The Heads of State or Government expressed their determination to give concrete shape to the objectives of SAARC. In this context they emphasised the need to progressively carry out SAARC activities within a broad framework of a long-term perspective and to harmonize their efforts to ensure tangible benefits to the peoples of South Asia as a whole. They were conscious of the fact that all South Asian countries faced problems in varying degrees in areas such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection. Towards this end they were of the view that all Member States should identify areas of core interest in their national perspective plans or prepare such plans and consolidate them into a regional plan to be called "SAARC-2000 : A Basic Needs Perspective", with specific targets to be met by the end of the century.

18. They recognised that Human Resource Development is one of the means of realizing these objectives. In this context they welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host a Centre for Human Resource Development and directed the Secretary-General to set up a Group of Experts from Member States to examine the proposal on the basis of a paper to be prepared by the Government of Pakistan and to submit its recommendations to the Standing Committee.

19. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their abiding commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, particularly those enjoining respect for the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and national independence, non-use or threat of use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and peaceful settlement of all disputes. They reiterated their faith in the United Nations as the most important forum for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the promotion of international cooperation aimed

at the progress and prosperity of mankind.

20. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the relaxation of global tensions through intensified super-power dialogue on a broad range of international issues and welcomed the progress towards the resolution of protracted regional disputes and conflicts. They agreed that these developments had enhanced the prospects for disarmament, security, peace and progress for all peoples of the world. They appreciated the important role played by the United Nations in bringing about these positive changes in the international political environment. They also called upon all States to strengthen the capacity of the UN system in all respects to achieve the purpose of the UN Charter.

21. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their deep commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-aligned Movement as an important force for strengthening world peace and harmony as well as for promoting development with justice and equity. In this context they expressed satisfaction over the results of the Ministerial Conference of the Non-aligned Movement held in Cyprus in September 1988 and expressed the hope the decisions of the Conference would contribute to the reduction of tensions and to the promotion of development. They hoped that the current discussions on the improvement in the methodology of the Non-Aligned Movement would result in strengthening the movement and enable it to play its role with greater effectiveness.

22. The Heads of State or Government believed that the escalation in military expenditure was a major constraint on world development. In this regard they noted that the UN Conference on Disarmament and Development had clearly established a link between disarmament and development and had provided a valuable framework for future action in this vital area. They urged that resources saved through disarmament measures should be diverted in particular to developing countries for development.

23. They welcomed the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on Intermediate Nuclear Force. They hoped this would be a precursor to further accords to reduce strategic nuclear arsenals drastically and to prevent an arms race in Outer Space. They called for the early conclusion in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a Convention to Ban Chemical Weapons. They declared their intention to continue their efforts to contribute to the realization of the objective of halting the nuclear arms race and eliminating nuclear weapons. They declared their resolve to support every effort to conclude a treaty prohibiting vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

24. The Heads of State or Government noted with deep concern the continued structural disequilibrium from which the world economy had long suffered. This had resulted in slower growth in the developing countries, downward trends in commodity prices, decline in the net export earnings of the developing countries and deterioration in their terms of trade. These developments combined with the overwhelming debt burdens, the reverse financial flows from the developing to the developed countries and the sharp rise of protectionism in the developed world had further aggravated the economic difficulties of the developing countries.

25. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the interdependent character of the economies of the developed and the developing countries. They called for the resumption of the North-South dialogue with a view to restructuring the international economic system and to establishing the New International Economic Order based on justice and equity. They called for coordinated actions by the developed and the developing countries to increase the net flow of developmental assistance, overcome debt difficulties, expand the access of the developing countries to the markets in developed countries, arrest the deterioration in terms of trade of the developing countries and stabilize commodity prices.

26. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the need for preserving and liberalizing the multilateral trading system with renewed efforts both within and outside the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. They also underscored the importance of the developed countries fully respecting and implementing the commitments made in Punta del Este on "standstill and rollback" arrangements. They expressed concern that on account of differences between major trading entities on the question of agricultural subsidies, the Montreal Meeting on the midterm review of the Uruguay round was inconclusive. They particularly regretted that there was no progress in the negotiations on issues of major interest to developing countries such as trade in textiles and a Safeguard System. They were disappointed that on some of the issues of interest to developing countries on which there was agreement, particularly tropical products, it would not be possible even to implement the decisions taken, from the beginning of 1989 as envisaged. They emphasised that the development dimension must be taken into account in the negotiations on new issues, particularly services and intellectual property rights. They agreed to take concerted action to this end in the forthcoming negotiations.

27. The Heads of State or Government fully supported the call for the initiation of a comprehensive process for the preparation of an International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade as well as the proposal of the Group of 77 for convening a Special Session of the General Assembly in 1990 to revive growth and development in the developing countries.

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28. The Heads of State or Government reemphasized the need for increased resource flows and special measures in favour of the least developed countries within the Framework of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA) for these countries. They supported the convening of a high level United Nations Conference on the least developed countries in 1990 to review progress and formulate national and international policies and measures for accelerating the development process in the least developed countries during the 1990s, especially in order to help them achieve their long term socio-economic objectives.

29. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which Prime Minister of Pakistan chaired the meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of Pakistan.

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## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

*(issued on 31 December 1988 at the end of Fourth SAARC Summit, Islamabad)*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka met at the Fourth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Islamabad from 29-31 December, 1988. The meeting was marked by an atmosphere of mutual understanding and spirit of accommodation.

2. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of the Association enshrined in the SAARC Charter and renewed their determination to work collectively towards the attainment of these objectives. They issued the Islamabad Declaration.

3. The Heads of State or Government were deeply shocked at the armed attack on the Republic of Maldives on 3rd November, 1988 aimed at destabilising the Government and taking over the country. They strongly condemned these acts of violence which disrupted the peace and security of a Member State. They expressed full solidarity with the Government of Maldives.

4. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern at the high incidence of drug production, trafficking and abuse. They decided to declare 1989 as the "SAARC Year Against Drug Abuse" in order to focus attention on drug-related problems facing the region. They called upon Members States to prepare and implement national programmes in this regard.

5. They welcomed the launching of SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships schemes and the Youth Volunteers programme. They recognised that Education was one of the principal areas requiring urgent attention in the region and decided to include Education among the agreed areas of cooperation. For this purpose they decided to set up a Technical Committee and accepted the offer of Bangladesh to chair the Committee.

6. The Heads of State or Government agreed to launch "SAARC-2000-A Basic Needs Perspective" which calls for a perspective regional plan with specific targets to be met by the end of the century in areas of core interest such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection. In this context they welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host a Centre for Human Resource Development and directed the Secretary-General to convene an Expert Group Meeting of member countries to work out modalities for the realization of "SAARC 2000 - A Basic Needs Perspective".

7. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the idea of holding South Asian Festivals from time to time and accepted the offer of India to host the first such festival.

8. The Heads of State or Government directed the Standing Committee to examine the desirability of establishing a regional body to promote cultural links among Member States.

9. They welcomed the coming into force of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. They stressed the importance of the adoption of enabling measures at the national level that would be necessary in order to fully implement the provisions of the Convention.

10. They welcomed the Agreement regarding the establishment of a South Asian Food Security Reserve in August this year which marked a major breakthrough in the common endeavours of the Governments of member countries of SAARC to assist each other in food emergency situations.

11. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction at the progress achieved in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA). They recognised the need for focusing attention on more concrete and result-oriented activities within the SAARC framework.

12. They welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Agriculture Information Centre (SAIC) at Dhaka and were of the view that proposals for the setting up of regional institutions, focusing on problems of common concern in the region, should be given priority.

13. They reiterated their earlier commitment to accord priority to the needs of children in national development plans. They decided to declare 1990 as the "SAARC Year of the Girl Child" and directed that specific programmes and activities be undertaken to increase public awareness of the problems of the girl child.

14. They expressed satisfaction at the progress in the studies underway regarding the feasibility of cooperation in areas of trade, manufactures and services. In the meanwhile they directed the Secretary-General to convene a special meeting of the Group of Coordinators to identify any specific areas where cooperation may be feasible immediately. They directed that the report of the Group should be presented to the next sessions of the Standing Committee and the Council of Ministers.

15. The Heads of State or Government expressed profound sorrow at the natural disasters suffered by Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan in 1988 and urged that the study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment be completed in the shortest period of time so as to provide a rational basis for identifying areas keeping in view the potentials and possibilities of evolving a regional plan of action, particularly to strengthen disaster management capabilities and to protect and preserve the environment.

16. They expressed satisfaction at the concrete steps being taken for the implementation of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) Programme. They directed that social, economic and technical themes should be given emphasis by the SAVE Programme.

17. Recalling the usefulness of the earlier Ministerial meeting on Women in Development held in India in 1986, the Heads of State or Government called for the holding of a second Ministerial level meeting and welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host the meeting.

18. They expressed satisfaction that pursuant to the direction given by the Kathmandu Declaration for enhancing people-to -people contact, concrete steps had been taken by including regional NGOs and professional bodies in SAARC activities.

19. They decided that any country in the region subscribing to the objectives and principles of the Charter may be admitted as a member of the Association by a unanimous decision of the Heads of State or Government.

20. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the effective functioning of the SAARC Secretariat and its role in coordinating SAARC activities. They appreciated the work of the SAARC Secretary-General in the discharge of his responsibilities and thanked His Majesty's Government of Nepal for the assistance and cooperation extended to the Secretariat.

21. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Fifth SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1989.

22. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep appreciation for the outstanding manner in which the Prime Minister of Pakistan had conducted the meetings as the Chairperson of the Fourth SAARC Summit. They also expressed profound gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

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Fifth SAARC Summit  
Male'  
21-23 November 1990



# Male' Declaration

*The Male' Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 23 November 1990.*

The President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, His Excellency Mr. Hussain Muhammad Ershad, the King of Bhutan, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Chandra Shekhar, the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal, The Right Honourable Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and the Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Dingiri Banda Wijetunga met at the Fifth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Male' on 21-23 November, 1990.

2. The Heads of State or Government reiterated that cooperation among the countries of South Asia was necessary for improving the quality of life of the peoples of the region. They recalled their conviction that the objectives of peace and stability in South Asia could be best served by fostering mutual understanding, cooperation and good neighbourly relations. They reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and renewed their resolve to intensify cooperation under its aegis in pursuit of their common objectives.

3. The Heads of State or Government stressed their desire to promote peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Nonaligned Movement, particularly respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, nonuse of force, noninterference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful settlement of disputes.

4. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the launching of SAARC in 1985 and the initiatives under the Integrated Programme of Action for strengthening regional cooperation in South Asia had generated much enthusiasm and hope in their peoples, and that the South Asian consciousness necessary for the success of regional cooperation was gradually permeating the region. They reiterated their resolve to make optimal use of the positive forces of goodwill, trust and understanding existing among their peoples and to turn SAARC into a dynamic instrument for achieving its objectives and creating an order based on mutual respect, equity, cooperation and shared benefits.

5. The Heads of State or Government reviewed the status of children in South Asia and noted that the recent World Summit for Children had imparted a new impetus to the ongoing efforts in this field. They believed that relevant recommendations of the World Summit could be usefully incorporated into a Plan of Action in the South Asian context and its implementation should be reviewed annually. The guidelines for such Plan of Action could be prepared by a panel of experts to be appointed by the Secretary General and examined by the Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities. They also welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its entry into force. They expressed the hope that those Member States, who have not already become party to the Convention, would do so at an early date.

6. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the recommendations made by the Second SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Women in Development held in Islamabad in June 1990. They noted with satisfaction the enthusiastic response in all Member States to their collective call for the observance of 1990 as the "SAARC Year of the Girl Child". They decided that in order to maintain focus on the problems of the Girl Child, the years 1991-2000 AD should be observed as the "SAARC Decade of the Girl Child".

7. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the growing regional cooperation in combating the problems of drug trafficking and drug abuse. They expressed serious concern over the growing linkages between drug trafficking and international arms trade and terrorist activities. They agreed that observance of 1989 as the "SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking" had had a profound impact in drawing attention to the menace and to the need for its elimination. They expressed satisfaction that following the decision of the Fourth SAARC Summit, the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances had been signed at Male'. They urged the Member States to take early measures to ratify the convention for its entry into force. They were convinced that the Convention would help in making SAARC efforts in this area more effective.

8. They endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers in regard to the timeframe for completion of the Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment. They noted with satisfaction that the methodology for undertaking the Study on the 'Greenhouse Effect' and its impact on the region was likely to be finalized in the near future and desired that the Study itself be completed for consideration at the Sixth Summit. In this context, they noted that the destruction of rainforests, the world over, was contributing significantly to adverse climatic changes and this aspect should also be covered in the proposed Study. They expressed the hope that these Studies would lead to an action plan for meaningful cooperation in the field of Environment and Disaster Management.

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9. Recognizing that environment had emerged as a major global concern, the Heads of State or Government noted with alarm the unprecedented climatic changes predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). They urged the international community to mobilize additional finances and to make available appropriate technologies to enable the developing countries to face the new challenges arising from climate changes and sealevel rise. They agreed that Member Countries should coordinate their positions at international fora on this issue. They also decided to observe 1992 as the "SAARC Year of Environment".

10. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the national studies on Trade, Manufactures and Services had been completed. They underlined the need for expeditious action for completing the Regional Study within the timeframe stipulated by the Council of Ministers. They expressed the hope that it would open new avenues of cooperation for the prosperity of the peoples of the region.

11. The Heads of State or Government approved the recommendations of the Council of Ministers regarding Special SAARC Travel Document and decided to launch the scheme.

12. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern that Member States were compelled to divert their scarce resources in combating terrorism. They called for expeditious enactment of enabling measures for the implementation of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. They also urged Member States to continue to cooperate in accordance with the Convention.

13. The Heads of State or Government noted that as their countries stood on the threshold of the next millennium, the world was undergoing profound transformations characterised by popular upsurge for democracy, liberty and exercise of human rights, lowering of ideological barriers and the relaxation of global tensions and progress towards disarmament and the resolution of a number of regional and global conflicts. There was also a welcome trend towards the opening up of the global economy and integration of national economies into the mainstream of the world economy. They further noted the trend of increasing integration of the pattern of global production, consumption and trade, growing multipolarity of the world economic structure and integration of the markets of the developed countries in order to maintain their technological lead and competitive edge. These changes presented new challenges and opened up new opportunities to the South Asian countries, as to the rest of the developing world. The Heads of State or Government were convinced that their mutual cooperation can be a critical factor in enabling them to pursue these objectives more effectively.

14. The Heads of State or Government, noting the vital importance of biotechnology for the longterm food security of developing countries as well as for medicinal purposes, decided that cooperation should be extended to this field and, in particular, to the exchange of expertise in genetic conservation and maintenance of germplasm banks. In this connection, they welcomed India's offer of training facilities and agreed that cooperation in the cataloguing of genetic resources stored in different SAARC countries would be mutually beneficial. Taking note of the proposal made by the Group of Fifteen Developing Countries (G15) for the establishment of a gene bank for developing countries, they agreed to participate in this venture.

15. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the idea of setting up of a Fund for regional projects which could make available credit on easy terms for the identification and development of regional projects. They agreed that representatives of the national development banks of the Member Countries should get together to work out the precise modalities for the source of funds and the manner in which these could be related to joint venture projects. They accepted India's offer to host this meeting.

16. The Heads of State or Government regarded the recent developments in the Gulf as the most unfortunate aberration from the present trend of detente, cooperation and peaceful settlement of disputes. They reaffirmed their adherence to UN Security Council Resolutions on this issue. While emphasizing the need for a peaceful solution of the issue, they called for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate Government. They stated that the Gulf crisis had dealt a severe blow to their economies. They needed massive international assistance to compensate the loss suffered by them due to a sharp decline in remittances, setback to their exports and severe strain on their balance of payments position imposed by increased oil prices. They recognized the potentiality of cooperation among themselves for mitigating the impact of these adverse consequences.

17. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the initiative of the Government of the Maldives for the Protection and Security of Small States at the UN in 1989, which they all supported, had also received overwhelming support of the international community. They agreed that, because of their particular problems, small states merited special measures of support in safeguarding their independence and territorial integrity.

18. The Heads of State or Government expressed the hope that the talks between the two Super Powers on arms control would culminate in the conclusion of an agreement for substantial reduction in their nuclear arsenals leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. While welcoming the measures being considered for arms

reduction at the global level, they were convinced that the objective could be best achieved through the promotion of mutual trust and confidence among the Member States. They underlined the inherent relationship between disarmament and development and called upon all countries, especially those possessing the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals, to rechannel additional financial resources, human energy and creativity into development. They expressed their support for the banning of chemical weapons and early conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In this context, they welcomed the convening of the UN Conference in January 1991 to consider amendments to the Partial Test Ban Treaty to convert it into a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

19. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern that the international economic environment for the developing countries had been characterised by negative resource flows, high trade barriers, serious external debt problems and high interest rates. The need of SAARC countries for increased concessional resources and technology as well as access to markets for their exports could not, therefore, be under estimated. They called for collective efforts based on mutuality of interest and felt that regular NorthSouth consultations were essential for ensuring equitable management of global interdependence.

20. The Heads of State or Government recalled the usefulness of the First Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues held in Islamabad in 1986. They agreed that the second such Ministerial Meeting be held in India in 1991 to review the outcome of the Uruguay Round and to coordinate positions at international conferences including the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, 1992.

21. Notwithstanding the continuing efforts on the international economic plane, the Heads of State or Government emphasised the pressing need for the Ministerial Meeting to address itself vigorously to the objective of selfreliance. They directed the Ministers to prepare a strategy for mobilising regional resources which would encourage and strengthen individual and collective self reliance in the region.

22. The Heads of State or Government expressed their support for the Paris Declaration (1990) and the Programme of Action adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. They called upon the international community to contribute to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action which is of special importance for the socioeconomic development of the region.

23. The Heads of State or Government recognized the imperative need for providing a better habitat to the peoples of South Asia through optimum utilization of indigenous technology, knowhow and material, and decided that 1991 be observed as the "SAARC Year of Shelter".

24. The Heads of State or Government noted that millions of disabled persons lived in the SAARC region and immediate action was required to reduce their sufferings and to improve their quality of life. They decided to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons".

25. The Heads of State or Government were particularly happy that the Fifth SAARC Summit coincided with the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Independence of the Maldives which provided them with the opportunity to express their solidarity with the people and the Government of the Maldives. They expressed their conviction that the Male' Summit had helped in consolidating the gains of regional cooperation and in strengthening the institutional base of SAARC.

26. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Sixth SAARC Summit in 1991.

27. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the President of the Maldives had discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Maldives and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

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## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

*(issued on 23 November 1990 at the end of the Fifth SAARC Summit, Male')*

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of the Maldives, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka met at the Fifth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Male' from 21-23 November 1990. The Meeting was held in an atmosphere of warmth, cordiality and mutual understanding.

2. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of SAARC and reiterated their resolve to intensify cooperation under its aegis. They issued the Male' Declaration.

3. They welcomed the signing of the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances by the Ministers at Male' and undertook to take early measures to ratify the Convention.

4. The Heads of State or Government decided to launch the Special SAARC Travel Document which would exempt its holders from visas for travel within the region. They decided that Supreme Court Judges, Members of the National Parliaments, Heads of national academic institutions, their spouses and dependent children would be entitled to this Document.

5. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers to launch the Scheme for the Promotion of Organised Tourism during the first half of 1991. They also welcomed the proposal for institutionalised cooperation among the tourist industries of the Member States with a view to attracting more tourists from outside the region.

6. They noted with satisfaction that all Member States had completed their national studies on Trade, Manufactures and Services. They underlined the need for completing the Regional Study within the stipulated timeframe.

7. They decided that measures for establishing joint ventures in the field of cottage industries and handicrafts should be taken up forthwith to set a stage for promoting collective selfreliance in the region. They directed the SecretaryGeneral to appoint a group of 23 Experts selected from within the region, to prepare a paper suggesting the modalities for the setting up of joint ventures, sources of funding and other necessary details for consideration at the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

8. The Heads of State or Government noted the proposal for the establishment of a SAARC Regional Fund and directed the Standing Committee to submit its recommendations on the proposal for consideration at the next session of the Council of Ministers.

9. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of cooperation among the SAARC Member States in the field of mass media and directed the SecretaryGeneral to facilitate, under the auspices of SAARC, increased interaction among federations/associations of journalists, news agencies and mass media of the region.

10. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the decision authorizing the Secretariat to share information and exchange reports, studies and publications with the European Community (EC) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to begin with, in the identified areas of cooperation.

11. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the work was well under way for the setting up of a nucleus Centre for Human Resource Development in Pakistan. They were of the view that the Centre would contribute towards optimizing regional cooperation in this vital field.

12. They called for early completion of a regional plan "SAARC 2000 A Basic Needs Perspective" to facilitate activities within a broad framework of a long term perspective.

13. They directed that the theme of 'Poverty Alleviation' Strategies be discussed in depth by Planners for formulating suitable recommendations.

14. The Heads of State or Government decided that in order to maintain focus on the problems of the Girl Child the years 1991-2000 AD would be observed as the "SAARC Decade of the Girl Child". They were deeply moved by the SAARC Girl Child's appeal for love and care for them and their right to childhood. They reiterated their resolve that the welfare of the child in general and the girl child in particular, would figure at the top of their list of priorities.

15. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of regular exchange of views among the representatives of the SAARC Member Countries at international economic fora with a view to concerting positions,

as far as possible, on matters of common concern. They decided to hold the Second Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues in India in 1991.

16. The Heads of State or Government underlined the imperative need for providing a better habitat to the people of South Asia and decided that in order to focus attention on the problems of the Homeless, the Year 1991 be observed as the "SAARC Year of Shelter". They decided that each country would organise a series of events on this theme and share their experiences in order that the people of the region could derive practical benefit from the "SAARC Year of Shelter".

17. They directed that the Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment and the Study on the 'Greenhouse Effect' and its impact on the region be finalized before the next Summit. They stressed that, pending the completion of the studies, Member States should take necessary steps at national levels in this vital field. They decided to observe 1992 as the "SAARC Year of the Environment".

18. The Heads of State or Government stressed that immediate action was required to reduce the sufferings of the millions of disabled people who lived in the SAARC region. In order to focus attention on their problems and to improve their quality of life, they decided to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons".

19. They decided that appropriate programmes should be worked out for observing the SAARC Year of the Shelter 1991, the SAARC Year of the Environment 1992, and the SAARC Year of Disabled Persons 1993. In order to derive the maximum benefit and to sensitize the peoples in the region in the above vital fields, they noted that Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan respectively will circulate the recommended Plans of Action for implementation at national level.

20. The Heads of State or Government noted that SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) was already functioning at Dhaka. They decided that the SAARC Tuberculosis Centre and the SAARC Documentation Centre would be set up in Nepal and India respectively. They directed that necessary steps to establish the two Centres should be taken up urgently.

21. The Heads of State or Government stressed the need for adopting a more businesslike and functional approach in the conduct of meetings held under the aegis of SAARC. They requested the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit and the President of Bangladesh to initiate consultations with the Member States in this regard.

22. The Heads of State or Government directed the Chairman of Council of Ministers to prepare recommendations on rationalizing SAARC activities with a view to promoting effective functioning of the Association.

23. The Heads of State or Government expressed appreciation for the pioneering work done by Ambassador Abul Ahsan, the first Secretary General, during the formative years of the Secretariat. They welcomed his successor, Ambassador Kant Kishore Bhargava, and appreciated his valuable contribution to the ongoing activities of SAARC.

24. They expressed profound happiness that the Fifth SAARC Summit coincided with the TwentyFifth Anniversary of the Independence of the Maldives which provided them with an opportunity to express personally their solidarity with the people and the Government of the Maldives.

25. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Sixth SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1991.

26. The Heads of State or Government highly appreciated the exemplary manner in which the President of the Republic of Maldives conducted the meetings of the Association as the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit. They also expressed their sincere gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Republic of Maldives and for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

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Sixth SAARC Summit  
Colombo  
21 December 1991



# Colombo Declaration

*The Colombo Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 21 December 1991.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia; the King of Bhutan, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck; the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Shri Narasimha Rao; the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; the Prime Minister of Nepal the Rt. Hon. Girija Prasad Koirala; the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mian Mohammed Nawaz Sharif and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa met at the Sixth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at Colombo, Sri Lanka on 21 December 1991.

## REGIONAL COOPERATION

2. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of SAARC. They resolved to promote regional cooperation for the benefit of their people, in a spirit of mutual accommodation, with full respect for the principles of sovereign equality, independence and territorial integrity of all States and in strict adherence to the principles of non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. They also reiterated their commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Non-aligned Movement.

## INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES

3. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the vital importance of assessing the nature and extent of international economic inter-dependence and of the need for reviving the North/South dialogue. They noted the recent developments that had radically transformed the international development relationship deeply affecting the prospects for the economies of the seven SAARC countries. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the need for vigorously promoting South-South economic cooperation to off-set the negative consequences of international economic developments.

4. The Heads of State or Government also exchanged views on the priorities of their respective national economies. They identified, for the further development of their economies, the importance of securing less restrictive trading and marketing opportunities for their products, more extensive technology and resource transfers to South Asia, debt relief and access on favourable and on more concessional terms to resources from multilateral financial institutions. They agreed to keep an open dialogue on these aspects through mutual consultations.

## INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

5. The Heads of State or Government assessed current international developments in the political sphere particularly those that affected the lives of the people of South Asia. They noted the changing power structures in international relations and the reduction of confrontations and tensions, particularly among the Super Powers. These have contributed to the receding of the threat of nuclear confrontation and to agreements on disarmament measures. The Heads of State or Government hoped that these developments would restrain the pursuit of military power in all areas of the world. They expressed the hope that the peace dividend would be used for promoting further development of developing countries. They welcomed the trend towards popularly based democratic governments in different parts of the world including in South Asia.

6. The Heads of State or Government observed however that some political issues in particular the Palestine question, the final elimination of Apartheid as well as other problems remained unresolved despite efforts towards their settlement.

7. In regard to human rights, the Heads of State or Government observed that civil and political rights on the one hand and economic and social rights on the other are inter-dependent and of equal importance. Human rights issues should not therefore be viewed in narrow and exclusively political terms. In this context they underlined the need to view the efforts of States to guarantee human rights in their full context, through the pursuit of development for all citizens in conditions of stability, which in turn guarantees the enjoyment of human rights of all persons.

8. The Heads of State or Government while reaffirming their commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, emphasised the need to ensure that development remains at the centre of international attention.

9. The Heads of State or Government agreed to participate in the on-going process of revitalising the United Nations as an effective universal instrument for addressing international issues on an equitable and democratic basis, taking full account of the interests and concerns of all states, including those in South Asia. Issues such as the protection and preservation of the environment and the equitable and sustainable management of global resources, economic development and the alleviation of poverty, the suppression of terrorism, drug trafficking and other international crimes required global responses and solutions calling for action by all States.

### **PROJECTION OF COLLECTIVE POSITIONS**

10. In the context of the SAARC Charter objective to strengthen cooperation among member-states in international fora, the Heads of State or Government resolved to encourage consultations among delegations of SAARC countries at all international fora and to promote articulation of joint positions where such action would be in the interests of all. They felt that the development of a collective position in international fora would accord them greater credibility and enhance the international profile of South Asia.

### **STRENGTHENING OF SAARC**

11. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the Report presented by the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit, the President of Maldives, and the Head of Government of Bangladesh on the adoption of a more businesslike and functional approach in the conduct of SAARC meetings, as well as the Report submitted by the Chairman of the Ninth Session of the Council of Ministers, the Foreign Minister of Maldives, on rationalizing SAARC activities. The Heads of State or Government also considered other proposals submitted by Member-States and by the Secretariat to make the Association a more effective instrument for the realisation of the aspirations of the people of South Asia.

12. They decided that the Standing Committee should meet in special session in Colombo in April 1992 in order to collate and study all proposals and comments in this respect and to submit a report with its recommendations to the Eleventh Session of the Council of Ministers.

### **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

13. The Heads of State or Government re-emphasised that regional self-reliance should be resolutely promoted through closer cooperation among countries of the Association and that this would help mitigate the adverse consequences of negative international developments operating against them.

14. The Heads of State or Government requested the Standing Committee at its Special Session to study the question of cooperation between SAARC and appropriate international and regional organizations taking into account the evolution of SAARC activities in the core economic areas and to report to the Eleventh Session of the Council of Ministers.

### **INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

15. The Heads of State or Government noted the progress made by the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) in expanding to cover a number of sectors crucial for the economic and social progress of the peoples of South Asia. They were of the view that the challenge facing the IA was to achieve its identified targets within specific time periods. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the proposals made and the discussions proceeding in SAARC to heighten the effectiveness of the IPA.

### **POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

16. The Heads of State or Government accorded the highest priority to the alleviation of poverty in all South Asian countries. They affirmed that South Asia's poor could constitute a huge and potential resource, provided their basic needs were met, and they were mobilized to create economic growth. This requires that the poor are empowered and are irreversibly linked to the mainstream of development. It was noted that each South Asian country has had significant success cases of this approach to poverty alleviation.

17. Recognising that a great majority of these people remain below the poverty line, they evinced keen interest in a "Daal-Bhaat", or assured nutritional standards approach towards the satisfaction of basic needs of the South Asian poor.

18. Deeply conscious that primary education is the cutting edge in the struggle against poverty and the promotion of development, the Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the importance of attaining the target of providing primary education to all children between the ages of 6 - 14 years by the year 2000. They agreed to share their respective experiences and technical expertise to achieve this goal.

19. The Heads of State or Government decided to establish an independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation consisting of eminent persons from each SAARC member state to conduct an in-depth study of diverse experiences of the seven countries on poverty alleviation, and to report to the Seventh Summit, their recommendations on the alleviation of poverty in South Asia.

## **TRADE, MANUFACTURES AND SERVICES**

20. The Heads of State or Government were pleased to note the establishment of the Committee for Economic Cooperation as an important outcome of the Regional Study on Trade Manufactures and Services. They declared their commitment to the liberalisation of trade in the region through a step by step approach in such a manner that all countries in the region share the benefits of trade expansion equitably.

21. The Heads of State or Government approved that the Inter Governmental Group (IGG) set up on the recommendation of the Committee on Economic Cooperation should formulate and seek agreement on an institutional framework under which specific measures for trade liberalisation among SAARC member-states could be furthered. It should also examine the Sri Lankan proposal to establish a SAARC Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA) by 1997. They directed that the IGG should meet as early as possible and report to the Committee on Economic Cooperation. The Heads of State or Government accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Second Meeting of the Committee on Economic Cooperation at Colombo in June/July 1992 at which the report of the Inter Governmental Group would be considered.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

22. The Heads of State or Government recognised that the degradation of the environment has emerged as a major global concern. While the protection of the environment is a common imperative for all humankind, the main responsibility in this regard rests on developed countries since most of the emission of pollutants originates in those countries and since they also have greater capacity for taking or facilitating corrective measures.

23. The Heads of State or Government called on the international community to address the question of unsustainable production and consumption patterns and life-styles which lead to environmental degradation. They were also of the view that environmental standards applicable to developed countries may have excessive and unwarranted economic or social costs if applied in developing countries.

24. Adequate new and additional resources are needed for developing countries to pursue an environmentally sensitive process of development that will banish the underlying causes of environmental degradation poverty, malnutrition and unemployment. Such resources should be transferred to developing countries on an assured basis together with environmentally sound technology at preferential and concessional terms.

25. The Heads of State or Government expressed their conviction that the framework could be laid for an equitable global partnership of all countries with a view to safeguarding the environment.

26. The Heads of State or Government noted that in preparation for the SAARC Year of the Environment, SAARC countries had taken various national as well as regional measures for the preservation of the environment.

27. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction at the completion of Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of Environment. They urged the member countries to promote cooperation amongst themselves for enhancing their respective disaster management capabilities and for undertaking specific work-programmes for protection and preservation of the environment. They endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers to establish a Committee on Environment to:

- examine the recommendations of the Regional Study,
- identify measures for immediate action,
- decide on modalities for their implementation,

and welcomed the offer of Bangladesh to hold the first meeting of the Committee in Dhaka.

28. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the decision of the Standing Committee concerning the time frame to finalise the regional study on the “ ‘Greenhouse Effect’ and its Impact on the Region”. They urged member countries to consult each other on key issues concerning climate change, Bio-diversity and Biotechnology, a global consensus on forestry principles, transfer of environmentally sound technology, management of waste and other issues for discussion at Inter-governmental Negotiating Committee and the UNCED in 1992 so that the concerns of SAARC countries could be effectively articulated and projected, keeping in mind their respective national priorities.

29. The Government of India renewed its offer to host a Ministerial Meeting to harmonise the views of SAARC countries on these issues before UNCED 1992. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the offer.

### **SHELTER**

30. The Heads of State or Government noted the useful activities conducted during 1991 which was observed as SAARC Year of Shelter. They decided to continue to work towards the global objective of “Shelter for All by the Year 2000”.

31. The Heads of State or Government were of the view that Governments should play the critical role of facilitator and supporter of the initiatives of the people and non- governmental agencies in the field of shelter. In this role, they should be involved in the provision of affordable sites with secure tenure, making housing finance available on an affordable and sustainable basis, providing infrastructure development such as water supply and sanitation, energy and waste disposal, increasing the supply of building materials at reasonable prices using indigenous resources, removing constraints to building activities, and creating maximum opportunities for public participation in decision making and management of shelter activities in the overall context of poverty alleviation. Such activities would be facilitated by the exchange of experience, personnel, research and information among the SAARC countries.

32. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the recommendation on the establishment of a shelter information network to be called “SHELTERNET”.

### **CHILDREN**

33. The Heads of State or Government accorded the highest priority to the question of child survival, protection and development. They welcomed the adoption of a Plan of Action on Children for South Asia which incorporated relevant recommendations of the World Summit on Children.

34. The Heads of State or Government noted in this context that some member countries had completed their national Plans of Action and urged other member countries to complete their respective Plans. They also urged Member- States to ensure coordinated follow-up action on their respective Plans.

35. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host a Conference on Children in South Asia in 1992 to consider implementation of the regional Plan of Action.

36. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the adoption of the Plan of Action for 1991 - 2000 A.D. as the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child. They requested the Council of Ministers to ensure an annual review of the status of implementation of the Plan of Action during the decade.

### **TERRORISM**

37. The Heads of State or Government expressed serious concern on the spread of terrorism in the region affecting the security and stability of all member-states and unequivocally condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal. They deplored all such acts for their impact on life, property, socio-economic development

and political stability as well as on regional and international peace and cooperation.

38. They recognised that cooperation among SAARC States was vital if terrorism was to be prevented and eliminated from the region. In this regard they urged member-states to take all necessary measures to give full effect to their obligations under the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. They stressed in particular, the urgent need for the expeditious enactment of enabling legislation by those member-states which had not yet done so, for the implementation of the Convention and the need for a constant dialogue and interaction among the concerned agencies of member-states, including submission of periodic recommendations to the Council of Ministers.

#### **SECURITY OF SMALL STATES**

39. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Maldives in drawing the attention of the international community to the protection and security of small states. They noted with satisfaction that the resolution submitted by the Maldives to the United Nations during the 46th Session of the General Assembly and co-sponsored by 65 countries including all the members of SAARC was adopted without a vote. They agreed that small states may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs and that they merit special measures of support in safeguarding their sovereign independence, territorial integrity and the welfare of their people.

#### **DRUG TRAFFICKING**

40. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the increasing regional cooperation in combating the problem of drug trafficking and drug abuse. They expressed serious concern over the growing linkages between drug trafficking, international arms trade and terrorist activities. While expressing satisfaction at the signing of the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances at the Fifth SAARC Summit at Male, they urged member-states which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention for its entry into force. They also recognised the need for greater cooperation, including the submission of periodic recommendations to the Council of Ministers.

#### **PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACT**

41. The Heads of State or Government recalled that important initiatives had been taken at the Bangalore and Kathmandu Summits which had subsequently resulted in the increased involvement of the peoples of South Asia in the process of Regional Cooperation. They welcomed the steps being taken by business organisations/ professional bodies, scholars, academics, National Cultural Councils and the media in South Asia to form regional entities/ bodies. They called on the Standing Committee to expedite the formulation of guidelines for extending recognition to such groups and bodies.

#### **FUND FOR REGIONAL PROJECTS**

42. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the setting up of a SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (SFRP) for identification and development of regional projects. They noted that the Fund would be managed by a Regional Council of Development Financing Institutions of the SAARC Member States and that the First Meeting of the Council would take place in India.

#### **SOUTH ASIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND**

43. The Heads of State or Government requested the Secretary-General of SAARC to set up a panel of experts to examine the proposal of His Majesty the King of Bhutan to undertake a pre-feasibility study for the establishment of a South Asian Development Fund, taking into account the views of all Member States.

#### **SAARC VISA EXEMPTION SCHEME**

44. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the Scheme in regard to the entitled categories of Members of Parliament, Judges of the Supreme Court, Heads of national academic institutions and the accompanying spouses and dependent children will become operational from 1st March 1992. They called for expeditious action to implement the scheme as well as to consider other categories eligible for exemption.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

45. The Heads of State or Government were conscious of the vast potential being afforded by current advances

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in scientific research for the application of science and technology towards the well-being of the peoples of South Asia. They agreed that for the South Asian region to derive the maximum benefit, scientific and technological cooperation should transcend national frontiers.

46. Recalling the decision of the Male' Summit to institutionalise cooperation in the field of bio-technology, they welcomed the proposal for the establishment of a networking arrangement between Research and Development Centres in the member-states as an important step in advancing such cooperation. They also welcomed the emphasis on organised study tours, workshops and seminars proposed in the identified areas of cooperation in the field of science and technology.

#### **DATE AND VENUE OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE SAARC HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT**

47. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Bangladesh to host the Seventh SAARC Summit in 1992.

48. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the President of Sri Lanka had discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of Sri Lanka and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

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Seventh SAARC Summit  
Dhaka  
10-11 April 1993



# Declaration

*The Declaration of the Seventh SAARC Summit of the Heads of State or Government of Member Countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 11 April 1993.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, the King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Rt. Hon. Girija Prasad Koirala, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Nawaz Sharif and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa met at the Seventh Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 10 - 11 April, 1993.

## REGIONAL COOPERATION

2. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to the principles and objectives of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to the five principles of peaceful co-existence, the UN Charter and non-alignment. The Heads of State or Government noted the progress achieved in regional cooperation under the aegis of SAARC. They felt that time was now opportune for SAARC to provide a further dynamic impetus to activities in the core areas of economic, social and cultural cooperation in the SAARC region.

## INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF ACTION (IPA)

3. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the recent specific steps taken to consolidate and further streamline IPA-related SAARC activities. They also stressed the need for a progressive movement towards undertaking more well-defined, target-oriented and time-bound projects and programmes to ensure tangible benefits for the peoples of South Asia.

## ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE IPA

4. The Leaders welcomed the recent decisions to institutionalize cooperation in the core areas.

## MORE BUSINESS-LIKE AND FUNCTIONAL APPROACH IN THE CONDUCT OF SAARC MEETINGS

5. The Heads of State or Government approved the recommendations of the Eleventh Session of the Council of Ministers for adopting a more business-like and functional approach in the conduct of Summit meetings. They also noted with satisfaction the guidelines and procedures approved by the Eleventh Session of the Council in this respect relating to other SAARC meetings. They decided to meet informally whenever necessary, between Summits.

## CONSENSUS ON ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN SOUTH ASIA

6. Conscious that the sheer magnitude and complexity of South Asian poverty constituted a major political and economic challenge, the Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to continue to accord a high priority to its eradication from the region in the shortest possible time.

7. They pledged to overcome this challenge through the implementation of appropriate pro-poor development strategies at macro and micro levels.

8. In this context, the Heads of State or Government welcomed the Report of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation established at the Colombo Summit. The Report provided valuable insight and illustrative examples of successful poverty alleviation programmes in individual Member States.

9. Acknowledging that the abiding human qualities of dignity, creativity and productive potential are eroded by chronic poverty, the Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to empowering the poor for enhanced growth, consistent with human development and equity.

10. The Heads of State or Government committed their Governments unequivocally to the eradication of poverty in South Asia, preferably by the year 2002 A.D. through an Agenda of Action, which would, inter-alia, embody :

- A strategy of social mobilization involving the building of organizations of the poor and their empowerment

through appropriate national support mechanisms, with the assistance of respective Governments;

- A policy of decentralized agricultural development and sharply focussed household level food security through universal provision of 'Daal-Bhaat' or basic nutritional needs;
- A policy of decentralized small scale labour intensive industrialization, with the choice of efficient and cost-effective technology;
- A policy of human development, including the enhancement of the social role and status of poor women, the provision of universal primary education, skill development, primary health care, shelter for the poor and protection of children;
- A policy to support the above initiatives with adequate financial resources.

11. The Heads of State or Government stressed that within the overall conceptual approach of 'Daal-Bhaat', the right to work and the right to primary education should receive priority.

12. The Leaders also underscored the critical link between the success of national efforts aimed at poverty alleviation and the external factors affecting growth and development. They urged all major actors in the world economic scene, particularly the industrialized countries and multilateral and regional financial institutions, and Non-Governmental Organizations to create an enabling international atmosphere that is supportive of poverty alleviation programmes in South Asia. This would require a new dialogue with donors.

13. The Heads of State or Government agreed to the follow-up action indicated below :

- a national level pro-poor plan to be drawn up by each Member State. This plan is to be harmonized with the open economy and structural adjustment strategies;
- to share during the next Summit, information regarding the progress achieved.

## **TRADE, MANUFACTURES AND SERVICES**

14. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the need to liberalize trade as early as possible through a step by step approach. They underscored that this should be done in such a manner that all countries in the region could share the benefits of trade expansion equitably.

15. In this context, the Heads of State or Government welcomed the finalization of the framework Agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). They expressed their deep satisfaction over the signing of the framework Agreement. The Leaders stressed that all necessary steps should be taken to begin the first round of trade negotiations to exchange trade preferences among Member States under the Arrangement.

16. The Heads of State or Government further underlined the critical importance of urgently promoting intra-regional cooperation, particularly in the area of manufactures in order to enhance the productive capacity of the Member Countries, and to promote sustained growth and development to prevent the marginalization of South Asia's trade interest in the larger global context.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

17. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep concern at the unabated degradation of the environment and recurrence of devastating natural disasters. They also underscored the risks and dangers involved in overlooking the challenge posed by these problems. They expressed their commitment to implementing at all levels - national, bilateral, regional and global - programmes for the protection and preservation of the environment and prevention of its degradation. The Heads of State or Government recognized that the completion of the Regional Study on the "Greenhouse Effect' and its Impact on the Region" was a significant step forward in promoting regional cooperation in this vital area. They also stressed the importance of continuing the ongoing SAARC activities in the field of environment.

18. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and underscored the imperative need to ensure the flow of resources to successfully implement the wide range of suggested initiatives and actions contained in Agenda 21. The Heads of State or Government noted that all international actions in the area of environment should be based on common but differential responsibilities, collective endeavours and a balanced perspective. Such actions, they stressed, must consider the protection of environment, economic growth and eradication of poverty as mutually reinforcing. All environmental initiatives, they underscored, must preclude the imposition of arbitrary and one-sided pre-conditions and ensure a harmonious blending of environmental and development concerns. They further noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. They urged that the Commission approach environmental problems of developed and developing countries in an equitable manner.

19. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction over the adoption of a common position by Member States prior to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. They expressed their determination to continue in future the practice of intra-SAARC consultations on matters of common concern.

## **POPULATION**

20. Recognizing the sovereign right of all countries to promote, adopt and implement their population policies and mindful of their cultures, values and traditions, the Heads of State or Government stressed the need to integrate demographic objectives and population strategies in the formulation of the development strategies of Member Countries. In this context, they also noted the importance of adequate investment in the health and education sectors for the success of their population programmes. They agreed that cooperation among Member States should be strengthened, both through sharing experiences and in other practical ways, to enhance their capacity to deal with the population problem. The Leaders urged Governments of developed countries, as well as all concerned international and regional organizations, to strengthen their financial and technical support in the areas of health and education as part of their strategy of assistance to developing countries in their development efforts.

21. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the offer of Nepal to host a SAARC Ministerial Conference on Women and Family Health in Kathmandu in October/November 1993.

## **SHELTER**

22. The Heads of State or Government reiterated that housing was a basic right for all people and that Governments should act as facilitator and supporter of shelter programmes initiated by the people. They urged Member States to continue to work towards the global objective of "Shelter for All by the Year 2000".

## **CHILDREN**

23. Reaffirming their commitment to accord the highest priority to child survival, protection and development, the Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that all Member States had completed their National Plans of Action on Children. They reiterated their call at the Colombo Summit to continue to ensure coordinated follow-up action by Member States on their respective plans.

24. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the "Colombo Resolution on Children" adopted by the Second SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children held at Colombo in September 1992 and urged Member States to implement programmes as appropriate in their respective national contexts, to achieve the illustrative goals embodied in the Resolution, and the goals of the SAARC Plan of Action on Children.

25. The Heads of State or Government noted, in particular, the need to take effective measures to protect children against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation and agreed to promote cooperation among Member States in devising such measures.

## **YOUTH**

26. Stressing that the youth of South Asia constituted a vital resource for national development and that mobilization of their latent power was imperative, the Heads of State or Government focussed special attention on the needs of the Youth in South Asia and their development.

27. The Leaders noted that the youth of South Asia faced a number of serious problems requiring urgent attention and remedial measures. They welcomed the offer of the Maldives to host a Ministerial Conference on Youth in South Asia in 1994 to address the problems of the Youth and focus on the broad theme of youth and development. They also agreed to designate 1994 as the "SAARC Year of the Youth".

## **PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE DISABLED PERSONS**

28. The Heads of State or Government while recalling their decision at the Male' Summit to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons", adopted the Regional Plan of Action for the Disabled Persons. They urged Member States to take concrete steps to implement the Plan.

29. They welcomed the offer of Pakistan to host a Ministerial Conference on Disabled Persons in September 1993.

## **WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**

30. While reviewing the situation of women in the region, it was noted with satisfaction that over a period of time, the content of regional cooperation which addresses the issue of development, gender and equality for women has steadily grown in SAARC. The Heads of State or Government hoped that the cooperation thus developed

will enable Member States to achieve the ultimate goal of bringing women into the mainstream of development with independence and equality.

31. The Heads of State or Government recalled that in pursuance of their collective will expressed in the Male' Summit to observe the 1990s as the " SAARC Decade of the Girl Child", Member States had undertaken to formulate National Plans of Action for the improvement of the condition of the Girl Child giving priority to her survival, protection and development. They expressed satisfaction that some Member States had already completed this task and others were expected to do so soon.

### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

32. The Heads of State or Government emphasized that cooperation in the field of Science and Technology was of utmost importance in order to accelerate the process of development in South Asia.

33. They called for further intensification of efforts by Member States in this important area, particularly to facilitate research and exchange of information through networking arrangements in the field of bio-technology, genetic engineering, energy modelling techniques and other identified areas of cooperation.

### **TERRORISM**

34. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal. They strongly deplored the adverse consequences of terrorism.

35. They noted with grave concern that the efforts to combat the growing threat of terrorism had resulted in the diversion of valuable scarce resources from urgent development programmes.

36. The Leaders reiterated the need to give high priority to the enactment of enabling legislation at the national level to give effect to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, while urging the Member States which had not yet done so, to make every effort to finalize this matter before the Eighth SAARC Summit.

37. While recognizing that some progress had been achieved in the fields of consultation and exchange of information, they stressed the need for further enhancing cooperation in these fields as well as for coordinated action. They called for the expeditious implementation of the recommendations formulated for advancing cooperation in this regard in pursuance of their decision at the Colombo Summit.

### **DRUG TRAFFICKING AND DRUG ABUSE**

38. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their grave concern at the growing menace of drug trafficking in the region and the aggravation of the problem of drug abuse among the South Asian population, particularly the youth.

39. They recognized the devastating impact of drug abuse on the very fabric of society and the serious threat to security and stability posed by drug trafficking through its growing linkages with organized crime, illicit arms trade and terrorism.

40. The Heads of State or Government were gratified to note the expanding cooperation among Member States to combat and eliminate the scourge of drug trafficking and drug abuse.

41. They reiterated the need for further strengthening cooperation in this field and called for the expeditious implementation of the recommendations formulated for this purpose in pursuance of their decision at the Colombo Summit.

### **SECURITY OF SMALL STATES**

42. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to pay special attention to the monitoring of the security of small States and underscored the need to consider special measures of support to preserve their sovereign independence, territorial integrity and the well-being of their people. They further noted that real protection of small and weaker States should be firmly rooted in the Rule of Law and strict adherence to universally accepted principles and norms relating to the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all States - big or small. This, they stressed, should be ensured by all countries either severally or collectively through the pursuit of appropriate actions.

### **PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACT**

43. The Heads of State or Government stressed the need to further promote people-to-people contact in order to ensure increased involvement of peoples of South Asia in the process of regional cooperation. In this

context, they noted that the formulation of guidelines and procedures for extending recognition to regional apex bodies would facilitate participation of these bodies in promoting regional cooperation at the people-to-people level.

44. The Leaders expressed the hope that the recent recognition of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry would contribute positively to enhancing cooperation in the crucial areas of trade and economic relations.

45. The Heads of State or Government expressed their appreciation to the Government and people of India for hosting the First South Asian Festival of SAARC Countries in 1992. The Festival provided the people of the region the opportunity to share in the rich cultural heritage of South Asia. The Heads of State or Government hoped that the South Asian Festival would become a regular feature.

#### **ASSOCIATION OF SAARC SPEAKERS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS**

46. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the initiative of the Speakers of Parliaments of SAARC Countries in forming an "Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians". They were of the view that the establishment of this Association would add another important dimension to the process of regional cooperation.

#### **SOUTH ASIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND**

47. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the recommendation of the Council of Ministers for the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Group (IGG) on South Asian Development Fund (SADF) on an ad-hoc basis. They directed that the IGG define in clear terms the size, structure, resources and operational modalities of the proposed Fund. They also directed the IGG to examine the complementarities between the SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (SFRP) and SADF, and their relationship, including the possibility of their merger. They welcomed the offer of the Maldives to host the meeting of IGG.

#### **INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

48. The Heads of State or Government had wide-ranging discussions on the current global political trends and future prospects, particularly those issues that affect South Asia. In this context, they reiterated their deep commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen the United Nations as the central instrument for peace, security, disarmament, development and cooperation among the nations of the world. To this end, the Leaders supported all constructive initiatives aimed at strengthening the United Nations. They, however, underscored that any move to adapt or reform the United Nations must be undertaken with the sole objective of rendering the United Nations more democratic, efficient and effective and not to limit the focus of its attention to a narrow and isolated range of objectives.

49. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their firm commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-aligned Movement and underlined the continued validity and relevance of these principles and objectives in the contemporary global political and economic context. They recalled the important role the Movement had been playing in strengthening international peace, promoting development and establishing more equitable and just economic relations and enhancing international cooperation in all areas. They expressed their deep conviction that the Movement's innate strength uniquely equipped it to continue to play a most constructive role in laying the foundations and defining the characteristics of a new world order which should be based on the principles of justice, equity and democracy in international relations. In this context, the Heads of State or Government welcomed the success of the Jakarta Summit of the Non-aligned countries and called for the expeditious implementation of its decisions.

50. The Heads of State or Government noted that the end of the cold war presented new opportunities and challenges. They observed that despite many positive developments and recent successes in resolving some regional conflicts, the international political scene was still marred by strife and tension. They expressed their serious concern over the unfortunate and tragic consequences of ethnic conflict and violence afflicting people and communities in many parts of the world. They stressed that efforts must be intensified to find peaceful and viable solutions to conflicts of long standing nature and new problems through greater respect for international law and universally accepted humanitarian norms and standards.

51. The Heads of State or Government noted a number of recent positive developments in the area of nuclear, chemical and conventional disarmament including the agreements on bilateral arms reductions between the United States and the Russian Federation. They expressed their hope that the implementation of the far-reaching arms reduction agreed in the Washington Agreement of June 1992 and START II signed in Moscow in January 1993 would be successfully carried out. The Leaders urged all Nuclear-Weapon States to collectively endeavour to attain the ultimate goal of complete elimination of nuclear arsenals in the shortest possible time.

52. They also underscored the imperative to further broaden and deepen the dimensions to disarmament and to complement bilateral approaches to disarmament with effective multilateral approaches. While welcoming the

recent progress in arms reduction at the global level, the Leaders were convinced that this objective could be best achieved through the promotion of mutual trust and confidence among Member States.

## **INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES**

53. The Heads of State or Government noted that while it was important to build peace and create conditions of stability in the world, it was equally important to promote economic and social development. They underscored that international cooperation for development and eradication of poverty were inextricably linked with the preservation of international peace and security and hence needed to be treated on an equal footing and pursued with equal vigour. The Heads of State or Government expressed their grave concern over the continuing deterioration in economic situation in the majority of developing countries. The economies of developing countries, they observed, continued to suffer as a result of limited market access for their exports, dwindling resource flows, absence of adequate foreign investment, mounting external indebtedness, inadequate transfer of technology and the inequities in the global monetary, financial and trading systems. The Heads of State or Government noted that although the developing countries themselves had the primary responsibility for their economic development, the role of developed countries remained central to the revival of the growth of the world economy - in particular the economies of the developing countries.

54. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the vital importance of economic interdependence among nations and of the need for reviving North-South dialogue. They fully endorsed the view that there should be more equitable economic opportunities for all nations. These should include such important features as the strengthening of a free, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, effective macro-economic coordination and fiscal discipline to ensure stable conditions conducive to development in the global economy. They also reiterated their firm support for the broadening of the coordination of international macro-economic policies to take into account concerns of all countries, specially the developing countries. Referring to the competing demands for capital and investment resources, the Heads of State or Government underscored the need to ensure the adequate flow of investment resources to the developing countries through increasing global savings and a more equitable utilization of the peace dividends. In this context the Heads of State or Government also underscored the need to fulfil the internationally agreed aid targets for the developing countries and the Least Developed Countries. They emphasized on the need for exceptional finance to facilitate implementation of economic reform programmes in SAARC Countries.

55. The Heads of State or Government also strongly underlined the need to continue efforts to seek a comprehensive, durable and growth-oriented solution to the external indebtedness of the developing countries. This, they stressed, was essential to accelerate the process of growth in these countries. A lasting solution to the debt crisis, the Heads of State or Government noted, must take into account the need to significantly reduce the stock and service of all types of debts of indebted developing countries to augment the concessional aid flows to SAARC Countries and work out anticipatory measures to prevent the recurrence and proliferation of the debt problem.

56. The Heads of State or Government also underlined the importance of a strengthened and liberalized international trading system. In this context, they noted that the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations was a matter of great importance to the developing countries. Failure of the Round, the Leaders noted, would only further impair economic growth and encourage protectionist policy seriously weakening the multilateral trading system. The Heads of State or Government strongly urged the major partners in the Negotiations to demonstrate their political will and take positive steps to ensure without further delay a satisfactory conclusion of the Uruguay Round. They further stressed that although the main thrust of these negotiations in the recent past had been in respect of new issues, there was an imperative need to ensure that the Uruguay Round fully take into account the concerns and interests of developing countries. This, the Heads of State or Government stressed, was particularly important. The Leaders underscored the need to speedily conclude the current round of negotiations in a transparent, balanced and expeditious manner. They also stressed that before the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, an evaluation of results be held from the point of view of developing countries.

57. The Heads of State or Government expressed their concern over the increasing stock of anti-dumping and countervailing duty investigations against the exports of developing countries and the new threats to a liberal trading order in the form of measures taken in pursuit of the goals relating to workers' rights and the environment.

## **PROJECTION OF COLLECTIVE POSITIONS**

58. The Heads of State or Government were of the view that greater consultations among the delegations of SAARC Countries in all international fora on the major issues of common concern to them would be in the interest of all their countries. They felt that the development of collective positions on such issues in the international fora would enhance the international profile of South Asia and would enable the countries in the region to articulate their position on them more effectively. They reiterated their common resolve to concert their position in all



international fora and negotiations with a view to deriving maximum benefits from them in accordance with their needs and common priorities.

59. The Heads of State or Government underscored the vital importance attached by their countries to the forthcoming Second World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the World Population Conference in 1994 and the 1995 World Conference on Women. They also supported the convening of a World Summit for Social Development. The Heads of State or Government stressed the need to develop a common South Asian perspective on the issues to be discussed by these important international conferences. They also underscored the imperative to coordinate the position of SAARC countries in order to ensure a balanced equitable and action oriented outcome of these conferences.

#### **OBSERVER STATUS**

60. The Heads of State or Government decided that an Expert Group of the Member States will examine the various requests for observer status at SAARC/SAARC meetings in all its aspects on the basis of a working paper to be prepared by the Secretariat and make appropriate recommendations to the Nineteenth Session of the Standing Committee. In this respect, they welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host the Expert Group Meeting.

#### **CONCLUSION**

61. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep satisfaction over the positive outcome of the Seventh SAARC Summit and expressed their conviction that this Summit would greatly contribute towards strengthening the policies and cooperative actions of the Member States in response to the challenges of the 1990s and beyond in areas where SAARC has a distinct contribution to make. They also reiterated once again their determination to strengthen and enrich SAARC as an instrument - endowing it with a clear set of forward looking goals and objectives as well as all the requisite institutional capacities - so that it can continue to work to enrich not only the lives of its own members but also promote peace, progress and stability in South Asia in a larger context.

#### **DATE AND VENUE OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE SAARC HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT**

62. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of India to host the Eighth SAARC Summit in 1994.

63. The Heads of State or Government of Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their sincere appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the Prime Minister of Bangladesh had conducted the Meeting and guided its proceedings in her capacity as Chairperson. They expressed their deep gratitude for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them by the Government and people of Bangladesh and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

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Eighth SAARC Summit

New Delhi

2-4 May 1995



# Delhi Declaration

*The Delhi Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 4 May 1995.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, the King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Rt. Hon. Manmohan Adhikari, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Her Excellency Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga met at the Eighth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at New Delhi, India on 2-4 May 1995.

## SAARC DECADE

2. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction on the achievements of the First Decade of SAARC and resolved to celebrate its completion of the First Decade both in the individual Member States and collectively. They endorsed the proposal of the Council of Ministers to convene a Commemorative Session of the Council on the theme "SAARC - Vision for the Second Decade" to identify the areas on which SAARC should focus in its Second Decade.

## REGIONAL COOPERATION

3. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their resolve to intensify regional cooperation in order to accelerate the process of promoting the welfare and improving the quality of life of the peoples of South Asia. They reiterated their commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the SAARC Charter, particularly, to the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. They recalled their conviction that in an increasingly interdependent world, regional cooperation was a dynamic instrument for promoting economic prosperity, mutual understanding and good neighbourly relations to achieve the objectives of peace and stability in South Asia. In this context, a climate of peace and stability would contribute to the economic growth.

## ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN SOUTH ASIA

4. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the eradication of poverty in South Asia, preferably by the year 2002 A.D. through an Agenda of Action.

5. The Leaders endorsed the recommendations of the Finance/Planning Ministers' Meeting held in Dhaka in July 1994 which recommended that a mechanism should be set up which would act as a forum for exchange of information on poverty eradication programmes, in the context of the policies and strategies adopted, particularly exchange of information on technologies that are relevant to efforts at poverty eradication. They agreed that this process could be strengthened by sharing and exchanging relevant studies carried out by independent research institutions and experts. This mechanism would be in the form of a three-tier institutional structure as recommended in the Report and would meet once a year. They noted that such a mechanism has been set up enabling the procedures of exchange of information to commence and welcomed the offer of India to host the first round of the three-tier mechanism.

6. The Heads of State or Government directed that the next meeting of Finance/Planning Ministers consider the efficacy of such mechanism towards eradicating poverty in the region and report on the progress achieved to the Ninth SAARC Summit, through the Council of Ministers.

7. In this context, they decided to declare 1995 as the "SAARC Year of Poverty Eradication".

8. Acknowledging that the abiding human qualities of dignity, creativity and productive potential are eroded by chronic poverty, the Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to empowering the poor for enhanced growth consistent with human development and equity.

9. Recognizing that poverty is a complex multi-dimensional problem with origins in both national and international domains, country-specific programmes to tackle poverty and international efforts supporting national efforts and the parallel process of creating a supportive international environment conducive to economic growth and social development of developing countries, are crucial for a solution to this problem. The World Summit for Social Development recognized the need for focusing the attention of the international community on and support the special needs of countries and regions in which there are substantial concentrations of people living in poverty, in particular those in South Asia and which face serious difficulties in achieving social and economic development.



The Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to eradicate poverty and noted with appreciation the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development.

10. The Heads of State or Government committed themselves to addressing the fundamental causes of poverty and to provide for the basic needs of all. They reaffirmed their commitment to work for guaranteeing the realisation of the rights of all, in particular those of the poor, to food, work, shelter, health, education, resources and information.

11. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to provide expanded opportunities to the poor to enhance their overall capacities and improve living conditions and to adequate economic and social protection during unemployment, disability and old age. While recognising the need to improve, expand and deregulate markets to promote sustained economic growth they felt it was essential to mitigate any negative features created by the market forces and make all efforts to make the markets friendly to the poor. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the necessity to ensure that financial systems and other public policies are geared towards poverty eradication and warned against increase in socially divisive disparities.

12. The Heads of State or Government agreed that the Governments of SAARC countries will have to play a lead role in promoting the support structures needed for poverty eradication, including people's institutions and non-governmental organisations in the context of organising the people and fostering decentralisation and local self-governance and encouraging organisation of the poor, in the context of their social and economic interests.

### **SAARC PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENT (SAPTA)**

13. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that subsequent to the signing of the Framework Agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) during their Seventh Summit in Dhaka in April 1993, the first round of trade negotiations to exchange trade concessions among Member States has been completed. They directed that all necessary steps should be taken to facilitate ratification by all Member States and operationalise SAPTA by the end of 1995 as mandated.

14. The Leaders reiterated their firm belief that the operationalisation of SAPTA will herald the beginning of a new and significant process of regional cooperation and would lend strength to SAARC as an institution for promoting the welfare of the peoples of South Asia.

15. In view of the fast changing international economic environment, creation of major trading and economic groupings, establishment of the World Trade Organisation subsequent to the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and unilateral economic liberalisation measures being adopted by Member Countries, the Heads of State or Government emphasised the urgency of broadening and deepening cooperation within a specific and rapid time-frame in the core areas of trade and economic relations in the region. These developments call for added urgency to achieve more progress towards operationalisation of SAPTA and intensification of cooperation to expand regional trade. To that end, they decided that the "Components" and "Additional Measures" identified in Articles 4 and 6 respectively of the SAPTA Agreement should be implemented.

### **INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

16. The Heads of State or Government noted the progress made through the Integrated Programme of Action covering a number of crucial areas and activities.

### **REGIONAL CENTRES**

17. The Leaders welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) in New Delhi in May 1994 and the SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC) at Dhaka in January this year.

### **WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**

18. Noting that increased political and social consciousness in the region had highlighted the issues of elimination of gender-disparity and empowerment of women which are essential for their socio-economic development, the Heads of State or Government underlined the urgency of addressing these issues through further affirmative action.

19. The Leaders endorsed the "Kathmandu Resolution on Women and Family Health", adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Women and Family Health in Kathmandu in November 1993, and expressed satisfaction that appropriate programmes were being undertaken to implement the Resolution at the national level by the Member States.

20. The Leaders noted the progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action to mark 1991-2000 as the 'SAARC Decade of the Girl-Child', and requested the Council of Ministers to conduct a comprehensive mid-decade review for presentation to the Ninth SAARC Summit.

21. Recognising the serious threat faced by certain groups of Girl Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (GCEDC) including those orphaned, disabled and exploited, the Leaders decided that an urgent appraisal of the situation of these children be undertaken by the Council of Ministers and specific recommendations be presented to the Ninth SAARC Summit.

22. Considering that the exploitation of the Girl Child is a direct reflection of the status of women in society, the Leaders reaffirmed their resolve to take necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girl-children.

## **CHILDREN**

23. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the annual reviews of the situation of children in SAARC countries for the years 1993 and 1994 had been completed which indicated reduction in infant mortality and significant progress in the immunisation programme for children in the region.

24. Recalling the mid-decade goals of the World Summit for Children, the Heads of State or Government resolved to intensify their efforts both at the national and regional levels for attainment of these goals.

25. The Leaders welcomed that all Member States have become party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They felt that the recently held Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in September 1994 and the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development in March 1995 had imparted fresh impetus to the on-going efforts for the survival, protection and development of children in South Asia.

## **YOUTH**

26. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the Malé Resolution on Youth adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Youth in South Asia held in the Maldives in May 1994 and noted that the Conference had, *inter-alia*, served to focus attention on the status of the youth and the challenges faced by them. The Leaders noted with satisfaction that the Agenda for Action incorporated in the Resolution is being implemented by Member States with a view to integrating the youth into the process of national development. They noted with satisfaction that the SAARC Youth Resolution had been adopted and the SAARC Youth Awards Scheme has been established.

27. The Leaders expressed satisfaction on the implementation of the Plan of Action to mark 1994 as the SAARC Year of the Youth in Member States and resolved to continue the momentum generated in Member States.

## **PERSONS WITH DISABILITY**

28. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the Ministerial Conference on Disabled Persons was held in Islamabad in December 1993. They endorsed the Islamabad Resolution on Disabled Persons and the recommendations of the Conference and noted that the Conference had further increased awareness among the peoples of South Asia regarding the needs and problems of the disabled persons. They welcomed the activities and programmes launched by the Member States in pursuance of the Resolution for the protection and promotion of persons with disability.

## **SHELTER**

29. The Heads of State or Government, recognising that housing was a basic right for all people and that, in addition to governmental efforts, private initiatives of the people and non-governmental agencies should be supported, reaffirmed their commitment to work towards the global objective of "Shelter for All by the Year 2000."

## **LITERACY**

30. The Heads of State or Government noted that illiteracy is one of the major causes of poverty, backwardness and social injustices and called on the Member States to initiate more concrete programmes aimed at eradicating illiteracy in the region preferably by the year 2000 A.D. They decided to observe 1996 as the "SAARC Year of Literacy".

## **ENVIRONMENT**

31. Reaffirming the need for a concerted action for the protection and preservation of the environment, the Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction over the formulation of a common position by Member States prior to the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the presentation of the collective position at the Yokohama Conference. They recognised that international cooperation is vital for building up national capabilities, transfer of appropriate technology and promotion of multilateral projects and research efforts in natural disaster reduction.

32. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep concern at the unabated degradation of the

environment and recurrence of devastating natural disasters. They also underscored the risks and dangers involved in overlooking the challenge posed by these problems. They expressed their commitment to implementing at all levels - national, bilateral, regional and global - programmes for the protection and preservation of the environment and prevention of its degradation. The Heads of State or Government stressed the importance of continuing the on-going SAARC activities in the field of environment.

33. The Heads of State or Government noted that although some work has been carried out in the area of disseminating information on the problems of environmental degradation and their impact on the region, progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the SAARC Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment and the Regional Study on Greenhouse Effect and its Impact on the Region, which were completed in 1992, had been slow. They stressed the importance of effective and speedy implementation of the recommendations of the two Studies and requested Member States to take all necessary steps without further delay in vital areas such as sharing and developing scientific capabilities to protect and manage the environment. They further directed the Technical Committee on Environment to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the two Studies, and submit a report to the Ninth Summit through the Council of Ministers.

34. The Heads of State or Government recalled the decisions expressed in the Dhaka Declaration of April, 1993 on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of June, 1992 and reiterated the urgent need to ensure the flow of new and additional resources that are adequate and predictable to successfully implement the programmes of Agenda 21. They also recalled the United Nations minimum target for developed countries of 0.7 percent of GNP as Official Development Assistance, a target which is yet to be approximated by most developed countries. The Heads of State or Government also noted that international actions in the area of environment protection should be based on partnership and collective endeavours and should reflect the principle enunciated in the UNCED, of common but differentiated responsibilities. Integral to such actions is the promotion of economic growth in developing countries, that is both sustained and sustainable and direct action in eradicating poverty.

35. The Heads of State or Government also noted that the Commission on Sustainable Development set up to monitor the implementation of the Rio agreements has met thrice since their earlier meeting and expressed the hope that the Commission would be able to facilitate the necessary flow of resources and technology.

36. The Heads of State or Government also noted that the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have both come into force and the first meetings of the Conferences of Parties to each Convention have been held. Welcoming these developments they urged that developing countries should be assisted in meeting their commitments under the Conventions. The establishment of the restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a beginning in this direction. However, the Heads of State or Government urged that funds of a much larger order would be necessary if the needs of the Conventions are to be met.

## **TERRORISM**

37. The Heads of State or Government expressed serious concern on the spread of terrorism in and outside the region and reiterated their unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal. They deplored all such acts for their ruinous impact on life, property, socio-economic development and political stability as well as on regional and international peace and cooperation.

38. The Heads of State or Government once again emphasised that highest priority should be accorded to the enactment of enabling legislation at the national level to give effect to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. They urged Member States, which had not yet done so, to enact expeditiously enabling legislation at the national level to implement the convention and reiterated the need for a constant dialogue and interaction among the concerned agencies of Member States, including submission of periodic recommendations to the Council of Ministers.

39. They underlined that cooperation among SAARC Member States was vital if the scourge of terrorism was to be eliminated from the region.

## **DRUG TRAFFICKING**

40. The Heads of State or Government recognised that drug abuse and drug trafficking with its linkages with organised crime, illicit arms trade and terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to the security and stability in the region.

41. While noting the efforts made by Member States as well as the regional cooperation underway to combat this pernicious trade, the Leaders stressed the urgency of further strengthening the process of cooperation.



42. The Leaders welcomed the ratification of the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances by all Member States and entry into force of the Convention in September 1993. They urged all Member States to take necessary follow-up action for effective implementation of the Convention.

### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

43. The Heads of State or Government reiterated that cooperation in the area of Science and Technology should be accorded high priority. Noting that some progress had been made towards establishment of networking arrangements, *inter-alia*, in the fields of Bio-Technology, Genetic Engineering, Energy Modelling Techniques and Low-Cost Housing and Building Technologies, the Leaders called for further acceleration of this process.

### **PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACT**

44. Reiterating their earlier resolve to further promote people-to-people contact through increased involvement of the peoples of South Asia in the process of regional cooperation, the Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that such interaction has been taking place through various fora both within and outside the SAARC framework and has contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding in the region.

45. The Leaders noted that SAARCLAW (an association for persons of the legal communities of SAARC countries) had been accorded recognition by SAARC. The Leaders hoped that SAARCLAW would play an effective role in fostering closer cooperation among the legal communities in the region.

46. The Leaders noted with satisfaction that the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has been functioning satisfactorily. They expressed hope that the SAARC Chamber and its constituent units in the Member States will do their utmost to promote trade and economic cooperation in the SAARC region. The Leaders commended the SAARC Chamber for disseminating information on the scope, content and potentials of SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) among the business community in the region.

47. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme is being implemented smoothly and has enhanced the scope of people-to-people contacts.

### **SOUTH ASIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (SADF)**

48. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the establishment of a three-window South Asian Development Fund with the merger of SAARC Fund for Regional Projects and the SAARC Regional Fund and a third window for social development and infrastructure development.

### **PROJECTION OF COLLECTIVE POSITIONS**

49. The Heads of State or Government recalled their decision taken at the Seventh SAARC Summit regarding development of collective positions in international fora on such issues as would enhance the international profile of South Asia and would enable the Member States to articulate their position on them more effectively. They noted that Council of Ministers had formulated a procedure for projection of SAARC collective positions at such international fora.

50. They noted with satisfaction that pursuant to the decision at the Seventh SAARC Summit, collective positions were formulated by Member States which were presented at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the World Summit for Social Development. The Leaders also noted with satisfaction that a SAARC collective position will also be presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995.

### **SECURITY OF SMALL STATES**

51. The Heads of State or Government reaffirming their commitment to universally accepted principles and norms relating to the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all States, recognised that small States, because of their particular problems, required special measures of support for safeguarding their independence and territorial integrity. They reiterated that real protection of small and weaker States should be firmly rooted in the rule of law. This, they stressed should be ensured by all countries either severally or collectively through the pursuit of appropriate actions.

### **INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

52. The Heads of State or Government noted that the end of the Cold War had resulted in fundamental changes in the political landscape. It was therefore important that a new idiom be found to address new concerns. The disappearance of the confrontation between the two power blocs presented an opportunity towards building a genuine consensus for a new international order.



53. The Heads of State or Government had wide ranging discussions on the current global political trends and future prospects, particularly those issues that concern South Asia. In this context, they reiterated their deep commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen the United Nations as the central instrument for peace, security, disarmament, development and cooperation among the nations of the world. While pledging their support to all constructive initiatives aimed at strengthening the United Nations, the Leaders emphasised that such initiatives must be undertaken with the sole objective of rendering the United Nations and all its organs more democratic, efficient and effective and not to limit the focus of its attention to a narrow and isolated range of objectives.

54. Appreciating the role of some SAARC Member States in the UN Peace Keeping Operations in various parts of the world, the Heads of State or Government felt that such participation had contributed towards maintenance of peace and security in the world.

55. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their firm commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-aligned Movement and underlined the continued validity and relevance of these principles and objectives in the contemporary world. They recalled the stabilising role played by the Movement in global affairs since its inception. They expressed their deep conviction that the Movement's innate strength equipped it to continue to play a most constructive role in laying the foundations of a new world order based on the rule of law, non-discrimination, equity and cooperation.

56. The Heads of State or Government noted that while the international community had successfully created the norm against chemical and biological weapons, it had, unfortunately, been unable to do the same with regard to nuclear weapons. The Leaders were convinced that more needs to be done and at a far greater pace. Reiterating that the utmost priority was to be given to nuclear disarmament, given the danger posed by nuclear weapons, they urged the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances and undertake negotiations for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time bound framework.

57. The Heads of State or Government expressed their strong commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. They agreed to take all necessary steps to achieve this objective.

#### **INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

58. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and reaffirmed their commitment to implement fully and as scheduled, the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. They also welcomed the coming into existence of the WTO and expressed the hope that it would help to expand international trade, particularly that of the developing countries. They reaffirmed the immediate need to elaborate policies to enable developing countries, to take advantage of expanded international trading opportunities, in the context of the full implementation of the Round. They called on all countries to refrain from any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and enlightened regionalism and globalism that creates obstacles to trade relations among States and thereby impedes the full realisation of social and economic development.

59. Recognising that the promotion of mutually reinforcing broad-based sustained economic growth on a global scale, as well as a non-discriminatory, and multilateral rule-based international trading system, provided a basis for social development, the Heads of State or Government called for the establishment of an open, equitable, cooperative and mutually beneficial international economic environment. They also called for a reduction of trade barriers and promotion of expanded access to global markets.

60. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to safeguard the basic interests of workers. They called upon countries to refrain from erecting trade barriers in the guise of promotion and protection of workers' rights. They deplored the tendency to impose any conditionalities on international trade, whether as a "social clause" or as the "environmental clause", while reiterating their commitment to ensuring workers' rights as well as protection of the environment.

#### **SPECIAL MEASURES FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED AND LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES**

61. The Heads of State or Government noted with deep concern that economic growth in the Least Developed Countries and Land-Locked Countries is not satisfactory and emphasised the need to take special measures for accelerating the process of development. They reiterated the need to fulfil the internationally agreed aid targets for the developing countries and the Least Developed Countries. They emphasised on the need for exceptional finance to facilitate implementation of economic reform programmes in SAARC Countries.

#### **DATES AND VENUE OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE SAARC HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT**

62. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Maldives to host

the Ninth SAARC Summit. The dates would be finalised in consultation with Member States.

63. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the Prime Minister of India had discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Republic of India and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

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Ninth SAARC Summit  
Male'  
12-14 May 1997



# Declaration

*The Declaration of the Ninth SAARC Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 14 May 1997.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina; the King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck; the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral; the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; the Prime Minister of Kingdom of Nepal, Rt. Hon. Mr. Lokendra Bahadur Chand; the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Her Excellency Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga met at the Ninth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) at Malé, Maldives on 12-14 May 1997.

## REGIONAL COOPERATION

2. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to SAARC and resolved to accelerate regional cooperation in order to realise the aims and objectives of the Association. They reaffirmed their commitment to the principles enshrined in the SAARC Charter, especially to the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-interference in each others' internal affairs. They were convinced that regional cooperation was indispensable in an interdependent world for the realisation of the full potential of the South Asian region.

3. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the holding of the Commemorative Session of the Council of Ministers in New Delhi in December 1995 to mark the First Decade, on the theme "SAARC - Vision for the Second Decade". They observed that over the past decade SAARC has matured as an institution and the scope and volume of cooperative activities have expanded. They expressed satisfaction that in addition to continued cooperation in agreed areas, SAARC has now moved into the core areas of economic cooperation.

4. The Heads of State or Government noted that, in the twelve years of its existence, SAARC has seen progress in various fields of its endeavour. They directed that a Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) be constituted, with distinguished backgrounds in activities pertaining to regional cooperation, comprising of one representative from each Member State, with the discretion of each Member State to appoint an additional representative. This Group, to which the SAARC Secretary-General will be invited, will undertake a comprehensive appraisal of SAARC, and identify measures including mechanisms to further vitalise and enhance the effectiveness of the Association in achieving its objectives. They further decided that the Group may develop a long-range vision and formulate a perspective plan of action including a SAARC Agenda for 2000 and Beyond which will spell out the target that can and must be achieved by the year 2020. The Group may report to the Heads of State or Government at the Tenth SAARC Summit.

5. With a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the role and functioning of the Secretariat, the Heads of State or Government agreed to amend Article V (1) of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Secretariat and decided that the tenure of the Secretary-General, with immediate effect, shall be for a non-renewable term of three years.

6. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their determination to reinforce the unity and cohesion of SAARC. With the objective of enhancing regional solidarity and promoting overall development within SAARC, the Heads of State or Government encouraged, under the provisions of Articles VII and X of the Charter, the development of specific projects relevant to the special individual needs of three or more Member States.

7. They agreed that a climate of mutual accommodation and purposeful cooperation was needed to impart further impetus to the SAARC process during the second decade of SAARC in order to address the developmental challenges facing the region.

## ENHANCING POLITICAL COOPERATION

8. The Heads of State or Government recalled their commitment to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding and, recognising that the aims of promoting peace, stability and amity and accelerated socio-economic cooperation may best be achieved by fostering good neighbourly relations, relieving tensions and building confidence, agreed that a process of informal political consultations would prove useful in this regard.

## ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN SOUTH ASIA

9. The Heads of State or Government were unequivocal in their commitment to the eradication of poverty in South Asia at the earliest, preferably by the year 2002 A.D. through an Agenda of Action. They noted with satisfaction the establishment of a three-tier mechanism on poverty eradication and endorsed the recommendations of the two rounds of meetings under this mechanism hosted by India and Pakistan, respectively. They desired that the Ministers of Finance / Planning should meet again in the near future to give further impetus to this process.

10. In considering the Report of the Ministers of Finance/Planning, the Heads of State or Government agreed that effective implementation of poverty eradication programmes required a focus on greater participation of target groups in the formulation and implementation of such programmes through social mobilization. They, therefore, decided to designate 1997 as the "SAARC Year of Participatory Governance".

11. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the successful holding of the Micro-credit Summit in Washington, D.C. in February 1997 and its Declaration of support to launch a global campaign to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially women, with credit for self-employment and other financial and business services, by the year 2005 A.D.

12. Recognising that micro-credit programmes have successfully demonstrated their usefulness toward achieving many goals of socio-economic upliftment, including the eradication of poverty and empowerment of women, the Leaders agreed to intensify endeavours in their respective countries so that the outreach of these programmes becomes widespread.

13. The Heads of State or Government were convinced that an enabling international environment to support poverty eradication efforts of the SAARC countries is an essential element in attaining success for these efforts. They urged all donor countries, international institutions and other bodies engaged in eradication of poverty to increase their support and assistance to these efforts.

#### **ACCELERATION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

14. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the entry into force of the Agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) on 7 December 1995. They recognised the importance of achieving a free trade area by the year 2001 A.D. and reiterated that steps towards trade liberalisation must take into account the special needs of the smaller and the Least Developed Countries and that benefits must accrue equitably.

15. While expressing satisfaction at the conclusion of the two Rounds of Trade Negotiations under SAPTA, the Heads of State or Government welcomed the decision to launch the Third Round of Trade Negotiations shortly. They agreed that preferential tariff concessions should cover products which are being actively traded amongst Member States. They further agreed that the Third Round should deepen tariff concessions along with the removal of non-tariff barriers and structural impediments in order to move speedily towards the goal of SAFTA.

16. The Leaders welcomed the holding of the First Meeting of the Commerce Ministers and the First SAARC Trade Fair in New Delhi in 1996 and noted the decision of the Commerce Ministers to meet annually. They further welcomed the offer of Pakistan to host the second SAARC Trade Fair to coincide with the SAARC Commerce Ministers' Meeting.

17. The Heads of State or Government agreed that the efforts to enhance trade and economic co-operation in the region would be further strengthened by initiating specific steps to promote and protect investment, increase complementarities in economic activities of Member States and other measures supportive of promotion of SAARC joint ventures. They also welcomed the offer of India to host a meeting on promotion and protection of investment and the offer of Pakistan to host a meeting on avoidance of double taxation. They also welcomed measures of cooperation in the areas of customs standardisation, arbitration and enhancing industrial economy and management.

18. The Heads of State or Government agreed that in intensifying economic cooperation the interests of smaller countries, especially the least developed among them, should be taken into account through the implementation of special measures in their favour.

19. The Heads of State or Government noted that inadequate communications facilities amongst the Member States were a major hindrance to closer economic co-operation. They stressed the importance of developing infrastructure and adequate communication networks among Member States to reinforce the process of economic co-operation. In this regard, they highlighted the need for the simplification of complex documentation procedures and transactional software to facilitate economic interaction across the region. They welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host a Meeting of the Communication Ministers of the Member States.

20. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their determination to encourage the private sector in the region to contribute increasingly to the strengthening of intra-SAARC links in key areas of trade, investment and finance. They welcomed the decision by the SCCI to convene annually an Economic Cooperation Conference in conjunction with the annual meeting of SAARC Commerce Ministers and SAARC Trade Fairs.



## **INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF ACTION (IPA)**

21. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the need to make the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) more effective through the selection of target-oriented and time-bound activities within an overall framework of enhanced co-operation among Member States. In this context, they noted that the Secretary-General had been authorised by the Council of Ministers to constitute a Group of Experts to review the IPA.

## **REGIONAL CENTRES**

22. The Heads of State or Government noted that Regional Centres have an important role to play in harnessing the resources and capabilities within the SAARC region in addressing specific and shared concerns of Member States. They welcomed the decision of the Council of Ministers to establish a Human Resource Development Centre in Pakistan.

23. They stressed that Regional Centres should implement action and result-oriented programmes and highlighted the importance of rationalising the functioning of these Centres.

## **WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**

24. The Heads of State or Government recognised that increased social and political awareness in the region had brought positive contributions to the issues of gender equality and empowerment of women. They further emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation to achieve the desired objective of bringing women into the mainstream of socio-economic development in the region. In this context, they emphasised the urgency to effectively implement the recommendations of the "Dhaka Resolution on Women", issued at the conclusion of the SAARC Ministerial Conference on Women and presented to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

25. Taking note of the mid-decade review of the SAARC Plan of Action on the Girl-Child, the Heads of State or Government expressed their determination to accelerate efforts at reduction of malnutrition and mortality rates, raising education and literacy rates, reduction of the proportion of early marriage among girls, and the postponement of the age of first pregnancy, thereby contributing to the increased welfare of the girl-child and reduction of population growth rates.

26. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to take urgent action to alleviate the situation of Girl Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (GCEDC), including those orphaned, disabled and/or exploited. In this context, they endorsed the recommendations made by the Council of Ministers, aimed at the creation of a socio-economic environment in the SAARC region which would provide equal opportunities to children from all economic sections.

27. Expressing grave concern at the trafficking of women and children within and between countries, the Heads of State or Government pledged to coordinate their efforts and take effective measures to address this problem. They decided that existing legislation in Member States should be strengthened and strictly enforced. This should include simplification of repatriation procedures for victims of trafficking. They also decided that the feasibility of establishing a Regional Convention on Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution be examined by the relevant Technical Committee.

## **CHILDREN**

28. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the annual reviews of the situation of children in SAARC countries for the years 1995 and 1996 revealed significant progress in reducing infant mortality and in enhancing the coverage of immunisation in the region. They stressed that sustained efforts should be made by Member States to consolidate the gains in these areas. In this regard, they welcomed the decision to designate Seventh December, 1997 and Eighteenth January, 1998 as "SAARC Polio Immunisation Days".

29. The Heads of State or Government resolved to implement appropriate policies at the national level to achieve the targets and objectives set out in the Rawalpindi Declaration issued at the end of the Third Ministerial Conference on the Children of South Asia held in August 1996, including the call to eliminate the evil of child-labour from the region by the year 2010 A.D. They called for stringent measures to protect children from all forms of exploitation. To this end, the Leaders agreed to set up a Study Group at an appropriate level to examine the social compulsions that create the problem.

30. They reaffirmed their commitment to improve the status of children in disadvantaged circumstances in the SAARC region. They recognised that the problems of these children are inextricably linked to the prevailing socio-economic conditions and problems of the region, and therefore, called for a holistic approach to address them. They expressed the need to formulate a Convention on Regional Arrangements on the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia in launching the SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child, from the year 2001 A.D. to 2010 A.D.

## **NUTRITION**

34. Conscious of the continuing problems faced by disabled persons, the Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their resolve to continue the implementation of the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Disabled Persons held in Islamabad in December 1993.

## **SHELTER**

35. The Heads of State or Government emphasized that housing was a basic right of all people and reiterated their determination to sustain efforts to improve the condition of human settlements in the region, with a view to achieving the global objective of "Shelter for All by the Year 2000".

## **LITERACY**

36. The Heads of State or Government recognised that illiteracy is one of the major causes impeding the development of the vast human resource potential of the region and a major factor contributing to the region's economic backwardness and social imbalance. They noted that the Member States had observed "1996 as the SAARC Year of Literacy" and reiterated their commitment to continue endeavours to eradicate illiteracy from the region.

37. Recognising the resource, manpower and infrastructural constraints to the promotion of vocational and higher education in the region, the Leaders agreed that new and innovative methods like Open Learning and Distance Education can play an effective role in meeting regional needs in a cost effective and flexible manner. Accordingly, they agreed that the institutional facilities in such education available in the region should be utilised on a regional scale. The possibility of the creation of a Consortium of Open Universities in the region should also be explored.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

38. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern about the continuing degradation of the environment in different parts of the world including the SAARC region. While recognizing that collective initiatives were required urgently to address the challenge posed by such degradation, they noted that unsustainable consumption patterns in the developed countries and widespread poverty in the developing countries are major factors contributing to ecological degradation in different parts of the world. In this regard, they noted that although both developed and developing countries were required to undertake specific initiatives to face environmental concerns, stress should also be laid on the acceleration of development in developing countries to enable them to face environmental challenges.

39. Reviewing the work carried out in the area of disseminating information on the problems of environmental degradation and their impact on the region, the Heads of State or Government expressed the urgent need for the implementation of the recommendations of the SAARC Regional Study on the Greenhouse Effect and its Impact on the Region, and the Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment. They welcomed the offer of the Maldives to host a meeting of the SAARC Environment Ministers to focus more directly on the Environment concerns of the region including the formulation of a Plan of Action for immediate implementation of recommendations contained in the two Studies, taking into account the recommendations made by the Meeting of the Environment Ministers in New Delhi in April 1997. The Leaders felt that the meeting may also consider the feasibility of drawing up a Regional Treaty on Environment in the context of existing international Conventions on the subject. They reiterated their view that Member States should take all necessary steps in vital areas such as sharing and developing scientific capabilities to protect and manage the environment.

40. The Heads of State or Government agreed on the urgent need for cooperation through exchange of information, strategies and technologies for combating pollution of air and water and for evolving common minimum standards which could be applied region-wide in this regard. Recognising the wealth of bio-diversity in the South Asian region and expressing concern at the threat of its progressive depletion through degradation and fragmentation, they affirmed their commitment to take steps towards the protection and conservation of these genetic resources. They noted that many areas rich in bio-diversity in South Asia lay along shared borders and agreed to cooperate in the creation of contiguous protected areas where identified. They also agreed to cooperate in the prevention of illegal trafficking in flora and fauna and devise an appropriate mechanism for this purpose, including the possibility of concluding a Convention. They decided that the meeting of SAARC Environment Ministers should be institutionalised henceforth as an annual event.

41. While expressing concern at the slow progress in the implementation of the Agenda 21, the Heads of State or Government called for the urgent implementation of the commitments, recommendations and agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. In particular, they also called for the early implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change and the adoption of a Protocol or another legal instrument for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by developed countries within an early timeframe, but not later than the year 2005 A.D.

42. The Heads of State or Government underlined the importance of projecting an effective, and coordinated collective position of SAARC at the forthcoming Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21. In this regard, they fully endorsed the New Delhi Declaration issued at the end of the SAARC Ministerial Conference on Environment held from 2-3 April 1997, as amended at the Eighteenth Session of the Council of Ministers.

### **TERRORISM AND DRUG TRAFFICKING**

43. Recognising that terrorism and drug trafficking pose a serious threat to security and stability of Member States, the Heads of State or Government reiterated their firm commitment to combat these activities in the region. They emphasised the urgent need to complete enabling legislation in order to implement the SAARC Regional Conventions on Suppression of Terrorism and on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

44. The Heads of State or Government recalled the adoption of the 1996 UN Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism and urged all Member States to work towards its implementation. They called for international action to prevent the abuse of Refugee Conventions and to halt activities which help terrorist groups to collect funds for their activities in South Asia.

45. The Heads of State or Government noted the establishment of the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) and the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) in Colombo. They agreed on the need to maintain regular flow of relevant information to enable the Monitoring Desks to function effectively.

46. The Heads of State or Government noted with appreciation the convening of the First SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters in Colombo during July 1996. They endorsed the outcome of the Conference, particularly, the call for sharing of expertise with regard to the different areas of police investigation and investigation of organised crime and drug related crimes. They welcomed the offer of the Maldives to host the second Conference in 1997.

### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

47. Noting that cooperation in the field of Science and Technology was imperative in ensuring the acceleration of the process of development in the region and recognising the progress made in this field, the Heads of State or Government emphasised the need to continue cooperation in this area, especially in facilitating research and exchange of information in the fields of bio-technology, genetic engineering, energy modelling techniques and low-cost housing and building technologies.

### **TOURISM**

48. Emphasising that tourism plays an important role in promoting people to people contact in the region, the Heads of State or Government stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation with the aim of realising its full potential in the region. They were convinced that greater cooperation in this area would contribute to the enhancement of people-to-people contact within the region as well as to the economic development of Member States.

49. The Heads of State or Government noted that organised tourism in South Asia has not yet achieved its full potential, and recommended that appropriate measures to promote tourism be given priority, and in this regard, welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Colombo in 1997.

### **PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACT**

50. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their conviction that enhanced people-to-people contact would contribute to strengthening mutual understanding and goodwill among the people in the region. In this context, they noted the positive contribution made by SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and SAARCLAW.

51. They observed that SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships Scheme should be increasingly used to facilitate greater interaction among students, scholars and academics in the region.

52. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the inclusion of new categories of persons from different walks of life in the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme and believed that this would further promote people-to-people contact.

53. They noted the offer of Sri Lanka to host the First SAARC Film Festival in Colombo in 1998 to coincide

with the 50th anniversary of the Independence of Sri Lanka.

54. The Heads of State or Government agreed that the SAARC countries possess enormous tourism potential that should be properly utilised for the benefit of the people of the region. In this context, they decided that the civil aviation authorities of Member States should meet in the very near future with a view to establishing direct air services between SAARC capitals which would promote people-to-people contact and encourage tourism. They welcomed the offer of Bangladesh to host the first meeting of the civil aviation authorities.

#### **SOUTH ASIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (SADF)**

55. While expressing satisfaction that the South Asian Development Fund (SADF) had been established in June 1996 initially with its headquarters in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the Heads of State or Government recognised the need to make the Fund operational at the earliest.

#### **PROJECTION OF COLLECTIVE POSITIONS**

56. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to develop collective SAARC positions in international fora on issues of common concern, in order to enhance the international profile of South Asia as well as to enable Member States to articulate their position on such issues in a more effective manner. In this regard, they noted with satisfaction the collective SAARC positions finalised and presented prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, HABITAT II held in Istanbul in June 1996, and World Food Summit held in Rome in November 1996. They also expressed satisfaction with the formulation of a SAARC common position before the forthcoming Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21.

#### **SECURITY OF SMALL STATES**

57. The Heads of State or Government recognised that small states, because of their particular vulnerabilities, require special measures of support from the international community for safeguarding their sovereign independence and territorial integrity. They further reaffirmed their view that such support should be firmly rooted in the scrupulous adherence to the UN Charter, the rule of law and strict adherence to universally accepted principles and norms related to sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all States irrespective of size. This, they emphasised, may be ensured by all countries either severally or collectively through the pursuit of appropriate action.

#### **INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

58. The Heads of State or Government had wide ranging discussions on current international issues, particularly those that affect South Asia. In this context, reiterating their deep commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the Heads of State or Government recalled that the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations in October 1995 had highlighted the need to strengthen, revitalize and reform the Organization. They reiterated their support to the on-going process of restructuring and revitalizing the Organization and reaffirmed their resolve to make it a more effective universal instrument for addressing international issues on an equitable and democratic basis, taking full account of the interests and concerns of all states.

59. Addressing the question of reform of the United Nations, the Heads of State or Government laid particular emphasis on the principle of sovereign equality of States and on equitable geographical representation in regard to the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council. They recognised the need to make the Security Council more representative, democratic and transparent, so that it is better equipped to uphold its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

60. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their firm commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and underscored the continued validity and relevance of these principles and objectives in the contemporary world. They expressed their deep conviction that the Movement's innate strength equips it to continue to play a most constructive role in laying the foundations of a new world order based on the rule of law, non-interference, equity and cooperation.

61. The Heads of State or Government while expressing support to the continuation of the peace process in the Middle East, expressed concern at the setback to the peace process and unleashing of violence against Palestinian people in occupied territories and the resulting threat to the peace process due to policies of the Government of Israel in establishing and enlarging existing Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. They were convinced that the peace process should be continued by honouring previous commitments made by all parties involved. They also called for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of self determination and the establishment of a sovereign State under the leadership of PLO, their sole legitimate representative, which could co-exist with its neighbours in peace and harmony.

62. Noting that the end of the Cold War had created unprecedented opportunities in the field of disarmament,

the Heads of State or Government recognised the need for the international community to pursue nuclear disarmament as a matter of highest priority. In this regard, they recognised the need to start negotiations through the Conference on Disarmament and to establish a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, including a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

63. While reiterating their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, the Heads of State or Government resolved to take all necessary steps to achieve this objective.

#### **INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

64. The Heads of State or Government noted that current trends of globalisation and liberalisation were imposing a heavy burden on developing economies, in particular, the least developed countries (LDCs) which are becoming marginalised from the mainstream of the world economy. They also expressed concern over trends to erect new protectionist barriers by linking imports from developing countries to politically motivated social and environmental values and concerns, such as human rights. They observed that the impact of these trends is compounded by new challenges relating to issues of access to markets, capital and new technologies. They also noted with regret the overall decline in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) over the years which has contributed to the aggravation of the condition of the LDCs.

65. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the promotion of a non-discriminatory and multilateral rule-based global system of economic relations in order to engage the developing countries constructively and on the basis of reciprocal shared benefits in the process of liberalisation, as well as to assist them integrate into the global economy.

66. The Heads of State or Government called on the developed countries to assist the developing countries through the creation of a favourable and supportive global economic environment, in particular, through domestic action in their countries for purposes of accelerating investment flows to developing countries thereby generating a positive impact on the developmental efforts of developing countries as well as assisting their integration into the multilateral trading system. They also called on the developed countries to substantially reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers and desist from restrictive trade practices, which would negatively affect the access of developing countries to global markets.

#### **SPECIAL MEASURES FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED AND LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES**

67. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the need for priority action on various international development commitments, such as the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for LDCs for the 1990s.

68. While noting with deep concern that economic growth in the Least Developed and Land-Locked Countries is not progressing well, the Heads of State or Government stressed the need to take special measures for accelerating the process of development. They emphasized the need to fulfil the internationally agreed aid targets for ensuring accelerated and sustained economic growth in developing countries particularly in the Least Developed Countries. They stressed on the need for adequate resources to facilitate implementation of economic reform programmes in SAARC countries.

69. The Heads of State or Government emphasised that the review of the criteria for the determination of LDC status for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly this year, must take into account the special significance of the extent and magnitude of incidence of poverty in the poorest countries and the special vulnerabilities of small island states.

#### **DATES AND VENUE OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT.**

70. The Heads of State or Government accepted with deep appreciation the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Tenth SAARC Summit. They further decided that the Eleventh and Twelfth Summits will be held in Nepal and Pakistan, respectively.

71. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their sincere appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the President of the Republic of the Maldives had conducted the Meeting and guided its proceedings in his capacity as Chairman. They expressed their deep gratitude for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Maldives and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.





Tenth SAARC Summit  
Colombo  
29-31 July 1998





# Declaration

*The Declaration of the Tenth SAARC Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 31 July 1998, in Colombo.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina; Chairman, Council of Ministers and Head of Government of the Royal Government of Bhutan, His Excellency Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley; the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee; the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal, Rt. Hon. Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala; the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif; and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Her Excellency Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga met at the Tenth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at Colombo from July 29 to 31, 1998, in the year of the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Sri Lanka.

## REGIONAL COOPERATION

2. The Heads of State or Government re-affirmed their firm commitment to the objectives, principles and provisions of the Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and to the pursuit of regional cooperation on the basis of their acceptance of the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity of States, political independence, non-interference in each others internal affairs, non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of all disputes and mutuality of benefit.

3. The Heads of State or Government recognised that the rich potential for productive, equitable regional cooperation among the Governments and people of South Asia which accounts for a fifth of humanity should be fully realised.

## CULTURAL UNITY

4. The Heads of State or Government recognized that South Asia, while reflecting a rich, complex and varied plurality of cultural and religious traditions, was heir to a profound common civilizational continuum of great antiquity which constitutes a historical basis for sustaining harmonious relations among the people of the region. They acknowledged that the SAARC process could draw more deeply from the vitality and strength of South Asia's shared cultural heritage as a source influencing and enhancing creative energies in all fields.

5. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host a meeting of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs of SAARC to prepare a practical Action Plan to network the national institutes of cultural relations and to establish a South Asian Cultural Center to promote the distinctive arts of South Asia. They requested the Government of Sri Lanka to circulate a concept paper on the issues to be addressed by the meeting including financing arrangements for the proposed institute.

## ENHANCING POLITICAL COOPERATION

6. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding and, recognising that the aims of promoting peace, stability and amity and accelerated socio-economic cooperation may best be achieved by fostering good neighbourly relations, relieving tensions and building confidence, agreed that a process of informal political consultations would prove useful in this regard. The Heads of State or Government further recognized that this process would contribute to the appreciation of each other's problems and perceptions as well as for decisive action in agreed areas of regional cooperation.

## APPRAISAL OF SAARC ACTIVITIES

7. The Heads of State or Government continued their review of the nature, extent, and effectiveness of the cooperative activities of SAARC. They considered the Report and Recommendations of the Group of Eminent Persons mandated by the Ninth Summit in Male' to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of SAARC and to develop an Agenda for 2000 and beyond. They expressed appreciation for the Chairman of the Ninth Summit, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the President of the Maldives for convening the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) and encouraging them to complete their work within the time frame given to them by the Ninth SAARC Summit.

8. The Heads of State or Government directed the Council of Ministers to examine the Report of the Group

of Eminent Persons in depth at their next Session, taking into consideration the views of Member States with regard to the viability of the recommendations and the method of their implementation.

## **SAARC IN THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

9. The Heads of State or Government assessed the implications of current global economic developments on the economies of South Asia and other developing countries. They noted the profundity of the wide-spread changes being effected in the economic, technological, social and information fields and their apparent unpredictability. They expressed serious concern over the severe distortions produced by the process of unrestrained globalisation as has been evidenced in the downturn of economies of several Asian States. The challenges and opportunities inherent in these fast evolving developments could best be met and the full potential of South Asia realized through effective practical regional and bilateral cooperation among Member States.

10. They noted that the benefits of the so described "liberalization" have been disappointingly asymmetrical with the process proceeding at a much slower pace in areas of special interest to developing countries. Increased opportunities in trade and investment have bypassed many developing countries. The Least Developed Countries have in particular been marginalised through a series of developments including the shrinking of ODA, concessional and other financial flows to these countries.

11. The Heads of State or Government noted the initiation of links between SAARC and economic unions and trading groups that were emerging in the wake of globalization and liberalization and considered how best relationships of mutual benefit could be established.

12. The Heads of State or Government observed that following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva, a process has been initiated at the WTO where implementation issues, built in agenda issues, issues arising out of the WTO Ministerial Conference and other multi-lateral trade issues will be considered with a view to making recommendations to the next Ministerial Conference of the WTO in 1999. These issues and the decisions arising from this process will have far-reaching consequences for our development strategies and prospects. The Heads of State or Government, therefore, resolved that SAARC countries would endeavour to coordinate their decisions on these issues in areas of common concern so as to protect and promote the interest of the developing countries. They expressed concern about the erection of protectionist barriers and the tendency to impose arbitrary "norms" relating to labour conditions, environmental regulations, governance and other extraneous issues to regulate trade exchanges, which would amount to additional non-tariff barriers, that would have the effect of restricting market access for developing countries including preferential access by Least Developed Countries (LDCs) into markets of developed countries. They agreed on the need for collective strategies to promote a rule-based, non-discriminatory and equitable international trading system in which the interests and concerns of developing countries would be fully safeguarded and served.

13. The Heads of State or Government noted that emerging issues relating to copyright, patents and marketing franchises including on foodgrains, plants and herbs indigenous to South Asia require firm collective responses to preserve these bio-resources from unregulated commercial exploitation by extra-regional interests. They emphasized in this regard, the principle of sustainable development of bio-resources and the provisions of the UN Convention on Bio-diversity which provided for regulated access to such resources on terms and conditions to be agreed upon with the State in which such resources are located.

14. The Heads of State or Government cautioned that potential efforts to formulate a new Multilateral Investment Agreement should not overlook the need to ensure the continued independence of developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to formulate specific investment policies appropriate to their stage of development.

15. While reviewing the beneficial effects of globalization, the Heads of State or Government stressed the fact that systemic crises are becoming unpredictable with increased globalization. They expressed their concern about the shortcomings of the international monetary and financial system, and its tardiness in anticipating impending financial market crises sufficiently in advance, so that pre-emptive remedial action be adopted. They noted that the problem is systemic, and not unique to Asia, nor confined to emerging economies, and that it can have global ramifications, unless more fundamental reforms are put in place.

16. They recognized the risk that ad-hoc approaches, however prompt, once crises supervene, may lead to excessive social costs in the attempt to restore financial discipline. More effective social safety nets would, therefore, need to be devised for protecting vulnerable groups and a more appropriate balance between financing and adjustment found in a reformed international system or architecture, if both the economic and social aspirations of SAARC countries are to be realized. They acknowledged the need to strengthen the individual financial systems of SAARC countries through enhancing institutional capacity, surveillance mechanisms as well as through closer consultations on, and coordination of macro-economic policies where appropriate.

17. The Heads of State or Government recognized that notwithstanding all national and regional endeavours for economic development and financial stability, the pervasive global economic environment continued to exert a major, sometimes negative influence on the outcome of these endeavours.

18. Against this background of the need to address systemic issues, they agreed on the vital imperative for strengthened cooperation among SAARC Members to identify, analyze and effectively contend with the complex multi-faceted challenges inherent in the global economic environment that is changing so radically, particularly in this last decade preceding the new millennium. They acknowledged the need to enhance the collective capacity of SAARC in respect of policy analysis, with a specific emphasis on international financial, monetary, trade and investment issues and their domestic ramifications.

19. The Heads of State or Government also expressed their abhorrence over the practice of imposition of unilateral coercive economic measures as an instrument of policy against developing countries. They called for their immediate cessation.

20. They stressed the need for more efficient capacity building to enable informed decision-making in these areas to enable innovative collective intervention to safeguard South Asian interests in international negotiations, as well as to develop some edge for effective leverage in such negotiations. The Heads of State or Government agreed on the urgent need for harnessing the rich intellectual and resource capacity of South Asia for this purpose.

21. The Heads of State or Government requested Sri Lanka, as Chairperson of the 10th Summit, to conduct consultations with Member States for the convening of a network of researchers comprising members of the Private Sector, Central Banks, Planning Ministries, Research Institutes and eminent economists nominated by Governments to identify, analyse and help SAARC faced up to current global, financial and economic developments affecting the region. They requested Sri Lanka to co-ordinate on necessary practical measures while keeping Member States informed in the matter. Heads of State or Government welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host a meeting in Colombo of representatives of SAARC, nominated by their Governments to study the matter further and report with practical recommendations on the matter in advance of the 21st Session of the Council of Ministers to facilitate early decisions.

#### **ACCELERATION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

22. The Heads of State or Government assessed progress made in the two rounds of negotiations already undertaken under SAPTA. They decided that the third round should be concluded well before the Twenty-first Session of the Council of Ministers. The Heads of State or Government decided that to accelerate progress in the next round of SAPTA negotiations, deeper preferential tariff concessions should be extended to products which are being actively traded, or are likely to be traded, among Members; that discriminatory practices and non-tariff barriers should be simultaneously removed on items in respect of which tariff concessions are granted or have been granted earlier. Measures to remove structural impediments should also be taken in order to move speedily towards the goal of SAFTA. They also directed that domestic content requirements under SAPTA Rules of Origin should be reduced and that the SAPTA Committee of Participants should meet by mid-October '98 in Colombo to finalise the extent of reduction in keeping with the decision of the Second SAARC Commerce Ministers' Meeting. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed that measures to enable smaller and Least Developed Countries to benefit equitably from economic liberalization were specially important.

23. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the importance of achieving SAFTA as mandated by the Ninth SAARC Summit. To this end they decided that a Committee of Experts, in consultation with Member States, be constituted with specific Terms of Reference (TOR) to work on drafting a comprehensive treaty regime for creating a free trade area. The Heads of State or Government expressed the view that such a treaty must incorporate, among other things, binding time-frames for freeing trade, measures to facilitate trade, and provisions to ensure an equitable distribution of benefits of trade to all states, especially for smaller and least developed countries, including mechanisms for compensation of revenue loss. They emphasised the importance of finalising the text of the regulatory framework by the year 2001.

24. The Heads of State or Government agreed that the benefits of economic liberalization would be more extensive and better balanced through the promotion of trade- creating joint ventures, investment and trade in services such as tourism.

25. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the outcome of the Second Meeting of the SAARC Commerce Ministers in Islamabad and welcomed their decision to coordinate SAARC's position on issues of common concern at the WTO. They welcomed in this connection the Declaration issued by the SAARC Commerce Ministers on the eve of the Second WTO Ministerial Meeting in Geneva, setting out a SAARC approach on these issues. Recognizing that critical issues would be decided at the Third WTO Ministerial Conference in the USA in 1999, the Heads of State or Government urged SAARC Commerce Ministers to work closely with a view to evolving better co-ordinated positions on all issues. They directed the Consultative Group of SAARC Permanent

Representatives to the WTO at Geneva to consult closely with like-minded countries to advance the interests of developing countries at all WTO Conferences.

26. The Heads of State or Government noted the progress made in preparations for the Second SAARC Trade Fair to be held in Sri Lanka from September 8-15, 1998. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the offer of Bangladesh to host the Third Meeting of SAARC Commerce Ministers in 1999 and the offer of Pakistan to stage the Third SAARC Trade Fair in 1999.

#### **PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACT**

27. The Heads of State or Government noted arrangements being finalized by Sri Lanka to host the First SAARC Film Festival in Colombo in 1998 in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of Sri Lanka.

28. The Heads of State or Government stressed that more convenient travel connections between SAARC countries were essential to facilitate fruitful interaction among people in the region, in particular, professional groups, creative artistes, pilgrims and journalists.

29. The Heads of State or Government considered means of encouraging more productive co-operation and collaboration between governments and the private sectors, including in the commissioning of studies relating to regional economic interaction.

30. They welcomed the contribution made by the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in facilitating the engagement of the private sector in regional economic interaction as well as initiating linkages with other regions for the purpose of promoting SAARC exports. The Heads of State or Government noted that a document entitled "Road Map to SAFTA" was presented by the President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) to the Chairperson of the Twentieth Session of the Council of Ministers.

#### **LINKS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

31. The Heads of State or Government noted links initiated between SAARC and other international and regional organizations. They considered the prospects for the development of SAARC projects and programmes in association with such organizations with which SAARC has cooperative arrangements as well as through other forms of cooperation. The Heads of State or Government were of the view that priority needs to be given in establishing contact with those regional groupings which have experience in economic cooperation and functional regional cooperation.

32. The Heads of State or Government also noted proposals for developing cooperation between SAARC and individual States outside the region. They requested the Council of Ministers to consider such proposals with a view to developing such contacts on the basis of mutual benefit and for the advancement of SAARC objectives.

#### **PROJECTION OF COMMON POSITIONS**

33. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their resolve to promote the articulation of joint positions at the United Nations and other fora where such action would be in the clear interest of all members of the Association.

#### **SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION**

34. With the objective of enhancing regional solidarity and promoting overall development within SAARC, the Heads of State or Government encouraged the development of specific projects relevant to the individual needs of three or more Member States under the provisions of Articles VII and X of the Charter.

#### **SECURITY OF SMALL STATES**

35. The Heads of State or Government recognized that due to their particular vulnerability, small States require special measures of support from the international community for the safeguarding of their sovereign independence and territorial integrity. They reiterated that real protection of small States should be firmly rooted in scrupulous adherence to the UN Charter, the rule of law and strict adherence to universally accepted principles and norms related to sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all States irrespective of size. This, they stressed should be ensured by all the countries either severally or collectively through the pursuit of appropriate action.

#### **SPECIAL MEASURES FOR LEAST DEVELOPED AND LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES**

36. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the need for priority action on various international development commitments, such as the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for LDCs for the 1990s.

37. While noting with deep concern that economic growth in the Least Developed and Land-Locked Countries

is not progressing well, the Heads of State or Government stressed the need to take special measures for accelerating the process of development. They emphasised the need to fulfil the internationally agreed aid targets for ensuring accelerated and sustained economic growth in developing countries particularly in the Least Developed Countries. They stressed on the need for adequate resources to facilitate implementation of economic reform programmes in SAARC countries.

38. The Heads of State or Government emphasised that the review of the criteria for the determination of LDC status for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly this year, must take into account the special significance of the extent and magnitude of incidence of poverty in the poorest countries and the special vulnerabilities of small island states.

## **EDUCATION AND LITERACY**

39. The Heads of State or Government were in agreement that illiteracy was a major impediment to economic development and social emancipation and that the eradication of illiteracy in the Region including through co-operative endeavours within SAARC must continue to be pursued resolutely.

40. The Heads of State or Government noted that the concepts of Open Learning and Distance Education could help substantially towards equal opportunities and access to knowledge. The Heads of State or Government directed that SAARC should build on the substantial expertise already existing in the Region in the field of open education, by establishing a SAARC Forum of Vice Chancellors of Open Universities. This Forum, consisting of regional leaders in the field, should strengthen cooperation in areas such as the sharing and joint development of programmes, credit transfers for specific programmes and the translation of existing programmes.

41. The Heads of State or Government urged the Forum, to spearhead the development of distance education outside the Open University System as well, drawing on the advances in Information Technology, to reach out to the remote and under-privileged sections. They welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host a meeting of Vice-Chancellors of SAARC Open Universities during the last quarter of 1998 to discuss the modalities for the establishment of the Forum and to draw up a programme to achieve the objectives identified by the Heads of State or Government. The Heads of State or Government requested the Forum to report to the Standing Committee on a continuous basis on its programmes.

## **ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN SOUTH ASIA**

42. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the commitment of SAARC to the eradication of poverty in the Region at the earliest possible, preferably by the year 2002. They emphasised the need to encourage maximum participation by target groups in the formulation and implementation of poverty eradication programmes. The Heads of State or Government were of the view that such participation is essential for success of efforts in this field. They stressed the need for effective utilisation of the SAARC Three-Tier Mechanism on Poverty Eradication and in that context welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host the next meeting of the SAARC Finance/ Planning Ministers under the Mechanism in October 1998.

43. The Heads of State or Government noted that the South Asian countries have provided leadership in developing and implementing Micro Credit Programmes, which have immense potential to contribute to the eradication of poverty. They were of the view that their respective programmes in this regard have proven to be effective and Member States would benefit by sharing experiences and exchanging information and expertise in this important area.

44. The Heads of State or Government noted that Human Resource Development is a key element in any poverty eradication programme. The Heads of State or Government, therefore, agreed that once the SAARC Centre for Human Resource Development in Islamabad is established, it could look in to the possibility of its contributing to the strengthening of the human resource development components of the regional poverty eradication programmes.

## **SOCIAL CHARTER**

45. The Heads of State or Government reviewed the progress made in the social sector by SAARC and determined that, in order to increase effectiveness, it would be necessary to develop, beyond national plans of action, a regional dimension of action including a specific role for SAARC. In this context, they agreed that it would be necessary for SAARC to develop a Social Charter, which would focus on drawing up targets with a broad range to be achieved across the region in the areas of poverty eradication, population stabilisation, the empowerment of women, youth mobilisation, human resource development, the promotion of health and nutrition and the protection of children. The Heads of State or Government further directed the Council of Ministers to initiate work on drawing up a Social Charter.

## COMMUNICATIONS

46. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the results of the First Conference of SAARC Communication Ministers held in Colombo in May, 1998. They noted that technological advances were making telecommunications an important medium for socio-economic development and developing commercial and business relations as well as promotion of people-to-people contact. They called for the speedy implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by the First Meeting of the SAARC Communication Ministers.

## TOURISM

47. The Heads of State or Government recognized that further efforts were required for South Asia to effectively tap the economic potential afforded by the global tourist industry as well as to encourage intra-SAARC tourism. They welcomed the convening of the First SAARC Tourism Ministers' Meeting in Colombo as a step towards this end and called for the effective implementation of its decisions, including the encouragement of active private sector participation in the promotion of tourism, both intra-regionally and internationally, simplification of visa-procedures for tourists and pilgrims, more convenient air and other travel links among SAARC countries including special regional fares and the co-ordination of activities of tour operators.

48. The Heads of State or Government identified the need to strengthen the existing air services between their respective Capitals, with a view to both facilitating tourism as well as people to people contacts. They called in this regard, for an early meeting of the Chairpersons/Chief Executive Officers of the national air lines.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

49. The Heads of State or Government noted that the development of a regional self-reliance capability for South Asia in scientific research and development was essential, given a global context in which barriers to the free flow of technology still remained in place. The Heads of State or Government appreciated the efforts to foster under the SAARC umbrella, collective co-operation in this field.

50. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the offer by the Government of India to hold a Special Meeting of SAARC Science and Technology Ministers to consider a SAARC Technology Initiative to Identify and implement specific regional projects in rural areas which would have the direct impact in improving the day-to-day life of people there. Such an initiative could include rural telecommunications, drinking water and sanitation and improvement of life standards.

51. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their earlier call for the effective and rapid institutionalization of SAARC co-operation in the field of bio-technology. They pointed out that South Asia with its vast reservoir of bio-diversity and tropical climate, has substantial potential for bio-industry development on a sustainable basis. Many of the food and nutritional needs of the SAARC region could be met by the application of bio-technology. Contemporary developments in intellectual property and patent law, moreover, heightened the need for vigilance against encroachment on the regional bio-diversity heritage by external entities.

52. The Heads of State or Government accordingly requested the Standing Committee, with assistance of the SAARC Secretariat, to report to the forthcoming Twenty-First Session of the Council of Ministers on practical and cost effective measures towards rapidly operationalising SAARC cooperation in bio-technology.

## ENVIRONMENT

53. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep satisfaction at the positive outcome of the Environment Ministers' Conference held in Malé in October 1997, and called for the effective and early implementation of the SAARC Environment Action Plan. In this context, they welcomed the offer of Maldives to prepare a feasibility study on the establishment of a Coastal Zone Management Centre. The Heads of State or Government also committed their governments to prepare National Environment Action Plans and State of the Environment Reports before the end of 1998.

54. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction over the adoption of a common position by Member States prior to the Third Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Kyoto, Japan and welcomed the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 1997, and underscored the importance of the Protocol for the protection of the climate system. They urged all industrial countries to ratify the Protocol and to undertake urgent and effective steps to implement the commitments undertaken by them to reduce their emissions of green-house gases.

55. The Heads of State or Government also emphasised the need for complementary action by organisations and institutions in the region in their efforts to protect the environment and achieve sustainable development in the region.

56. The Heads of State or Government noted that the SAARC Environment Ministers would be meeting in Sri Lanka in late 1998. They urged that the Ministers should at this forthcoming meeting also mandate any specific measures required for SAARC to further strengthen cooperation on environment issues, with other international or regional organizations engaged in the same field.

## **YOUTH**

57. The Heads of State or Government affirmed the importance they attached to providing adequate opportunities to youth in South Asia to participate productively in national development and underscored the need for developing programmes in this regard at the national and regional levels.

## **CHILDREN**

58. Recalling targets and objectives set out in the Rawalpindi Declaration of 1996, the Heads of State or Government noted that the 1997 Review of the Situation of Children in South Asia had revealed progress in the reduction of infant mortality and increased coverage of immunization programmes. They stressed, however, that continued efforts required to be sustained in these areas. Serious efforts were also required in respect of education for all children and the reduction of gender disparities. In addition to national programmes, the Heads of State or Government called for the identification of practical regional programmes which could benefit from cooperation with relevant regional and international organisations with which SAARC has cooperative arrangements for the promotion of the welfare of children.

59. The Heads of State or Government condemned the exploitation of children by terrorist groups in hostilities and called for special measures for the psychological, physical and social rehabilitation of child victims. In this respect, the Heads of State or Government noted the initiative taken by Maldives in pursuance of their directive at the Ninth SAARC Summit in drafting the Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia. They welcomed the offer of Maldives to hold an Expert Group Meeting to finalise the draft Convention for its adoption at the Eleventh SAARC Summit.

## **SITUATION OF WOMEN AND THE GIRL CHILD**

60. The Heads of State or Government noted that many groups of women and girl children in South Asia continue to be in disadvantaged positions and lack equal opportunities for economic and social development. They were of the view that sustained efforts and practical affirmative action was required to offset the effects of discriminatory, social and psychological perceptions and to empower women through affirmative action, including where necessary, legislative measures. The Heads of State or Government condemned in particular violence against women and acts of discrimination and humiliation which tend to depress the status of women. They also expressed concern over the plight of women and girl children in situations of conflict. Equal opportunities in education, health facilities and nutrition were vital for the integration of women in the mainstream of national development. They agreed to work in close association, where possible, with professional and other women's groups in the region to ameliorate their conditions.

61. The Heads of State or Government recalled that the Ninth SAARC Summit expressed concern at the trafficking of women and children within and between countries and pledged to coordinate efforts of Member States to take effective measures to address this problem. In this context, they welcomed the finalisation of the draft text on the Regional Convention on Combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution and noted that this would be a vital instrument in dealing with this problem. They approved that the Convention be signed at the Eleventh SAARC Summit.

62. The Heads of State or Government also recommended that the feasibility of establishing a Regional Fund for Rehabilitation of Victims of Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution on a voluntary basis may be explored.

63. The Heads of State or Government were also of the view that the scope of the Convention should be broadened to cover purposes other than prostitution.

64. The Heads of State or Government noted that a gender disaggregated data-base on the basis of data provided by Member States would be a valuable means of assisting the formulation of national and regional policies and programmes in respect of women and the girl child.

## **HEALTH**

65. The Heads of State or Government noted the rich heritage of traditional systems of medicine (TSM) in the region. They observed that regional cooperation in this area would be worthwhile and relevant for meeting basic health needs. They welcomed the offer of India to host the First Health Ministers Conference to evolve proposals for cooperation in this field.

66. The Heads of State or Government urged that the regional pharmaceutical industries should strengthen cooperation. They were further of the view that the Member States could establish Action Committees in terms of Article VII of the SAARC Charter for such cooperation, if required.

### **DISABLED PERSONS**

67. The Heads of State or Government recalled the Islamabad Resolution on Disabled Persons and underscored the importance of having a very definite humanistic approach to ensuring the welfare of the 100 million disabled persons of this region. In this respect, the Heads of State or Government accepted the proposal of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the establishment of a SAARC Voluntary Fund for Disabled Persons.

### **INFORMATION**

68. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the recommendations of the First Meeting of SAARC Information Ministers held in Dhaka in April, 1998 and the offer of Pakistan to host the Second Meeting of Information Ministers of SAARC Countries.

69. The Heads of State or Government called for concerted endeavours for the promotion of practical programmes among South Asian countries, including through professional organizations, in the field of information and media exchanges benefitting from technological advances. Such action would help promote deeper understanding of issues common to the region, as well as to project a more balanced view of developments in the region. They welcomed the offer of India to host the First Meeting of SAARC Editors and Journalists.

### **TERRORISM AND DRUG TRAFFICKING**

70. The Heads of State or Government recognized that the Member States and peoples of South Asia continue to face the serious threat of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and drug trafficking. They reiterated their firm commitment to combat these activities in the region. They emphasized the urgent need to complete enabling legislation in order to implement the SAARC Regional Conventions on Suppression of Terrorism and on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

71. The Heads of State or Government urged all Member States to enhance cooperation against terrorism, wherever, by whomever, against whoever it occurs and to fully observe and implement the SAARC Regional Convention on Terrorism.

72. The Heads of State or Government affirmed that criminal acts intended to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons, for whatever purposes, are unjustifiable in any circumstances.

73. The Heads of State or Government recalled the adoption of the 1996 UN Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism and urged all Member States to work towards its implementation. They called for international action to prevent the abuse of Refugee Conventions and to halt activities which help terrorist groups to collect funds for their activities in South Asia.

74. The Heads of State or Government noted that two SAARC Conferences on Cooperation in Police Matters had been held since 1996. They called for the continued sharing of expertise with regard to the different areas of police investigation, and investigation of organized crime and drug related crimes.

### **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

75. The Heads of State or Government taking note of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reaffirmed their commitment to the further promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms by strengthening the respective national institutions in South Asia in this field. The Leaders agreed that tolerance and mutual accommodation, combined with the strengthening of participatory governance, constituted the foundation for the sustainable economic and social development of the SAARC region.

### **INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

76. The Heads of State or Government consulted informally on a range of international issues, particularly those which have a bearing on South Asia. They re-affirmed their strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and agreed that their delegations would work closely in the ongoing negotiations for the reform and strengthening of the UN system, so that the Organisation could be more democratic, efficient and financially viable and responsive to the interests of its membership, especially developing countries.

77. The Heads of State or Government also underscored the importance of the role of the Non-Aligned Movement in promoting a just and equitable global order and called for the further enhancing of the efforts of the Movement to influence positively contemporary international relations. In this context, they expressed full confidence



that the Twelfth Summit of the Movement scheduled to take place in South Africa would contribute towards augmenting the Movement's effectiveness.

78. The Heads of State or Government were of the view that stability, peace and security in South Asia could not be considered in isolation of the global security environment. Although great power rivalry which the NAM had consistently opposed, no longer posed a serious threat and the danger of a global nuclear conflagration had abated, yet some States had sought to maintain huge arsenals of nuclear weapons. The NPT and the CTBT, to which some SAARC members were signatories, had not led to any progress towards nuclear disarmament nor prevented proliferation. They underscored their commitment to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the need for promoting nuclear disarmament on a universal basis, under effective international control. They recognised that global non-proliferation goals cannot be achieved in the absence of progress towards nuclear disarmament and in this context called upon all nuclear weapon states, whether party or non-party to the NPT to engage constructively through a transparent and credible process of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament.

79. The Heads of State or Government therefore urged the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory international instrument prohibiting the use or the threat of nuclear weapons as well as eliminating such weapons in existing arsenals.

80. The Heads of State or Government noted the outcome of the recent UN Diplomatic Conference on the establishment of an International Criminal Court and the fact that the Conference had not addressed such issues as the crime of drug trafficking and the crime of terrorism with its use of indiscriminate violence aimed at innocent civilians and use of weapons of mass destruction. They emphasised the need to ensure that the proposed Court should respect the sovereignty of States consistent with the principle of complementarity with national jurisdiction on which the Statute of the Court is based.

81. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the enhanced status accorded to Palestine at UN fora. They however expressed growing concern at numerous setbacks affecting the peace process in the Middle East, including illegal attempts to change the jurisdiction and borders of Jerusalem. They re-affirmed their support for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) and Resolution 338 (1973) to restore the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

82. The Heads of State or Government called for intensification of efforts for promoting peace and stability at the global and regional levels for realising universal progress and prosperity.

#### **DATES AND VENUE OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT**

83. The Heads of State or Government accepted with deep appreciation the offer of His Majesty's Government of Nepal to host the Eleventh SAARC Summit in the second half of 1999.

84. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan expressed their appreciation for the skilful manner in which the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka had conducted the meeting and guided its deliberations, in her capacity as Chairperson. They also expressed their deep gratitude for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of Sri Lanka and the excellent arrangements made for the Summit and the meetings preceding it.

*Published by:*

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*First printed:* August 2001