

**SAARC 2015**  
**Expanding Horizons and Forging**  
**Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia**

**The New Delhi Statement on SAARC 2015**  
**and Asian Resurgence**

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# Foreword

As part of its programme for the promotion of regional cooperation in South Asia, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung organised the Conference on **SAARC 2015: Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia** in February 2007 in New Delhi in collaboration with Ambassador Kant K. Bhargava, former Secretary-General of SAARC, and Prof. Mahendra Lama, Chairman, Centre for South, Central, South East Asian and South West Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

The main thrust of the Conference was that the SAARC as an entity and its member states must prepare themselves well for leveraging the opportunities arising from the current resurgence in Asia. The Background Paper for the Conference was prepared by FES collaborators, Mr. K.K. Bhargava and Prof. Mahendra Lama. The structuring of the Conference was done in such a way that maximum time was made available to all participants for reflective discussions on key issues that were identified in advance for each of its Sessions.

The Conference was attended by Ministers, former Ministers, former diplomats, academics, businessmen from the SAARC countries including Afghanistan, scholars from the ASEAN, GCC, and observer countries, that is, China, Japan, Korea, USA and the EU. It was inaugurated by Dr. I.K. Gujral, former Prime Minister of India. Eminent presenters and panelists made their presentations in three plenary sessions on:

- Asian Dynamism and Challenges for Synergising Internal and External Cooperation of South Asia;
- Perspectives of Relations between South Asia and other Regions; and
- Vision and Strategy for the Third Decade of SAARC

The present publication puts together the basic documents relating to the Conference.

The New Delhi Statement represents a broad-based consensus both on consolidation and strengthening of internal regional cooperation and on the road ahead for the SAARC for establishing external regional cooperation with important neighbouring countries and regions.

The Conference rightly decided that its Statement be widely disseminated and be brought to the attention of the policy- and decision-makers. The present publication is intended to facilitate this task.

Dr. Dr. Peter Gey  
Resident Representative  
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, India Office

*March 2007*

# Preface

The subject of current Asian Resurgence and its implications for developments in the Third Decade of the SAARC is of overriding significance both in the realm of current Policy Studies in South Asia and for the study of evolution of Pan Asian cooperation in coming years. The urgency to address these issues has increased because of the important decisions taken in 2006 to:

- draw a road-map for regional cooperation in South Asia for the next decade;
- admit Afghanistan as a new member of SAARC; and
- grant Observer status to China, Japan, Korea, the EU and the USA.

Of late, both the Prime Ministers of India and of Pakistan have referred to the Asian resurgence and for the SAARC as a whole to be an integral part of it. For this there is a need for the countries of the subcontinent to reconnect and then establish connectivity with the larger Asian neighbourhood. But the consciousness has yet to emerge in the psyche of the SAARC about the advantage it can take from tremendous synergies by the two processes of internal and external regional cooperations moving on parallel tracks and in a mutually reinforcing manner.

Against this backdrop, we decided to hold a Conference on “*SAARC 2015: Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia*” in New Delhi on 09–11 February 2007 as a curtain raiser for the 14<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit scheduled to take place in New Delhi in April 2007. The participants had the benefit of the Background Paper prepared by us for the Conference and of several other prepared documents and presentations by distinguished speakers.

The New Delhi Statement on **SAARC 2015 and Asian Resurgence** sums up the broad-based consensuses among the eminent participants in regard to the vision

and strategy of SAARC for its third decade and on Perspectives of Relations of South Asia with other regions.

The Conference could not have been organised without the valuable support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung which has been in the vanguard for promoting regional cooperation for almost two decades.

We hope that the wider readership of policy activists and the policy-makers in SAARC will find this Booklet containing important information relating to the Conference useful, particularly in the context of formulating a vision and strategy for SAARC for its third decade.

Kant K. Bhargava  
Mahendra P. Lama

*March 2007*



# Background Paper

Prepared by Kant K. Bhargava  
and Mahendra P. Lama

*“Synergy in Conflict Management and Optimising Cooperation in Asia is a skill to be mastered and an ideal never to be lost from sight of all those committed to Peace and Cooperation in Asia”*  
– Kant K. Bhargava

## Asian Resurgence

Asia’s strength lies in its size and diversity. Its distinct sub-regions – East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia – are promising, vibrant, and robust. They are critical to the world economy both because of their strategic locations and also the huge commands they have on vital natural resources. The four sub-regions are not uniform in terms of the levels of their development. Each region therefore faces diverse challenges.

Asia accounts for:

- more than 60 per cent of the world’s population,
- one-third of the world economy,
- over a quarter of international exports, and
- largest amount of global foreign direct investment.

The Continent has become the engine for the revival of the global economy with its large reservoir of entrepreneurial, technical and technological skills and abundant natural resources including oil and gas. Asia is the largest market in the world with an increasing portion of the global workforce and a growing middle class. The rise of China and India has made a profound impact globally and particularly in the rest of Asia. China is spearheading changes at a fast pace in East Asia. India is impacting on rest of the SAARC, the Gulf region and to some extent on Central Asia apart from its growing ties with East Asia. Other major

countries like Russia, Japan, South Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and regional groupings such as the ASEAN and GCC are also progressing fast. Japan's growth is reviving. South Asian reforms and liberalisation are transforming the lives of more than a billion people. The Central Asian states are now emerging economies, as they are keen to leverage their natural wealth. The West Asian countries with their oil wealth are generating capital surpluses and transforming themselves into affluent societies. This region is imperceptibly and cautiously moving forward both economically and politically.

## **Globalisation and Rise of Asia**

Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has observed that “a dynamic Asia could well power global growth and provide new opportunities for growth for EU as well as North America.” He has pointed out that with “China trebling its share of the world GDP and India doubling it over the past decades, the international community needs global institutions and new global rules of the game that can facilitate the peaceful rise of new nations in Asia.”

At the same time globalisation is a reality and Asian nations have to contend with its attendant opportunities and challenges. With increasing globalisation, either Asian countries have to go out and play the game or have the game brought to them. The more cooperation there is among them, the more they will be able to follow the former path.

We are now witnessing the phenomenon of free movement of people and the global hunt for talent with its impact on the world economy and both its undocumented benefits and harm. Though the literature and policy on the free movement of people remains scanty and patchy, there is the recognition in academic circles that the economic interaction of major Asian powers, namely China and India is being driven by Asian Diaspora in the USA and Canada.

## **SAARC: Slow Progress and Uncertain Prospects**

The SAARC has been bogged by political problems and disputes among its member countries. It has not achieved satisfactory results within its present parameters of regional cooperation. It has also not succeeded in establishing meaningful cooperation with other regional groupings in South East and Central Asia and around the Gulf. Neither has the SAARC been able to take advantage of synergies that can be harnessed by internal and external regional cooperations. As a result, the SAARC remains marginalised at the periphery of the emerging Asian resurgence. Contrastingly, the ASEAN's pace of progress and its record of meaningful cooperation with other regional and international organisations are well known. It has emerged as a driving force for Asian resurgence as became evident at the ASEAN Plus Three Summit and the two East Asia Summits held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005 and in Cebu, Philippines in January 2007.

## **II**

### **New Thinking and Moves**

#### **Developments in East Asia**

Several voices have emanated from important quarters in support of Asian Cooperation. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has argued in its Study that regionalism should be a high priority for Asia. It creates integration with promotion of commercial linkages and transfers stimulus of China and India to their neighbours. The ADB issued an Asian Currency Unit (ACU) in March and floated ACU-denominated bonds mainly with a view to further boosting the regional economic integration in Asia.

The 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three Summit (China, Japan and Korea) held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2006 reiterated the common resolve to realise an East Asian community as a long-term goal that would contribute to the maintenance of regional and global peace and security, prosperity and progress.

In the first East Asia Summit (EAS) with additional participation of India, Australia and New Zealand held a day after the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Plus Three Summit, in-depth discussions were held on its role in the evolving regional architecture. At the EAS, the leaders discussed issues such as sustainable development, technology transfer, trade and investment related issues, challenges to socio-economic development, namely, poverty, development gap, capacity building and issues related to good governance, and promotion of human rights and democracy. The leaders agreed that the EAS with ASEAN as the driving force is an integral part of the overall evolving regional architecture. They also agreed that the East Asian region had already advanced in its efforts to realise an East Asian community (EAC) through the ASEAN Plus Three process.

At the second EAS Summit:

- the Cebu Declaration on East Asian Energy Security was signed;
- agreement was reached to strengthen regional education cooperation and the initiative for the revival of Nalanda University in India to improve regional understanding and the appreciation of one another's heritage and history was welcomed;
- closer cooperation in finance was welcomed and officials have been tasked to develop proposals in this regard;
- cooperation in fighting Avian Influenza and for Natural Disaster Mitigation was discussed;
- agreement was reached to launch a Track Two study on Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia and Japan's proposal for an Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) was welcomed;
- welcomed the specific proposal made for a Dialogue among East Asian Cultures, Societies and Faith and expressed support for initiatives like the Asia Pacific Regional Dialogue, the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue, and the UN's Alliance of Civilisations.

The leaders agreed that “the EAS is an important component of the emerging regional architecture and complements other existing regional mechanisms...” and expressed their conviction that the EAS should remain outward looking, with

ASEAN as the driving force working in close partnership with other participants of the East Asia Summit.

There are several Track II and III initiatives going on across Asia on linking various regional bodies and projects in support of the emerging quest for an Asian identity.

## Thinking in South Asia

At the same time, some policy analysts do argue that sub-regional entities such as the ASEAN and the SAARC have perhaps reached their limits and *questioned the ability of such groupings to harness the full potentials that the emerging new Asia is generating*. On the other hand, there are some definite moves by the leaders of these groupings to look for a wider geographical reach and work for a larger framework of cooperation and integration.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, has termed the Asian Economic Community as constituting ‘an arc of advantage’ in terms of prosperity, stability and closer economic integration where there would be large-scale movement of people, capital, labour, ideas and creativity.

The Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has suggested an integrated framework for intra-regional cooperation (in Asia) in strategic areas such as energy, water, food, infrastructure connectivity, investment in human capital and economic and social transformation through structural reforms.

There are interesting debates within South Asia about improving competitiveness, making SAFTA much wider in its geographical reach, evolving consensus on linking the SAARC to other regional organisations and deciding on India-China Free Trade Agreement to attract other countries of Asia to this process of collective Asian thinking and actions. The approach discussed and advocated by several prominent academics is a *comprehensive approach of economic partnerships*.

## **Cooperation and Dynamism in West Asia**

Over 25 years, six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), have been promoting economic cooperation and stability in the region that accounts for half the world's oil and about 45 per cent of its natural gas. Sectors of energy, construction, infrastructure, and engineering and health services are booming. Millions of South Asians live in this area and hundreds of their companies are working there. There is also a growing recognition of close inter-linkage of the stability and security of the Gulf region and the Indian subcontinent. The bonds are further strengthened by the presence of a large number of South Asian migrant workers and other professionals in the Gulf region. Think tanks are discussing possibilities of cooperation between South Asia and West Asia including the GCC. A separate Paper on the subject will be circulated to participants.

## **Nascent Regional Cooperation in Central Asia**

Central Asian Republics will greatly benefit from increased economic cooperation with each other and with neighbouring regions. Yet overall progress in this regard has been modest due to a number of factors including the magnitude and costs and benefits of cooperation and relative weaknesses in the work and progress of stake-holders. The Asian Development Bank and World Bank have done some useful work. The ADB is supporting the Central Asian Gateway (CAG) Project to expand its coverage and strengthen efforts to build a network of research institutes in Central Asia and neighbouring countries. The CAG project activities currently focus on four Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. But the programme would be expanded to include the remaining members of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Programme, namely, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Mongolia and PRC.

Linkages between Central Asia and South Asia are possible only with active cooperation of both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## Rationale for Asian Economic Cooperation

Main drivers in relationship of South Asia with its neighbouring regions

Important among these are:

- Energy Cooperation where Gulf Countries and Central Asian States have an important role to play;
- Emerging Convergence in maritime security where ASEAN will be the important partner;
- Rapid Developments in Transport and Communication that facilitate connectivity—internal, cross-border and inter-regional;
- Immigration, Remittances and Role of South Asian Diaspora—this is prominent in case of Gulf Countries and some ASEAN countries;
- Foreign Direct Investment as a result of investments from China, Japan, Korea and India are increasing;
- Manufacturing;
- Financial Services;
- New Asian Institutions, particularly East Asian community (EAC), East Asia Summit (EAS), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Bay of Bengal Integrated and Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

## Growing Interdependence

Interdependence of Asian countries is growing very quickly in economic, financial, environmental and social areas such as health, education and social development. This has now even expanded to politico-strategic fields including counter-terrorism and maritime security. Regional institutions like the ASEAN and the SAARC are now working on arriving at some concrete actions on trade, investment and finance. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is engaged in the Asian Highway Project. The private sector is interacting in a much more integrated manner.

Unlike the traditional emphasis on manufacturing sector, these economies are leveraging technological innovations and trying to move up the value chain. *Innovation in products and processes on a global scale are likely to be the next wave. Experts reckon that India is likely to emerge as a hub for innovation on a global scale. Also, there is a possibility of synergy in the near future as a result of Chinese strength in hardware combining with Indian strength in software.*

## **Active Role of Non-State Actors**

The civil societies have not only widened and deepened their interactions on regional issues (like common vulnerability to the scourge of terrorism, HIV/AIDS, Pandemic Avian Flu, and natural disasters like Tsunami) but also started networking and sharing experiences and best practices among them. This has a binding impact on the consciousness of Asians. Besides the discussion on issues of democracy, there are inter-cultural dialogues that bind the diverse cultures of the region.

The emerging framework is that of cooperation and inclusiveness leading to “inter-regional regime-building”. As the relationship between national cohesion, regional integration processes in Asia and the globalisation process unfolds itself, the rationale for Asian Economic Cooperation through building blocks of cooperation becomes clearer. The interest of the international community in the SAARC *per se* is evident as now the EU, the USA, Japan, China and South Korea have observer status in the SAARC.

## **Recent Decisions**

Realism in a transforming Asia is paving way to pragmatic approaches to cooperation and integration. For instance, at the Dhaka Summit held last November, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was invited to join the SAARC as a member. As a sequel to the decisions taken in the Summit and in the Council of Ministers, China, Japan, Korea, the US and the EU will be henceforth invited to the SAARC forum as observers. They will be attending the SAARC Summit in April 2007 in New Delhi as observers. The East Asia Summit held last December decided to form the East

Asian community (EAC) with ASEAN members, China, Japan and South Korea as its members. India was also invited for the Summit meeting thereby signaling its likely induction as a member. India and Pakistan have been accorded observer status in the SCO.

This is however not to understate the *serious constraints that exist in consolidating the regionalism in the Asian context*. Besides the feeble degree of consensus many historical issues remain unresolved. The internal dynamics of each region and the member countries with regard to regional disparities, poverty, inequality and the social exclusion continue to make them more inward looking. The deepening and acceleration of globalisation continues to throw up new challenges including issues of access to markets, human and national security and environmental management. The free movement of goods but not labour and vice-versa across the borders in parts of Asia is another controversial issue. *How could such constraints be removed and what role can South Asia play in this regard?*



## **Future Pathways**

Several Asian countries are now giving serious consideration to the questions relating to the establishment of a wider Asian Economic Cooperation, its scope and pace. Against this backdrop, *South Asia must prepare itself collectively for its external regional cooperation to pave the path for eventual Pan-Asian Economic Cooperation*.

## **Expanding Horizons**

Today, cooperation between the SAARC and its neighbouring countries/regions is both essential and inevitable. This would firm up connectivity and enable its member countries to leverage the opportunities provided by the current Asian dynamism. *This expanding horizon could bring about unprecedented benefits to the South Asia region in areas like economic integration, social dynamism, politico-strategic clouts and people-to-people contacts. This is likely to trigger a range of*

*cross-border infrastructural projects including highways, gas pipelines, electricity grid, inter-port linkages, etc. This inter-regional connectivity could mainstream-ise the South Asia region in the current Asian dynamism.* For this the SAARC needs to strategise and concretise actions. The SAARC has the both the potential and the wherewithal to become a driving force for promoting wider Asian cooperation incorporating all the four sub-regions of Asia.

The time is ripe for the SAARC politicians, businesses, policy-makers and civil society actors to seriously deliberate on these issues and steadily engage in policy dialogues with their counterparts in the neighbouring regions. This strand of thinking is already reflected in the decisions at the Dhaka SAARC Summit and the two East Asia Summits.

## **Forging Cooperation**

There are several questions that can give us some definite direction to South Asia's engagement with other countries/regions in Asia in the process of promoting the emerging Asia wide cooperation.

How can the SAARC forge cooperation with Asian countries such as China and Japan and with other regional groupings in Asia such as the ASEAN, ECO, and the GCC on a mutually beneficial basis?

*What are the prospects, challenges and modalities of cooperation between the SAARC and these entities?*

*With Afghanistan becoming a member of the SAARC what possibilities may emerge in regard to cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia?*

*With China, Korea and Japan as observers in the SAARC and India as a participant in East Asia Summit meetings, how can cooperation and integration between South Asian and East Asia economies be facilitated?*

Secretariats of the SAARC and the ASEAN have regular contacts. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC) could in fact act as a bridge between the SAARC and the ASEAN. Countries of South Asia and those belonging to the Gulf region have enjoyed close relationship for centuries. This is further strengthened by the presence of large number of South Asian expatriates in the GCC member countries and also the steadily increasing economic interactions with these countries. Gulf countries are looking for investment possibilities in South Asia and for cooperation in industry, education, and S & T.

Pakistan and Afghanistan also enjoy pivotal positions at the crossroads of these vital regions of the world – South Asia, Central Asia and onwards to Russia and Europe. They are therefore, uniquely positioned to leverage this location as a bridgehead for multi-sectoral cooperation between these regions. This includes gas pipelines, transportation, trade and tourism. They can also play an instrumental role in developing linkages between the SAARC and the ECO.

The burgeoning economic relations between India and China, India's Look East Policy, possible reopening of various land trade routes to China, the Chinese participation in the Gwadar port construction in Pakistan and construction of road links between Afghanistan and Iran are all transforming the nature of cooperation and integration among the Asian countries.

## **Challenges for SAARC 2015: Internal and External Regional Cooperation**

So far, the programmes of the SAARC have focused on internal regional cooperation designed to face important challenges such as: i) Building on Progress of SAFTA; ii) Poverty Reduction; iii) Improving Intra-regional and Inter-regional Connectivity; iv) Securing Energy Security; v) Management of Natural Disasters; vi) Protection and Preservation of Environment; vii) Fighting Terrorism and Extremism. External regional cooperation—even of the kind that would assist in meeting aforesaid challenges—has not received commensurate attention. The external dimension to

the SAARC is conspicuously missing. What is more, the SAARC has so far worked in an 'episodic' and not 'systematic' fashion. It also faces resource constraints. All these have made the SAARC process slow, uncompetitive and inward looking.

*What needs to be done to create conditions under which internal and external regional cooperation may be able to reinforce one another?*

*Can India and Pakistan take along the other least developed countries of South Asia in their integration effort with rest of the Asian economies?*

For meeting the above challenges, it is important that political leaders of the SAARC countries embrace both a vision and a strategy for change in political atmosphere and economic setting. Strategic decision-making is required rather than short-term partisan tactics. *In its third decade, governments, businesses, donors and civil society in South Asia need to forge new partnerships between them and their counterparts in neighbouring regions. A new model of cooperation is required, based on mutual interests, trust and accountability, which goes beyond the conventional kind of regional cooperation. The idea should be to evolve and promote people centric cooperation.*

## IV

### Conclusion

#### SAARC 2015 in a Transforming Asia: Vision and Strategies for External Regional Cooperation

From all accounts, it appears that the questions relating to external regional cooperation of the SAARC and those pertaining to its link with the eventual Pan Asian Regional Cooperation are important and serious enough for politicians and business leaders to address now in all earnestness. *For this purpose, both the intellectual energy as well as the strategic grip on issues is required.* Through wisdom and foresight, the SAARC leaders can work with their counterparts from neighbouring regions for establishing inter-regional connectivity, building a peaceful, increasingly cooperating and prosperous Asia where each country and region has its fair part—

a real and achievable goal. A building block approach of regional cooperation will result progressively in Asian integration that is based on a solid foundation. *Is this not the opportune time for the SAARC Leaders to consider setting up a South Asia Vision and Strategy Group to undertake a Study on Issues and Modalities of External Cooperation of the SAARC vis-à-vis its neighbouring countries and regional groupings?* Side by side: (a) academics should evolve gateway strategies for South Asia in respect to its neighbours, (b) governments should build communication bridges through specific projects such as the SAARC car rallies, South Asian University, and (c) sustained efforts need to be made to raise public consciousness on these issues.

## **Consensus-building**

There is a need to institute an independent and inclusive consensus-building process in the SAARC region to look beyond the horizons of the SAARC in a resurgent Asia. This should be in tandem with government initiatives. By a change in its outlook, South Asia will gain its true strength, its relevance, its idealism and therefore its support among the people.

What the SAARC needs to do in its third decade is to *actualise a vision of integration that expands security, economic opportunity and political freedom throughout South Asia and in its neighbourhood*. This will imply willingness on the part of member states to have a little less sovereignty, more engaged regional diplomacy, more consistent support to South Asian Economic Community, and a well-structured security dialogue and a concrete plan of action for all this. This will enable member countries of the SAARC to optimise prospects of growth and prosperity by fostering such cooperation within the SAARC framework that will also simultaneously facilitate progressive integration of South Asian economies within the larger framework of Asian Economic Cooperation,

## **Synergising Internal and External Cooperation**

The 13th SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in December 2005 took some important decisions (Annex I) on a) External Profile and Linkages of the SAARC,

b) Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms of the SAARC, and c) the SAARC Vision: An Agenda for Third Decade of SAARC. Pragmatism indicates that all these decisions need to be understood and implemented in the context of both internal and external regional cooperation of the SAARC.

The overwhelming question for the SAARC in its third decade is: *what it can do for the people of South Asia in the future as much as by creation of a common South Asian Economic Space and a defined agenda of trade and market policies as by reaping advantages resulting from synergies through well thought out internal and external cooperation programmes?*

Besides the larger political and geo-strategic themes like promotion of democracy, human rights and security, the key issues that could really bring the SAARC nations upfront within the arena of Asia-wide cooperation project are trade, investment, technology, social issues, environmental issues, cross border and cross regional migration and other regional infrastructure projects.

## **Extracts from the 13<sup>th</sup> The SAARC Summit Declaration November 2005**

### **External Profile and Linkages of SAARC**

49. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the observer status granted to the SAARC by the United Nations General Assembly at its Fifty-ninth Session; and expressed the hope that this would not only enhance the profile of the SAARC in the world body but would also enable Member States to project common positions of the SAARC in various multilateral forums. They also acknowledged the renewed interest of other regional and international organisations, bodies and entities to cooperate with the SAARC in various collaborative endeavours in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the SAARC. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the request by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for membership and invited Afghanistan as a member, subject to the completion of formalities. They also welcomed and agreed in principle with the desire of the People's Republic of China and Japan to be associated as observers. The Council of Ministers will decide the modalities in this regard at their 27th meeting in July 2006.

### **Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms of SAARC**

50. The Heads of State or Government agreed that with the incremental broadening of the SAARC agenda and increased emphasis being placed on implementation of plans and programmes, there was a need for a commensurate strengthening of institutional capabilities of the SAARC. Recognising the importance of thematic Ministerial meetings, they emphasised that these meetings should focus on regional challenges and priorities and contribute to the realisation of the objectives of the SAARC. They agreed that on completion of twenty years of the SAARC's existence, it was essential that a comprehensive review and reform of all the SAARC institutions and mechanisms, including the Secretariat and the regional Centres should be undertaken. In this context, they called on

the Council of Ministers to convene a Meeting of Experts, to be nominated by each Member State, to undertake a detailed Study and present a report to the next Council of Ministers. They empowered the current Chairman of the Council of Ministers to prepare within the next fifteen days a draft Terms of Reference for the Study to be approved, if necessary, by tele-conferencing of all the SAARC Foreign Ministers.

### **SAARC Vision: An Agenda for Third Decade of SAARC**

51. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to the realisation of the vision of South Asian Economic Union in a phased and planned manner. They agreed that as the SAARC completed its 20 years of existence, it was an opportune occasion to draw a roadmap for regional cooperation in South Asia for the next decade. In view of the new challenges facing the region, pledges and commitments made in the last two decades should be translated into concrete actions in the form of regional projects and programmes and innovative initiatives.
  
52. They directed all the SAARC institutions and mechanisms to work collectively towards a decade dedicated to implementation so that visible and discernible impact can be felt across South Asia. They emphasised that while this would enable the SAARC to realise its basic objectives of improving the quality of life of all South Asian peoples, it would at the same time create an enabling environment towards the establishment of a South Asian Economic Union. They directed the Standing Committee to formulate its recommendations, at its next Special Session, on a Vision for the SAARC's Third Decade and the course of action for its realisation, to be elaborated by a high-level Committee of Senior Officials.

# Shri I.K. Gujral's inaugural address at the Conference on SAARC 2015 (February 10, 2007)

Worthy friends, Dr Karan Singh, I am deeply delighted and honoured to deliver this inaugural address in this very important conference on vision of the “SAARC 2015: its Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia.” I see the presence of a galaxy of eminent thinkers, academics, media persons and policy makers who have contributed immensely to the progress of regional cooperation and integration in this region. Today the South Asia region is at a crossroads as indicated by four very conspicuous trends.

Firstly, the entire region has come out of the low growth equilibrium that was characterising South Asia for many past decades. The economies in this region despite a number of internal problems are now poised to grow at an unprecedented rate.

Secondly, the region is now much more outward looking both because of the process of globalisation and the steady rise in the people's aspirations. As a result, the people are showing their increasing keenness in rationally harnessing the opportunities both within the region and outside.

Thirdly, a new generation of the professionals, policy makers and actors and agencies are fast taking over the entire operations in the region. This generation has no baggage of mistrust, suspicions and low confidence. They are what our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh calls “the people who think out of the box”. They are interested in larger issues, bigger gains and interactive existence.

And finally, South Asia is emerging to be a major global attraction. There is a transformation in the patterns and strategies of engaging South Asia by various global powers. Earlier much of it would be on politico-strategic perspectives. Today

it is overwhelmingly on harnessing the huge social capital, market and natural resources this region has.

Therefore, how to reposition South Asia as a community in the changing Asian and global context is a critical question?

Worthy friends, could South Asia as an economic power house be a flag bearer in the emerging “new Asianism?”

The formidable challenge is to take along the entire region, listen to voices from all facets of South Asian geography, fulfill the aspirations of all classes, inclusion of most marginalised citizens and accommodate the entire spectrum of political ideologies.

Given this backdrop let me put before you few inputs for your deliberations and your ultimate policy suggestions.

ASEAN and SAARC have a very critical role in realising the goal of East Asian community. It is actually the resurgence of regions and sub-regions rather than individual country that has helped in fostering the idea of trans-regional communities. SAARC is already a 21-year old institution supported by seven countries. The vision of SAARC is already well laid out by the 1999 Report of the Group of Eminent Persons. I feel there are two very important achievements of the SAARC process.

Firstly, it has served as a strong regional forum for bringing the leadership of these countries to a common platform. Before the formal launching of SAARC in 1985 there was nothing like this.

Secondly, the SAARC process has generated a parallel process of unofficial SAARC. In the last two decades, there has been unprecedented rise in the interactions and networking among various institutions, agencies and civil society organisations of South Asia. We see such interactions taking place in human rights, environment, media, education, health, business people, professionals, music-arts-culture, and other issues of people to people contacts. In fact, I have the increasing feeling that unofficial

SAARC is going to be the driving force behind the official SAARC process. This is some sort of a “new regionalism” that is fast engulfing the entire South Asia region.

However, in terms of regional projects except the SAFTA agreement, I see not much of progress in SAARC. Why this is so? How can we make the SAARC a real robust and thriving organisation that will bring significant benefits to the region? The hope and fulfillment of our aspiration to play a crucial role in the emerging Asian Community lies in first strengthening SAARC and leveraging the organisational resilience for its pivotal role in the Asian and global context.

In this entire schematic, the role of India is very critical. India is now making very strong strides on the economic front. It is a major source of reverse flow of technology as depicted by the huge jump in the export of information technology. India’s geographical location is key to the physical linkages to the entire South East and East Asia. It is a burgeoning market of over 350 million middle class. It is the custodian of large deposits of vital natural resources. There are impressions that India has not yet shown adequate willingness to promote regionalism despite its long history of struggle for multilateralism in the international forum like UN, Group of 77 and Non-aligned movement. There are apprehensions that it is India only, which is growing as a developed enclave and leaving others behind.

These impressions are not entirely misplaced. As I always feel India could make significant unilateral gestures to build confidence among its neighbours so that all these countries can participate with equal footing. I myself have been a strong votary of these unilateral gestures. Some even call it a “Gujral Doctrine”. I have personally witnessed how much of good will, trust and confidence these small yet powerful gestures create in our neighbourhood. When I was holding the high office in the Government of India, among many things we initiated in our neighbourhood policy, we also signed agreements on Farakka Water sharing with Bangladesh and transit to Nepal through Fulbari corridor in India to reach Chittagong and Mongla ports in Bangladesh. Both these demands had been long standing. In both cases the Indian apprehensions proved to be wrong. Both these arrangements are working very well since the last decade.

Worthy friends, what I am trying to say is that no members of the SAARC can afford to make the national security and national interest parameters narrow and ever shrinking. We must enlarge the scope of our functional relations, widen the scale of our operations, create huge space for positive interactions and sustained benefits sharing. Learned friends, situations have changed so have people's aspirations. We must change and not become caged by traditional mindsets. We have lost opportunities after opportunities. Cost of non-cooperation has been very high. We have suffered in terms of environmental-energy and even food security. Studies do show that Pakistan alone lost over \$110 million in three years by not importing tea from South Asian neighbourhood. A very recent study by State Bank of Pakistan estimated that the potential of Pakistan-India trade is in the range of \$1 billion to \$5.2 billion per annum as against the officially reported flow of \$500 million. It also shows that how Pakistan has turned out to be a high cost economy because of its more extra-regional economic interactions.

At the same time, we have the astounding example of Bhutan earning annually over \$50 million by selling electricity from one single Chukha hydel project. As a result of free trade agreement, Sri Lanka's exports to India recorded a nine-fold increase from Sri Lankan Rs.4.3 billion in 2000 to Rs.39.62 in 2004 and the imports recorded a three-fold increase from Sri Lankan Rs.45.47 billion to Rs.145.65 billion. Nepal makes a huge forward and backward linkage and benefits from the extension of Indian tourism activities.

Friends, let me also highlight the importance of connectivity. A recent study on SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study conducted to enhance multimodal transport connectivity among SAARC member states very clearly show how much we gain by way of simply improving the connectivity in the region. For example, South Asia has one of the largest railway networks in the world, spreading over 77,000 route kilometers.

However, there has been no cross border connectivity. This not only affects the economics of scale of its operations but also makes sectoral linkages highly cost ineffective. In the context of regional road corridors, one of the most crucial non-

physical barriers has been the lack of bilateral transport agreements to facilitate uninterrupted movement of goods and vehicles across the borders between India and Bangladesh, as well as between Pakistan and India. As a result, goods are required to be transshipped at the border between the trucks of neighbouring countries. There are ample opportunities in regional inland waterway corridors, maritime transport, and air transport that could not only integrate the region but link this region with other regions very effectively.

We shall have to seriously work on these lines. Look at China which has brought a railway line to Lhasa and is now planning to bring it down to Nathu la pass in Sikkim. The way China has participated in developing the Gwadar port in Pakistan does very clearly indicate that it is also keenly interested in regional integration process. This very local integration strategy of China with Taiwan, Myanmar, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia and Korea have paid them handsomely. There are examples galore like that of South China Growth Triangle (SCGT), Greater Mekong Basin Growth Triangle (GMBGT) and the Golden Quadrangle. The northern Chinese provinces of Heilongjiang, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia have been in the forefront of border trading with Russia and other central Asian republics. I see similar zeal in all the South East Asian countries, Japan and Korea in their engagements with South Asia.

The question is how much of pro-activity the SAARC countries could think of in physically integrating the region through these cross border transport and communication linkages. I also read that besides the prices of gas in Iran, a major hurdle in constructing a trilateral gas pipeline between India-Pakistan-Iran is the apprehension that it may be disrupted by forces which do not want it to happen. In other words, this apprehension of security breach could be to a large extent addressed by guarantees by international institutions and also by extending this pipeline to neighbouring countries including Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

This is where SAARC as an institution needs to play a very critical role in translating these far reaching ideas and projects in to concrete actions and operations. This is

where SAARC can bring all the professionals, civil society organisations, and policy research institutions working on these areas across the region to pressurise their respective Governments to put them in action mode.

Friends, as the region comes together as a unit it can make a huge difference in international fora and in negotiation such as at the WTO and the UN. Let me cite another example. South Asian countries are some of the highest recipients of remittances from abroad. It contributes a lot to our GDPs and foreign exchange baskets. The region is a very steady supplier of labour and we have a beautiful mosaic of South Asian diaspora abroad. This means we already have a major platform in the international market.

However, there are trends in labour receiving countries mainly in developed market economies to close down the borders, making very tough immigration measures, discriminating against the migrants on various counts and also securitising the migration issue. This goes against the very fundamental principles of globalisation and international division of labour. No single South Asian country can fight against this trend on its own. Only a united and concerted effort could further open up opportunities for our ever growing mobilisation of social capital.

My worthy colleagues, may I say that we shall have to grow together. We shall have to take along all the countries in our journey towards integration with ASEAN and in building the East Asian community. Our stakes are very high as the East Asian community will comprise 50 per cent of the global population and another 50 per cent of the global income. If we are able to successfully create a niche in the East Asian community we can expect a major transformation in our thinking, quality of life and our role in the global order.

I am very delighted to see a large number of very critical issues on the agenda of this conference. I would be very keen to associate myself in strategising the implementation of some of these recommendations of this Conference. I wish you a very fruitful deliberations.

Thank You

# Reports of Groups on “Perspectives of Relations between South Asia and Other Regions”

## REPORT OF GROUP A

### “Perspectives of Relations between South Asia South East Asia”

*Chairpersons:* Dr. Kamal Hossain and Dr. Nagesh Kumar

*Rapporteur:* Aparna Shivpuri Singh

#### Issues:

- Update on ASEAN and BIMSTEC
- Update on SAARC-ASEAN Cooperation and Way Forward
- What are perspectives of ASEAN on medium term relations of South Asian countries with the evolving East Asian community?
- Issues in Trans-national migration and contribution of South Asian Diaspora
- Prospects for maritime cooperation, disaster mitigation and management

*Presenter:* Ambassador Sudhir T. Devare

*Panel:* Ambassador Farooq Sobhan; Dr. Saman Kelegama,  
Dr. (Ms) Kripa Sridharan and Dr. N.C. Pahariya.

Following important points emerged from discussions:

#### *SAARC-ASEAN*

In Asia's resurgence both South Asian and South East Asian regions are important in terms of natural and human resources. India is far ahead of the rest of the South Asia in terms of relationship with South East Asia. So how can other South Asian countries be included in this process of interaction? Can they piggyback on India? There are countries in the ASEAN like Singapore and Indonesia that worry about China's foray into the ASEAN and might like to interact with India more to balance

that. As far as ASEAN-SAARC cooperation is concerned, the circumstances are different. Views of other South Asian countries regarding integration with South East Asia are in some respects different from those of India.

The ASEAN showed interest in South Asia only after India's growth. The ASEAN is interested in South Asian countries for:

- Gaining Market Access
- Two-way investment
- Attracting high-end tourists
- Exchanges in the field of education

For the present, the ASEAN does not see need for any regional arrangements for the above purposes.

SAARC countries have been pursuing individual FTAs with ASEAN which ASEAN might find difficult to manage and may not turn out to be sustainable. Given the slow movement of SAFTA, ASEAN may prefer SAFTA to first absorb these bilateral agreements and move accordingly.

There are at present no mechanisms and cooperation arrangements between SAARC and ASEAN even in areas of major humanitarian concerns like disaster management, drugs trafficking and migration.

## **BIMSTEC-SAARC**

BIMSTEC-SAARC cooperation has better potential than the ASEAN-South Asia arrangement. Under the BIMSTEC, seven areas of cooperation have been identified and steady progress has been made on these issues. Some members of BIMSTEC are members of the SAARC while others are members of the ASEAN.

### ***Maritime Security***

There are several platforms for cooperation in maritime security matters. The IOMAC and IORC are two such initiatives.

### *South Asian Regional Forum*

The idea of a SAARC Regional Forum (SRF) was mooted. But the consensus was on the desirability of annually convening a SAARC Regional Economic Forum.

### **Recommendations**

1. With Japan, China and Korea as observers in the SAARC, it may be advisable for the SAARC to explore the option of JACIK-SAARC linkage as it might be a better option than the SAARC-ASEAN one.
2. The role of SAARC observers need to be defined.
3. The possibility of convening South Asian Regional Economic Forum meetings at the time of annual SAARC Summit meetings may be explored.
4. As far as Trans-national migration is concerned, South Asia needs to get its act together and take into account emerging trends and outstanding issues of citizenship for Indians in South East Asia.
5. Other South Asian countries need to profit from resurgence of India and to dissuade trans-regionalism of the kind that might facilitate India integrating with South East Asia in a manner that affects them adversely.
6. South Asian and South East Asian countries need to pursue cooperation in maritime security matters through exploration of appropriate feasible options.

## **REPORT OF GROUP B**

### **“Perspectives of Relations between South Asia and East Asia”**

*Chairperson:* Ambassador Lakhman Lal Mehrotra

*Presenters:* Dr. Shao Yuqun; Prof. Nakamura Hisashi and Prof. She-Jin Chang

*Panel:* Prof. Mahendra Lama; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood and Dr. Sridhar Khatri

### **Issues:**

- Update on China-South Asia Relations
- With China going ahead with free trade arrangements with India and Pakistan

in near future, what are the prospects of Free Trade between China and SAARC and greater two way investments?

- How does China, now an observer in SAARC, visualise its relationship with this body?
- What are the prospects of cross-border linkages for ensuring safe and smart borders between China and South Asian countries that share borders with it?
- Update on Japan-South Asia Relations and on results achieved with Japan's Special SAARC Fund
- How does Japan, now an observer in SAARC, visualise its relationship with this body?
- What are the prospects of greater trade, development assistance and investment of Japan in South Asian region in the present situation?
- What lessons South Asia should draw from the evolving nature of innovation-based economy of Japan?
- Update on Korea-South Asia Relations
- How does Korea, now an observer in SAARC, visualise its relationship with this body?
- What has been the experience and success story of Korean investment in South Asian countries? What are the future prospects of trade and investment between Korea and South Asia?

Following important points emerged from discussions:

## **South Asia-China**

South-Asia China relations are on the right track with a great potential and bright future. On the bilateral level, China had promoted its relationship with all countries in South Asia. Visit of President Jintao to India and Pakistan in November 2006 strengthened the strategic and cooperative partnership between China and India while enhancing the “all-weather” friendship between China and Pakistan. The relationships between China and other South Asian countries were stable.

## **China as Observer in SAARC**

China was committed to integrate into the regional development of SAARC an Observer. While there were some unresolved issues, these should not be obstacles in the way of strengthening cooperation of the region with China to create a win-win situation for both sides. China looked at the observer status in the SAARC as an opportunity for market and investment. China's priorities were trade, cooperation in energy and natural resources, infrastructure and communication and people-to-people relations. The economic relations between China and South Asian countries had mounted rapidly and China's trade with them in 2006 amounted to about US\$ 26 billion.

## **Terrorism**

The South Asian region has been harshly hit by terrorist activities. It was recommended that the region should consider the possibility of establishing a multilateral mechanism to effectively combat terrorism.

## **Water Resources**

As an upper stream country, China might undertake common research on various issues of the usage with down stream countries.

## **Free-Trade**

Operationalisation of the SAFTA in 2006 was an important step in regional cooperation. China has already signed FTA with Pakistan. The Joint Study Group set up by China and India had concluded its work on the feasibility of FTA and a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between them.

India has a predominant role in intra-SAARC trade and China is sensitive to India's susceptibilities.

## **Cross-border Linkages**

India and China did not think that the boundary issue should be an obstacle in the improvement of their relations and promotion of trade in the border areas. The

concept of the border trade should be widened to the larger concept of trade at the border. Both countries need to enter into an agreement on cross-border movement, broadening the trade basket, improving the infrastructure and strengthening mutual trust.

It was noted that in the near future, China would be investing up to US\$ 50 billion in the development of Central and West China. This would open up considerable opportunities for China and neighbouring South Asian countries for development of trade and investment ties between them. While opening up borders for trade with China could have a very healthy impact, it was pointed out that it could also raise grounds for concern. China has established a link all the way from its interior to the borders of India via Kuming, or Nathula. Migratory flows into India due to internal problems of other countries was another matter of concern.

## **South Asia-Japan: Past and Present Relations**

Japan has strong ancient Buddhist links with South Asia lasting several centuries. Japan's sights changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century turning more towards Europeanisation, Industrialisation and Militarisation. As a result, relations of Japan with its immediate civilisational neighbours got adversely affected.

Japan is currently engaged in making amends since the end of the Second World War and in reviving those ancient bonds. Its relations with South Asia were getting closer. Japan had earlier concentrated on building economic ties with China and Korea. But now it was planning to divert investment to South Asia, especially India. In this respect, the landmark visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Japan in December 2006 was very important. The number of Indian professionals in Japan in recent years has increased. In the years to come, demand in Japan for skilled manpower will increase considerably.

## **Bilateral and Regional Cooperation**

Japan has been the single largest donor to South Asian countries during the last two decades. Its own rapid economic development in the last half century has

given it a good deal of experience and it was ready to share it with South Asian countries. Japan had made a contribution to SAARC Japan Fund in 1993 but unfortunately it was not properly utilised. Japan was now ready to offer more to SAARC for assistance.

### **Nuclear Weapon Free Area**

Due to the nuclear holocaust suffered by Japan towards the end of World War II, Japan would like Asia, including South Asia, to emerge as a nuclear weapon free area.

### **South Asia-Korea: Trade Relations**

Korea's trade with South Asia is of the order of US\$ 10 billion. However, Korea's imports from South Asia are only one per cent of its total imports while its exports to the region are about two per cent of the total. Korea has a favourable trade balance of US\$ 2.8 billion. Korea's economic relations with India are on the upswing with India importing transport machinery and exporting textile and other consumer goods.

### **Investment**

Korea's foreign direct investment into South Asia amounting to US\$ 1.3 billion is only two per cent of its worldwide FDI. As opposed to this, the total net flow of FDI into Korea in 2004 amounting to US\$ 8.189 billion was more than the total sum of FDI received in that year by all the countries of SAARC put together. India had the largest share of Korean FDI in South Asia and the total amount is about US\$ 1 billion. Korean companies are now looking forward to entering the South Asian market in a bigger way especially in India due to its recent phenomenal growth. The POHANG steel company had acquired 3000 acres of land in an upcoming SEZ in India.

### **Skilled Manpower**

Korea would welcome skilled manpower from South Asia due to shortages developing in this area in the years to come.

## South Asia and Asian Resurgence

India has currently an impressive growth of nine per cent per annum which also contributes to prosperity of the South Asian region as a whole. It was hoped that other countries of South Asia would follow the Indian model.

## Pan-Asian Cooperation

Time has now come for the SAARC to explore the development of closer relations with other regional entities and neighbouring countries. Positive developments in China-India relations, as is evident from the raising of the level of relations between the two countries from constructive cooperation to strategic cooperation, augured well for the future of South Asia. India's presence now in the East Asia Summit and in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) where China and India interacted with each other might facilitate Pan Asian Cooperation. Reference was made to the first Asian Relations conference held several decades ago in which the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had spelt out ideas relating to Asian unity.

## Recommendations

1. The South Asian region should think big. Since the South Asian growth was driven by India, the latter would therefore stand to benefit if SAARC were to establish synergies with other regional bodies and important neighbouring countries. In this context, it was suggested that the SAARC should define what would be the role of Observer countries from Asia. The parameters of their role should be defined with clear objectives in mind. Possibility may be explored of according them the status of Dialogue Partners.
2. The SAARC needs to address the critical question of repositioning itself as a community in the changing Asian and global context. In due course, the SAARC needs to explore the possibility of becoming an essential link in the "new Asianism".
3. Work for the establishment of a South Asian University may be undertaken on a priority basis.

4. SAARC should organise more trade exhibitions in East Asia.
5. Skilled manpower from South Asia would be welcome in countries like Korea and Japan in the coming years due to emerging shortages of professionals there.
6. Beyond trade and investment, there were other opportunities available now to the SAARC for cooperation with Asian countries outside the region in areas such as terrorism, drug smuggling, environment, rural development and poverty reduction. The SAARC countries could also develop with neighbouring countries sister city relationships and sister province relationships.

## **REPORT OF GROUP C**

### **“Perspectives of Relations between South Asia and GCC countries; and South Asia and Central Asia”**

*Chairperson:* Dr. Sartaj Aziz

*Rapporteur:* Dr. Syed Riffat Hussain

*Presenters:* Ambassador Naeem U. Hasan; Professor Girjesh Pant; Dr. Jasim Abhulghani Al-khalufi; Dr. Rajeev Kumar; Mr. Naimullah Naimi

*Panel:* Ambassador Hamid Ansari; Dr. Savita Pande and Dr. P. Sahadevan

## **South Asia and GCC countries**

### **Issues:**

- Prospects of cooperation between SAARC and GCC
- Prospects of Economic Cooperation between Gulf Countries and South Asia
- Issues in Trans-national migration and contribution of South Asian Diaspora

Following important points emerged from discussions:

### **Evolution of GCC**

The GCC is a unique organisation marked by similarity of political systems, affinities of culture, kinship, and familial ties and shared strategic outlook. The GCC has a visa free regime and health care was available to member states on a region-wide basis. Even

though the GCC is not a military organisation, yet it was paying increasing attention to political and strategic issues confronting the Gulf region and its neighbourhood.

The economic evolution of GCC countries was centred on energy. The GCC had adopted a pro-West orientation mainly due to the oil factor. But these dynamics have now begun to change. Though GCC began with a politico-military rationale, its activities are now being impelled by economic considerations.

### **Difficult Strategic Environment**

Since its inception in 1981 the GCC has been burdened with a very difficult strategic environment. Challenges were posed to the GCC by such events as the Iran-Iraq war, the First Gulf War, the Second Gulf War and the American intervention in Iraq and the resulting destruction of the Iraqi state. Due to the combined effect of these events Gulf region had become an “arch of crisis”.

### **GCC and Energy Issues**

As a major energy supplier to the world, the GCC is deeply concerned about energy security issues. According to IEA 2006 projections, the bulk of GCC oil would go to India and China. China is building strategic reserves in Africa and has invested in energy projects in Iran and Sudan. This Chinese ingress is upsetting the United States, which has become a local power in the region due to its direct military presence in the Gulf region. Mutuality of energy dependence between South Asia and GCC would grow and this will bring South Asia and GCC closer.

### ***Bilateral Ties***

The GCC countries have been interacting with South Asian region for quite some time but outside the multilateral framework of activities. Its members maintain excellent bilateral ties with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the bilateral channels of interaction are very strong. The GCC seemed quite comfortable with its bilateral mode of interactions with South Asia.

### **Contacts between SAARC and GCC**

So far, the SAARC as a regional body has not explored the possibilities of developing

relations and linkage with the GCC as an organisation. The basic question needs to be posed whether the GCC is interested in having the kind of multilateral cooperation that is being suggested. While the point for forging cooperation between the GCC and the SAARC is well made, one should not ignore the fact that the GCC itself had tried to “jump over South Asia” to reach out to the ASEAN.

Lack of any contact between the SAARC and the GCC is very surprising given the geographical proximity of the two regions which have had long standing cultural and historical ties between their people. The South Asian expatriate community has a marked presence in the economies of the Gulf. The GCC investment is flowing into Pakistan and India. King Abdullah’s historic visit to India in 2006 indicated a new awareness among the GCC countries of the importance of South Asia.

Even though the SAARC and GCC both came into existence in the early 1980s, the GCC has evolved much faster and moved ahead as a regional organisation compared to the SAARC. The GCC Secretariat is more organised and functionally more effective than its SAARC counterpart.

The SAARC as a regional entity is not known to the GCC at all and this knowledge gap must be effectively addressed before initiating moves for linkages between the GCC and the SAARC. Time has now come for initiating *informal contacts* between the SAARC and the GCC. It was imperative that GCC and SAARC should establish basic contacts and make move towards opening an institutional dialogue. Secretariat-to-secretariat level contacts should be initiated between the GCC and the SAARC. Track II contacts are also very important. Civil society interactions, Chambers of Commerce level contacts are other possibilities. The key question facing the SAARC is how and when to *initiate cooperation* with the GCC. A view was expressed that South Asia needs to sort out the “sub continental mess first” before looking towards cross-regional cooperation. There is the need for making a modest beginning given the fact that the GCC has worked “in exclusivity”. The SAARC has also operated in isolationist mode. Cooperation between the two organisations at the Chambers of Commerce level could be one way for establishing linkages. Multilateral forms of cooperation between the two regional bodies may

be explored. Now in this era of Asian resurgence, regional collaboration between SAARC and GCC is no longer a matter of option but a necessity.

### **Possible Areas of Cooperation**

South Asia has become a vital source of labour inputs for the GCC and as the nature of labour supply changes, the GCC will have to pay greater attention to South Asia as a region. The GCC is moving toward a non-oil based growth model and this creates opportunities for developing synergies between the GCC and the SAARC. After 9/11 the GCC is anxious to find alternative sources of investment and this factor coupled with South Asia's rising hunger for energy has created the imperative for "structural level energy engagement" between the GCC and the SAARC region. Energy development projects in South Asia could be explored with the help of the GCC as the GCC have accumulated huge surplus capital. The GCC was planning US\$ 250 billion investment in Asia and South Asia should become an important destination for some of this investment. In this regard, the Gulf Investment Council could be approached by the SAARC.

The SAARC and the GCC could cooperate with each in such areas as human resource development and information technology. There is tremendous scope for promoting tourism and air-links between the GCC and SAARC. The Emirates Airline is a household name in South Asia. The GCC was searching for Centres of Excellence in the field of education in which there are good prospects for cooperation.

### **Security in Gulf**

Strategic policy has to be in sync with economic and political strategies of the two entities. Since the Gulf region has become a vital source of energy supplies for India, any destabilisation in the region will have severe adverse consequences not only for India but for the whole of South Asia. Any situation of a "Security vacuum" in the Gulf will have overall negative implications. In this connection it was noted that the critical difference between the GCC and SAARC was that the GCC was created to contain the threat of Iran's influence in the Gulf and this goal was being promoted through the GCC's military collaboration with the United States. After 9/11 the GCC is trying to become independent of American security umbrella but does not

have the military means to provide security to its members. The participant from the GCC noted the reference in the Dhaka Summit Declaration to the security of the smaller states and the need to contain dangers of the WMD as encouraging.

After the shocking events of 9/11, the destruction in Iraq and now the impending conflict between Iran and the United States over Iran's nuclear ambitions, the GCC is trying to persuade the Europeans and NATO countries to find a way to defuse the situation. The Iran debate in the Gulf is also important for South Asia because of Iran's location and the adverse impact on oil supplies that any situation of military confrontation will have. It is now the collective responsibility of the GCC and South Asia to prevent another round of catastrophic conflict in the Gulf.

## **South Asia and Central Asia**

### **Issues**

- Prospects of cooperation between the SAARC and the ECO and the SAARC and the SCO
- What are the implications of Afghanistan joining the SAARC for relations between South Asia and Central Asia?
- Possibilities of transport connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia
- What are the mutual gains for countries in the region as a result of a trade and transit corridor between South Asia and Central Asia?
- What are the prospects of energy cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia?

Following important points emerged from discussions:

### **Afghanistan**

Afghanistan is a newcomer to SAARC. Afghanistan's inclusion in the SAARC marked the recognition of the fact that Afghanistan was a gateway to Asia. But in order for Afghanistan to play the role of a bridge that would link South Asia and Central Asia and these two regions with the Gulf, it had to win its struggle for stability. While India and Pakistan were providing inputs to help Afghanistan stabilise itself, the twin challenges of

terrorism and drugs were threatening the Afghan future. Afghanistan had become the largest supplier of heroin to the world and this needed to be controlled. Trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan and between India and Afghanistan has experienced a huge surge and this augurs well for Afghanistan's future role in the SAARC.

### **India, Pakistan and Central Asia**

In the context of Central Asia, the SAARC needs to get its acts together. It was perhaps more useful for the countries of the region to focus on South Asia's relations with Central Asia rather than looking at these relations in the context of the SAARC. Also, it was imperative for India and Pakistan to pursue cooperative security and become responsible players in the region. Both countries will hugely benefit from expanded relations between South Asia and Central Asia. So far India and Pakistan were competing for influence in Central Asia and this ought to change into a positive sum game attitude.

### **Energy**

If India and Pakistan do not act together, the Central Asian hydrocarbon resources, and gas resources will get diverted elsewhere. Afghanistan could benefit as a bridge in any regional cooperation venture between South Asia and Central Asia. It is a tragedy that the current Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipe line agreement does not visualise its extension to India. A futuristic possibility also lies in the opportunity for electricity imports from the Central Asian States.

### **Interaction between South Asia and Central Asia**

The urge for South Asia to interact with Central Asia has been very strong and businessmen from Indian Punjab trying to reach out to the region have manifested this. South Asian presence in Central Asia remains weak despite the fact that Central Asians have been looking towards South Asia for their developmental needs. Central Asia needs massive assistance to develop its human resources and gets its products to markets in Asia.

Central Asian states were jealously guarding their sovereignty and this partly explains why they had joined a plethora of regional organisations including the

ECC, SCO and the OSCE. Central Asian states were looking for ways to escape oppressive forms of domination. Under the Soviet rule they had experienced a disconnect from their rich cultural heritage. South Asian countries could help them reclaim their cultural roots through a cross-cultural dialogue. South Asia should stop viewing Central Asia as a backyard of Russia and treat it as an independent entity. Such an approach will facilitate development of beneficial relations between South Asian countries and Central Asian states.

## **Recommendations**

1. The SAARC needs to consolidate itself as a regional body. Others would take a dynamic SAARC seriously. A dysfunctional and limping SAARC will be ignored.
2. A clearer perception of the relationship between bilateral and multilateral modes of interaction will be required.
3. Innovative thinking is required for developing cooperation with the GCC and Central Asian states on human resource development, transport and energy.
4. Regarding the role of the diaspora, there is the need to generate activities at the SAARC level to cultivate a South Asian identity. The Indian and Pakistani diaspora communities have been working at cross-purposes adopting a country perspective. But there is the need to go beyond that and generate activity using South Asian/SAARC identity as a vehicle.
5. In the context of Asia's resurgence, the key question that needs to be addressed is: how to make Central Asia and GCC part of this resurgence and how to take small steps in the domain of multilateral cooperation?

## **Contacts and Cooperation between South Asia and GCC**

1. SAARC should establish contact with GCC. Contacts at the institutional level between the SAARC and GCC Secretariats should be initiated. In order for this to happen the SAARC Secretariat capabilities need to be augmented.
2. Energy remains the key concern for GCC as a supplier and South Asia as a consumer.
3. The knowledge gap between the SAARC and GCC needs to be closed.

4. The SAARC and GCC may consider possibilities for institutional cooperation and collaboration in the areas of Human Resource Development, Communication and Information Technology and Energy Investment Projects.
5. The issue of Iran's nuclear programme should be resolved peacefully. South Asia needs to adopt a pro-active role and support the efforts being made by the GCC to avert a military showdown between Iran and the United States. Another military conflict in the Gulf region, Iran and the United States will have devastating consequence and it was imperative that this must be avoided.

### **Linking South Asia and Central Asia**

1. SAARC should work for the stability of Afghanistan. Collaboration between India and Pakistan was the key to achieving this goal.
2. A stable Afghanistan was the key to the future of cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia.
3. Central Asia energy resources had not been tapped by South Asia and this can only be done if peace and security returns to Afghanistan.
4. The SAARC needs to develop a multilateral framework for energy collaboration between Central Asia and South Asia. South Asia needs to compete with others for gaining access to Central Asian resources and this competition will benefit the Central Asian States.
5. Central Asian States need assistance in human resource development. South Asian countries may offer assistance to these States in this realm.

### **Report of Group D**

#### **“Perspectives of Relations between South Asia and European Union; and South Asia and America”**

*Chairperson:* Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa

*Rapporteur:* Ambassador Kant K Bhargava

## Issues:

- Update on the EU and its relations with the SAARC
- How does the EU, now an observer in the SAARC, visualise evolution of its relationship with this body?
- What can SAARC learn from EU and what are the opportunities for SAARC and EU to cooperate?
- Should SAARC adopt the principle of subsidiarity enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty?
- Update on the USA's relations with South Asian countries.
- How does the USA, now an observer in the SAARC, visualise evolution of its relationship with this body?
- What are the prospects of development cooperation between Canada and the South Asian countries?
- How can the South Asian Diaspora in North America be better harnessed for promoting regional cooperation in South Asia and its interaction with North America?

*Presenters:* Dr. Dick Gupwell; Dr. Gowher Rizvi; and Prof. Chiranjib Sen

*Panel:* Ambassador A N Ram, Ambassador Syed Muazzam Ali and Prof. Abdul Nafey

Following important points emerged from discussions:

## South Asia-EU

The European Economic Community had bilateral cooperation agreement with four of its member states before the SAARC was born. As of today the EU has strategic partnership with India. Free trade agreement between the EU and India is on the anvil. The EU has at present a bilateral agreement with five member states of the SAARC.

As early as in 1988 the European Parliament had adopted a resolution welcoming the establishment of the SAARC and expressing readiness of the European Economic Community to establish cooperation with the SAARC. In 1996, the EU entered into a technical cooperation agreement with the SAARC.

## **Prospects of Regional Cooperation**

For the time being, the focus of the European Union will be on bilateral partnership with India. The EU is interested in the SAARC as it is a factor for internal stability. If the South Asian Free Trade Agreement progresses in a way in which FTAs are viewed by the world, then there would be better scope for cooperation between the EU and the SAARC by 2015.

Earlier members of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) were not in favour of South Asian countries becoming members of it in view of the dispute between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. There is now a new Asia study that favours South Asian countries joining the ASEM process.

## **Parliamentary Dimension**

The SAARC can perhaps learn from the crucial role played by the European Parliament for promoting regional cooperation. The ASEAN is comparatively weak in regard to inter-parliamentary institutions. The SAARC has the existing mechanism of Association of Speakers and Members of Parliament. The EU has also the Council of Europe.

## **People-to-People Contact**

For promoting increased people-to-people contact and for harnessing the role of the civil society and NGOs, the EU has an organisation like the Economic and Social Committee of European Union. Such a body together with professional organisations at regional level provides inputs for strengthening the EU.

## **Local Governance**

In so far as local governance matters are concerned, the EU has organisations like the Committee of the Regions and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

## **Principle of Subsidiarity**

Subsidiarity is a two-way process. States need to devolve authority downwards also. India provides a good example of subsidiarity. At the same time India is so big that it cannot yield sovereignty. But India can benefit by enlarging market in South Asia.

## **SAARC-EU Comparison**

A view was expressed that the big size of India compared to other member states of the SAARC is a dampening factor for regional integration in South Asia. Unlike the SAARC, in the EU there is growing cooperation on foreign policy and defence issues. The Western European Union has now merged with the EU. There are moves for further enlargement with Turkey and two more states as prospective members.

## **Recommendations**

1. The SAARC might consider creating an organisation like the Economic and Social Committee of European Union. Such a body together with organisations of professionals at regional levels could then discuss what needs to be done to strengthen the SAARC.
2. The SAARC could usefully strengthen the existing mechanism of Association of Speakers and Members of Parliament. Further evolution of inter parliamentary institutions need not be modelled on European Parliament but more on the lines of Council of Europe.
3. There is need for a development fund for the SAARC like the Regional Fund in the EU.

## **South Asia-USA**

Officials in the State Department consider the South Asian region as very important because of issues of terrorism, environment, democracy, international peace-keeping and marketing opportunities. But even the analysts do not think of South Asia as a region but in country-specific terms. New centres and new chairs on South Asian Studies have been established. But the concentration in these organisations is mainly on India. The USA has now strategic relationship with India. With Pakistan, it has strategic partnership.

## **Interest in Regional Cooperation**

The USAID has a huge interest in integrating and connecting South Asia and Central Asia and in matters relating to infrastructure and energy. Some firms in

the USA have interest in South Asia as a region and have the positions of Vice-President South Asia in their establishments.

### **Democracy and Role of India**

The USA is also interested in strengthening democracy in the region as it considers it a key foundation of development. The US authorities are of the view that India has a central role to play in South Asia. The US private sector is currently focusing on India and exploring all possible avenues for cooperation in matters of trade, investment, agriculture, science and technology, education.

### **South Asian Diaspora**

The South Asian Diaspora is emerging as an influential group. The Indian Political Action Committee has done some useful work. The India Pakistan conflict gets reflected in the USA to some extent in the South Asian Diaspora.

### **Recommendations**

1. The countries of the region should begin to benefit from the prosperity and resurgence of India as this will also improve their prospects and of South Asian region as a whole to engage with the USA.
2. Regarding the role of the Diaspora, there is need to generate activities at the SAARC level to cultivate a South Asian identity. Indian and Pakistani Diaspora communities, which have worked at cross-purposes in the past by adopting a country perspective, need to go beyond that and generate activity using South Asian/SAARC identity as a vehicle.

### **South Asia-Canada: Update on South Asia-Canada Relations**

There are people-to-people links between South Asia and Canada thanks to the presence in Canada of a large number of migrant professional classes. In recent times, Indian foreign investment in Canada has increased considerably. Cooperation in higher education, science and technology are promising areas. There is the

Science and Technology Agreement between India and Canada which provides for R & D linkages. Outsourcing was another promising area for South Asian region as a whole.

### **Immigration and South Asian Diaspora**

By 2015 Canada will need as many as one million skilled immigrants. South Asia is now the single largest source for immigrants into Canada. On the whole, the South Asian community is well integrated in Canada. There is a qualitative change among the second generation South Asians in North America. Their attitude to disputes in South Asia was different compared to that of first generation South Asians who tend to get divided on this point.

### **Development Cooperation**

Canada is an important partner for South Asia in the field of Development Cooperation. Currently it has a substantial programme for development assistance to Afghanistan which is now a member of the SAARC. The Canadian International Development Agency had entered into a five year Memorandum of Understanding with the SAARC Secretariat some years ago for a five-year period which was subsequently not renewed.

### **Afghanistan**

Canada is deeply involved in bringing about political stability and security in Afghanistan basically in the framework of NATO operations and programme. The Parliamentary Secretary from Canada attended the recent conference held in India on Regional Cooperation matters pertaining to Afghanistan.

### **Current interest in SAARC**

Canada has not sought observer status in the SAARC.

### **Recommendations**

1. Educational exchanges constitute a strong basis for India's engagement with Canada. Other South Asian countries should also develop such linkages.

2. South Asian Diaspora with its large size could facilitate development of relations between South Asia and Canada on a regional basis.
3. The SAARC could profit from the experiences of NAFTA in North America where measures are taken by the USA, Canada and Mexico simultaneously for security, prosperity and partnership. Trade is a consequence and not necessarily a cause of integration in North America and this applies to South Asia also to some extent.
4. Regional NGOs in South Asia should tap assistance from Canada in the field of development cooperation through organisations like the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and International Development and Research Cooperation (IDRC).

## **Asia and the West**

1. Asian resurgence could power global growth and provide new opportunities for growth for Europe and North America.
2. In this context, the real challenge in the 21st century is posed not so much by the prospects of the so-called clash of 'civilisations' but by the imperative need for globalisation to solve problems through joint efforts.

## **Recommendations**

1. Just as the world accommodated the rise of Europe in the post-Marshall Plan era, it must accommodate the rise of contemporary Asia.
2. Asia and the West should increase cooperation and work for synergy between the present-day achievements of the great ancient Asian Civilisations and of the modern Euro-American Democratic Civilisations. South Asia has an important role in this regard.

# The New Delhi Statement on SAARC 2015 and Asian Resurgence

The Conference on “*SAARC 2015: Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia*” was held in New Delhi between 09-11 February 2007. The Conference was attended among others by ministers, former ministers, diplomats, academics, businessmen and other civil society members of the SAARC countries including Afghanistan, a new member of the SAARC. Delegates from China, Korea, Japan, European Union (countries and organisation with observer status in the SAARC), ASEAN and GCC participated in the Conference.

In his inaugural address, Dr I. K. Gujral, former Prime Minister of India and Chairman of the Indian Council for South Asian Cooperation highlighted that the SAARC process served as a strong regional forum by bringing the leadership of its member countries to a common platform. At the same time, it has generated a parallel process of unofficial SAARC. The last two decades have witnessed an unprecedented rise in the interactions and networking among various institutions, agencies and civil society organisations of South Asia.

Regrettably, as a result of South Asia missing opportunities after opportunities, the cumulative cost of non-cooperation has been very high. In this context he stressed that “we must change and not become caged by traditional mindsets”. India could make some significant unilateral gestures to build confidence among its neighbours and to facilitate their participation in regional cooperation and development matters on an equal footing.

In his view, South Asian countries have to grow together and move towards integration with ASEAN. He pointed out the need to reposition South Asia as a community in the changing Asian and global context. He posed the critical

question “*Could South Asia as an economic power house become a flag bearer of new Asianism accommodating the entire spectrum of political ideologies?*”

In his concluding statement as the Chairperson of the inaugural session, Dr. Karan Singh, Member of Parliament and President of the Indian Council for Cultural Cooperation, observed that for the SAARC to realise its optimal potential, it was important for India and Pakistan to get over their differences and problems. This will also enable South Asia as a region to reach out to the rest of the world. Fortunately, the composite dialogue process was now well in place with encouragement by creative activism on the part of civil society elements in the two countries. Dr. Singh observed that there is now confluence of:

- economic interests of Asian countries;
- rapid advances by them in technologies and productive processes; and
- cultural value systems of these countries.

The SAARC will be able to gain a lot by expanding its horizons and forging cooperation in this new environment with China, Japan and Korea having an observer status in SAARC and Afghanistan as its new member. He pointed out that the most critical aspects of cooperation and of the strength of South Asia are cultural exchanges including those through tourism. He referred to the recent understanding at the East Asia Summit to strengthen regional education cooperation and to the initiative for the revival of Nalanda University in India to improve regional understanding and the appreciation of one another’s heritage and history.

**The Opening Plenary Session on Asian Dynamism and Challenges for Synergising Internal and External Cooperation of South Asia** was chaired by Dr. Arjun Sengupta, Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Governing Body of Research and Information System (RIS).

The participants noted that the Background Paper for the Conference contained references to:

- the suggestion that has been made by Prime Minister of Pakistan about an integrated framework for intra-regional cooperation (in Asia) in strategic areas

- such as energy, water, food, infrastructure connectivity, investment in human capital and economic and social transformation through structural reforms;
- the remark of the Prime Minister of India terming the Asian Economic Community as constituting ‘an arc of advantage’ in terms of prosperity, stability and closer economic integration where there would be large-scale movement of people, capital, labour, ideas and creativity.

The following important points were made by the presenters Dr. Sartaz Aziz, former Finance and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Dr. Kamal Hossain, former Foreign and Law Minister of Bangladesh, Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, former Foreign Minister of Nepal and Dr. Mahmood Shaugee, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation of Maldives:

- SAARC has not been able to realise its full potential because of the existence of serious political differences and disputes in the region giving rise to tensions and mistrust among member states.
- Time is now ripe to give concrete shape to the recommendations of 1998 Report of the Group of Eminent Persons in the field of trade i.e. starting from the South Asian Free Trade Area in phase I, SAARC to move to a Customs Union in phase II and South Asian Economic Union in phase III to be completed by 2020; transport and telecommunications; cooperation in the field of energy; and evolving of common positions on emerging global economic issues.
- SAARC’s ability to forge stronger relations with other regions can improve progressively as the obstacles arising from mistrust and suspicion are overcome and the SAARC becomes a more vibrant and dynamic organisation.
- In terms of sequencing, it will not be necessary to require that SAARC itself must make substantial progress in different areas before it expands its horizons and strengthens cooperation with other regions. The two processes can move on parallel tracks and become mutually reinforcing.
- Due importance may be accorded to the prospects for sub-regional cooperation while pursuing the goal of strengthening overall cooperation in South Asia. Geographical realities, resource endowments and manifest complementarities point to significant benefits which could result for all partners from sub-

regional cooperation in the North-Eastern sub-region of South Asia, comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and North Eastern areas of India.

- Significant gains for SAARC countries would take place in the fields of Tourism and Civil Aviation as a result of open skies agreement and with SAARC developing cooperation with the neighbouring countries in a resurgent Asia.

The participants noted that Asia's economic dynamism will increasingly have a major impact on South Asian region as a whole. Developments in the neighbouring regions of South Asia pose enormous challenges and offer significant opportunities to the SAARC countries in the areas of trade, energy, and environment.

In a special presentation, Hon'ble Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce shared with the participants his perspective of developments within the SAARC following the entry into force of the SAFTA. India has already initiated a number of trade facilitation measures vis-à-vis its neighbours including measures for improvements in cross border movement of goods and people, and removal of non-tariff barriers. He pointed out that the concept of border trade needs to be widened so as to cover *trade at border*. In this regard he recalled that the Government of India had already started drastically modernising the facilities at 13 crucial customs points with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. He stressed that it is non-tariff barriers and not tariffs barriers which were really restricting the movement of goods and services in the region. He observed that India tops the list in the imposition of these non-tariff barriers. He called for a comprehensive study to first identify these and then for undertaking of actions to remove them. He highlighted the difficulties in realizing Myanmar-Bangladesh-India gas pipeline. He emphasised the importance of cross-border connectivity. Lack of timely action in this regard could be very costly to smaller countries in the region.

In the Second Session, four concurrent Working Groups discussed perspectives of relations of South Asia with other regions. Group A deliberated on South Asia's relations with South East Asia; Group B with East Asia; Group C with Central Asia and Gulf countries; and Group D with European Union and North America.

The participants discussed issues related to connectivity both within and outside the region, institutional linkages, migration and role of Diaspora, broadening of trade and investment activities including into services sectors like tourism, finance, education, insurance and banking.

The Reports of the Working Groups were presented and discussed in the Third Plenary Session. Following are some noteworthy outcomes of the deliberations in the four Groups:

### **Group A**

- In Asia's resurgence both regions, ASEAN and SAARC, are important in terms of natural and human resources.
- Vis-a-vis South Asian countries, ASEAN is mainly interested in better market access, attracting FDI and visits of high-end tourists.
- As far as trans-national migration is concerned, South Asia needs to get its act together and think it through. There are also issues of citizenship for Indians in South East Asia.
- In maritime security matters, cooperation between ASEAN and SAARC may be possible within the framework of IOMAC and IOARC.
- ASEAN and SAARC foreign ministers have been meeting every year at the UN General Assembly but nothing of substance has resulted from such meetings.
- BIMSTEC-SAARC cooperation has better potential than ASEAN-South Asia arrangement. Under the BIMSTEC, seven areas of cooperation have been identified and steady progress has been made on these issues.

### **Group B**

- The larger concept of trade at border needs to be promoted inter alia through agreement on cross-border movement of peoples and goods, improvement of infrastructure and strengthening of mutual trust.
- Joint research may be undertaken by the upper stream and down stream countries on various issues relating to usage of water.
- A multilateral mechanism to effectively counter terrorism needs to be established.

East Asian countries may consider possibilities of:

- increasing their investment in South Asia and of extending assistance to SAARC for regional programmes;
- sharing their experiences with South Asian countries in the fields of economic development and reduction of poverty.

SAARC countries may:

- consider organising joint trade exhibitions in the East Asian region;
- take due note of likely increased demand in East Asian countries of skilled manpower from South Asia due to emerging shortages in East Asia in years to come;
- consider defining the role that Observer States in SAARC would play.

### **Group C**

- There is the need to have a clearer perception of the relationship between bilateral and multilateral modes of interaction while considering perspectives of relations between South Asia and GCC and those between South Asia and Central Asia.
- Innovative thinking is required for establishing cooperation in human resource development, transport and energy.
- At times, South Asian Diaspora communities have been working at cross-purposes by adopting a country perspective. There is the need to go beyond that and generate activity using South Asian/SAARC identity as a vehicle.

### **South Asia and GCC**

- The knowledge gap between SAARC and GCC needs to be closed.
- Contacts at the institutional level between SAARC and GCC Secretariats should be initiated.
- SAARC and GCC can look at possibilities for institutional collaboration in the areas of human resource development, information technology, and energy investment projects.
- The issue of Iran's nuclear programme should be resolved peacefully and South Asia needs to adopt a pro-active role and support the efforts being

made by the GCC to avert a military showdown between Iran and the United States.

- Possibilities for cooperation between SAARC and the GCC in the fields of education, communication and information technology may be explored.

### **South Asia and Central Asia**

- SAARC should work for the stability of Afghanistan. Collaboration between India and Pakistan was the key to achieving this goal.
- SAARC needs to develop a multilateral framework for energy collaboration between Central Asia and South Asia.
- Central Asian states need assistance in human resource development and SAARC member states can offer them considerable assistance in this realm.
- Central Asia energy resources had not been tapped by South Asia and this can only be done if peace and security returns to Afghanistan.
- A stable Afghanistan was the key to the future of cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia.

## **Group D**

### **South Asia-EU**

The presentations and discussions brought out following important points:

- EU has at present a strategic partnership with India and has bilateral agreements with five South Asian countries. For the time being EU intends to focus on bilateral relationship.
- EU considers SAARC as a factor for internal stability in South Asia.
- If SAFTA gets implemented in right earnest, then by 2015 there would be better scope for cooperation between EU and SAARC.
- The Cecchini Report on Cost of Non-Europe highlighted the important role of regional cooperation. This may have some lessons for South Asia.
- EU has certain bodies like the European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, Congress of local and regional authorities. These bodies facilitate people-to-people contact and interaction. Such bodies may

be set up in South Asia. These together with various professional bodies at regional level may discuss what needs to be done to strengthen the SAARC. The SAARC may consider the advantages of setting up in South Asia an organisation like the Council of Europe. The Association of the Speakers and Members of Parliament of South Asian countries may be strengthened.

### **South Asia-North America**

The presentations and discussions brought out following important points:

#### **South Asia-USA**

- US State Department officials consider the South Asian region as very important mainly because of issues of terrorism, environment, democracy, international peace keeping and marketing.
- US relationship with South Asian countries is largely country-specific. It has a strategic relationship with India and a strategic partnership with Pakistan.
- The private sector is mainly interested in India. But there are several companies in USA having the positions of Vice-President for South Asia.
- The USAID has considerable interest in integrating and connecting South Asia and Central Asia through infrastructure and energy projects. Energy related Programme of USAID in South Asia known as South Asia Regional Initiative on Energy (SARI-E) has met with a lot of success.
- USA considers democracy as the key foundation for development. As such it considers building of democracy in South Asian countries as a very important matter. Engagement of USA with the South Asian region as a whole will happen as the countries of the region begin to benefit from the prosperity and rapid economic development of India.
- The conflicts in the Indian sub-continent do get reflected in USA in inter-se relationship of South Asian Diaspora.

#### **South Asia-Canada**

- Prospects of relationship between South Asian countries and Canada are bright in areas of education, science and technology particularly hi-tech areas and immigration.

- Canada is deeply involved in bringing about stability in Afghanistan, now a member of SAARC and has earmarked considerable aid for its development.
- The South Asian community in Canada is very large and growing. By 2015, Canada will need about one million skilled immigrants.

As the Dinner Speaker on February 10, Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Director, Ash Institute for Democratic Governance & Innovation, Harvard University presented his perspectives on the proposed South Asian University.

Ms Preeti Saran, Joint Secretary in-charge of SAARC Division in the Ministry of External Affairs and Special Invitee made her presentation in the Fourth Session. She pointed out that it was time to move SAFTA and SAARC Development Fund (SDF) into the implementation phase. She hoped that SAFTA would be operationalised and implemented in the spirit in which it was negotiated and that its scope will be enlarged so as to include trade in services. As regards the SDF, she recalled that India had offered \$100 million funding for poverty alleviation projects in other SAARC countries. The theme of the forthcoming SAARC Summit will be *SAARC: Towards the Theme of Connectivity through Trade, Transport and Energy Corridors*. The idea is to work for connectivity in the region and then to the outside world. Some of the concrete proposals which India had in mind were those relating to South Asian University, telemedicine and IT-enabled health services, cooperation in the energy sector including in non-conventional sources of energy. India is for open regionalism and believes that SAARC will benefit from external linkages.

Following her presentation, other presenters and members of the panel outlined various elements of vision and strategy of SAARC in its third decade. There was agreement that SAARC as a regional institution needs to foster and consolidate the process of regional cooperation and integration within itself. But this task should be undertaken against the challenging backdrop of deepening of globalisation process, resurgence and growing dynamism of Asia, new outward looking trends and changing realities in South Asia.

The Concluding Session was chaired by Prof. B.B. Bhattacharya, Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The participants discussed the Draft Statement of the Conference that was presented to the Plenary by Prof. Mahendra P Lama.

Thereafter, the Conference decided to recommend the following for consideration of the forthcoming 14<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit scheduled to take place in April 2007 in New Delhi:

- Early setting up of a South Asian University.
- Promotion in member countries of SAARC of the concept of Gateway Strategies for neighbouring countries and regions. The Gateway Strategy must go beyond physical connectivity and include its human dimensions in areas such as education, health, research and innovation, and understanding of these regions and their cultures. Such strategies need to be devised nationally as well as regionally in South Asia and in its neighbouring regions.
- Revival and strengthening of Bridges of Communications in South Asia and between South Asia and its neighbouring regions.
- Commissioning of a regional study on non-tariff barriers that adversely affect bilateral and regional trade.
- Encouraging establishments of networks of academic institutions of SAARC countries and those from other regions so as to promote better mutual understanding of perspectives of relations of South Asia with these regions.
- Improvements in the website of SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu.
- Constitution of a Vision and Strategy Group of Eminent Persons from SAARC countries for formulating recommendations for comprehensive internal as well as external regional cooperation in the context of globalisation and Asian Resurgence.
- Commissioning of Studies on strategies for South Asia's smooth and eventual integration with resurgent Asian regions and the potential of South Asia to play a catalytic role in the evolution of Pan Asian cooperation.

- Convening annually in conjunction with SAARC Summit, meetings of South Asian Regional Economic Forum for consideration of mega regional projects that are ripe for discussion.
- Visa-free regime and facilitation of travel inside the region for promoting generally people to people contacts and in particular for business, professional and tourism purposes.
- Efforts to bring South Asian Diaspora together and work collectively towards further opening of global labour markets.
- Acceleration of the SAARC Process by
  - a) Creation of appropriate implementing and coordinating mechanisms for various SAARC programmes.
  - b) Strengthening of SAARC Secretariat through induction of more professionals.
  - c) Capacity-building of the civil servants and others concerned with formulation and implementation of SAARC projects and programmes.
  - d) Focussing attention on implementation of recommendations of SAARC Social Charter.

The participants agreed to widely disseminate the contents of this Statement in their respective countries. The Conference agreed that the contents of the Statement be brought to the attention of the policy- and decision-makers, media, politicians, civil society and other organisations. The participants also agreed to put on the websites of their institutions, the Statement of this Conference and other relevant documents.

The organisers also undertook to transmit the Statement of the Conference to the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, policy-makers, opinion-makers in various member countries.

The participants recommended periodical convening of this type of regional conference.

The Conference thanked the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung for the valuable support it is extending through its South Asia Regional Programme.

# Programme of Conference on SAARC 2015

## Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia 09-11 February, 2007 New Delhi

Friday, February 09	
20.00 -2100 h	Reception hosted jointly by Dr. Dr. Peter Gey, Resident Representative, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) India Prof. Mahendra Lama, Chairman, Centre for South, Central, South East Asia and South West Pacific Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Ambassador (Retd.) Kant K. Bhargava, Former Secretary General, SAARC
2100 h	Dinner hosted by Dr. Karan Singh President Indian Council for Cultural Relations Chancellor JNU
Saturday, February 10	<b>SAARC 2015: Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia</b>
09.30 h	Registration
10.00-11.00 h	<b>Inaugural Session</b> <i>Chairperson:</i> Dr. Karan Singh <i>Welcome Remarks:</i> Dr. Dr. Peter Gey <i>Statement:</i> H.E. Bernd Mützelburg, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany <i>Opening Remarks:</i> Kant K. Bhargava and Mahendra Lama

	<p><i>Remarks:</i> Prof. Pushpesh Pant, Dean, School of International Studies, JNU</p> <p><i>Inaugural Address:</i> Dr. I.K. Gujral, Former Prime Minister of India and Chairman, Indian Council for South Asian Cooperation</p> <p><i>Chairperson's Statement</i></p>
11.00–11.15 h	Tea/Coffee Break
11.15–13.30 h	<p><b>Session I</b></p> <p>Asian Dynamism and Challenges for Synergising Internal and External Cooperation of South Asia</p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Dr. Arjun Sengupta, Member of Parliament</p> <p><i>Rapporteurs:</i> Mahendra Lama &amp; Kant K. Bhargava</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the political and economic implications of the current Asian Dynamism and Resurgent Asia?</li> <li>● What are the changing realities in South Asia and its immediate neighbourhood and new priorities in South Asia's global relations?</li> <li>● What are the recent noteworthy developments in SAARC? What are the key drivers in South Asia's recent spurt in growth?</li> <li>● What are their implications for external regional cooperation of SAARC and its internal and cross-border connectivity?</li> <li>● How do we position the emerging South Asia in the current Asian context?</li> <li>● Do we not try to break new ground in policy research relating to South Asia's relations with the neighbouring regions?</li> <li>● What kind of network building and public awareness campaigns are required in the context of Asian resurgence?</li> <li>● What are the opportunities available for generating sufficiently high interest in SAARC by synergising public-private partnership and through networking of other non-state actors?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do we work towards relationships with neighbouring regions that is agenda driven and not incidental and reactive?</li> <li>● How do we step up our investment in hard and soft infrastructure that connects us to rest of Asia?</li> <li>● Given the central location of South Asia, should we not evolve national and regional Gateway Frameworks for strengthening links of South Asia with its neighbouring regions?</li> </ul> <p><i>Presenters:</i> Dr. Sartaz Aziz, Former Finance and Foreign Minister of Pakistan  Dr. Kamal Hossain, Former Foreign and Law Minister of Bangladesh  Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, Former Foreign Minister of Nepal  Dr. Mahmood Shauggee, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation of Maldives</p> <p><i>Discussants:</i> Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Director General, Research and Information System  Ambassador (Retd.) Khalid Mahmood, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China  Ambassador (Retd.) Syed Muazzem Ali, Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh  Prof. Mohan Rao, Director, South Asia Centre, National University of Singapore  Prof. Uma Singh, JNU</p>
13.30–14.30 h	<p><b>Special Presentation from a Policy Maker’s Perspective</b>  Hon’ble Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Commerce Government of India</p> <p><i>Remarks by Chairperson</i></p>

15.30–17.45 h	<p><b>Session II</b></p> <p><i>Perspectives of Relations between South Asia and other Regions</i></p> <p>Four Concurrent Working Groups</p> <p><b>Group A: South Asia and South East Asia</b></p> <p><i>Co-Chairpersons:</i> Dr. Kamal Hossain and Dr. Nagesh Kumar  <i>Rapporteur:</i> Dr. Aparna Shivpuri, Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore</p> <p><b>Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update on ASEAN and BIMSTEC</li> <li>● Update on SAARC-ASEAN cooperation and way forward</li> <li>● What are perspectives of ASEAN on medium term relations of South Asian countries with the evolving East Asian community?</li> <li>● Issues in trans-national migration and contribution of South Asian Diaspora</li> <li>● Prospects for maritime cooperation, disaster mitigation and management</li> </ul> <p><i>Presenters:</i> Ambassador (Retd.) Sudhir T. Devare, former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India</p> <p><i>Panel:</i> Ambassador (Retd.) Farooq Sobhan, Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh  Dr. Saman Kelegama, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka  Dr. (Ms) Kripa Sridharan, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore and Senior Research Fellow, Institute for South East Asian Studies  Dr. N. C. Pahariya, Fellow, Consumer Unity and Trust Society Q &amp; A</p>
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## Group B: South Asia and East Asia

*Chairperson:* Ambassador (Retd.) L. L. Mehrotra

### Issues

- Update on China-South Asia Relations
- With China going ahead with free trade arrangements with India and Pakistan in near future, what are the prospects of free trade between China and SAARC and greater two-way investments?
- How does China, now an observer in SAARC, visualise its relationship with this body?
- What are the prospects of cross-border linkages for ensuring safe and smart borders between China and South Asian countries that share borders with it?
- Update on Japan-South Asia Relations and on results achieved with Japan's Special SAARC Fund
- How does Japan, now an observer in SAARC, visualise its relationship with this body?
- What are prospects of greater trade, development assistance and investment of Japan in South Asian region in the present situation?
- What lessons should South Asia draw from the evolving nature of innovation-based economy of Japan?
- Update on Korea-South Asia Relations
- How does Korea, now an observer in SAARC, visualise its relationship with this body?
- What has been the experience and success story of Korean investment in South Asian countries? What are the future prospects of trade and investment between Korea and South Asia?

*Presenters:* Dr. Shao Yuqun, Deputy Director, Department of South Asian Studies, Shanghai Prof. Nakamura Hisashi, Dean, School of Economics, Ryokoku University, Kyoto, Prof. Seh-Jin Chang, School of Economics, Inha University, Korea

*Panel:* Khalid Mahmood  
Dr. Sridhar Khatri, Executive Director, South Asian Centre for Policy Studies, Kathmandu  
Mahendra Lama

*Remarks by Chairperson*

### **Group C: South Asia and Central Asia**

#### **South Asia and the Gulf Countries**

*Chairperson:* Dr. Sartaz Aziz

*Rapporteur:* Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain, Executive Director  
Regional Centre for Strategic Studies,  
Colombo

#### **Issues**

- Prospects of cooperation between SAARC and ECO, SCO and GCC
- What are the implications of Afghanistan joining SAARC for relations between South Asia and Central Asia?
- Possibilities of transport connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia?
- What are the mutual gains for countries in the region as a result of a trade and transit corridor between South Asia and Central Asia?
- What are the prospects of energy cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia?
- Prospects of economic cooperation between Gulf Countries and South Asia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Issues in trans-national migration and contribution of South Asian Diaspora</li> </ul> <p><i>Presenters:</i> Ambassador (Retd.) Naeem U. Hasan, Former Secretary General, SAARC Mr. Naimullah Naimi, Scholar on SAARC, Afghanistan Prof. Girjesh Pant, JNU</p> <p><i>Panel:</i> Dr. Rajeev Kumar, Executive Director and CEO, ICRIER Ambassador (Retd.) Hamid Ansari, former Ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia Dr. Jasim Abdulghani Al-Khalufi, Senior Official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates</p>
	<p><b>Group D</b> <b>South Asia and the European Union</b> <b>South Asia and North America</b></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Dr. Bhekh B. Thapa <i>Rapporteur:</i> Kant K. Bhargava</p> <p><b>Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update on EU and its relations with SAARC.</li> <li>● How does EU, now an observer in SAARC, visualise evolution of its relationship with this body?</li> <li>● What can SAARC learn from EU and what are the opportunities for SAARC and EU to cooperate?</li> <li>● Should SAARC adopt the principle of subsidiarity enshrined in Maastricht Treaty?</li> <li>● Update on USA's relations with South Asian countries.</li> <li>● How does USA, now an observer in SAARC, visualise evolution of its relationship with this body?</li> <li>● What are the prospects of development cooperation between Canada and South Asian countries?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the South Asian Diaspora in North America be better harnessed for promoting regional cooperation in South Asia and its interaction with North America?</li> </ul> <p><i>Presenters:</i> Mr. Dick Gupwell, Secretary-General, European Institute for Asian Studies  Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Director, Ash Institute for Democratic Governance &amp; Innovation, Harvard University  Dr. Chiranjib Sen, President, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute</p> <p><i>Panel:</i> Ambassador (Retd.) Amar Nath Ram, former Ambassador of India to European Union  Ambassador (Retd.) I.P. Khosla, Editor-in-Chief, South Asian Survey  Prof. Abdul Nafey, Chairman, Centre for Canadian, US &amp; Latin American Studies</p> <p><i>Q &amp; A</i></p>
19.30-21.30 h	Dinner for Participants Presentation by Dr. Gowher Rizvi on “South Asian University”
<b>Sunday, February 11</b>	
09.30–11.30 h	<b>Session III</b> <b>Reports of Working Groups to the Plenary</b> <i>Chairperson:</i> Mahendra P Lama Presentation to Plenary of Group Results by Rapporteurs and Chairpersons of Groups A, B C and D  <i>Q &amp; A</i>

11.30-13.15 h	<p><b>Session IV</b></p> <p><b>Vision and Strategy for a Third Decade of SAARC</b></p> <p><i>Panel discussion</i></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Kant K. Bhargava</p> <p><b>Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SAARC- Feedback and “Feed forward”</li> <li>● What are the prospects of building on SAFTA and extending it to free trade in services and financial and monetary cooperation?</li> <li>● How to build and ensure safe and smart borders between India and other bordering SAARC countries?</li> <li>● What are the freshly emerging issues in migration both within and outside the SAARC region?</li> <li>● Now with Afghanistan being a member of SAARC, and EU and major countries being observers, what needs to be done by SAARC and its member states to harness potential opportunities of cooperation on a cross regional basis with Central Asia and beyond Europe and China.</li> <li>● Should SAARC not set up an expert group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ articulate frameworks of Gateways for South Asia that would facilitate its linkages with South East Asia, China, and Central Asia;</li> <li>◆ examine ways and means of meeting various challenges of external regional linkages including for the fight against terrorism;</li> <li>◆ suggest ways and means for developing research and training exchange programmes with other Asian countries, and</li> <li>◆ formulate recommendations for the way forward for</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) fast track integration of South Asian economies;</li> <li>(ii) South Asian economies to integrate with those of neighbouring regions particularly with the Evolving East Asian community (EAC) and</li> <li>(iii) global integration of the South Asian region that is equitable and sustainable.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Presenters:</i> Ms Preeti Saran, Joint Secretary, SAARC Farooq Sobhan Saman Kelegama</p>
13.15-14.15 h	Lunch at the Venue
14.15-15.45 h	<p><b>Session IV</b></p> <p><b>Presentations continued</b></p> <p><i>Panel:</i> Syed Riffat Hussain L.L. Mehrotra I.P. Khosla Sridhar Khatri Naeem U. Hasan Mr. Binod Chaudhary, President, Confederation of Nepal Industries Mr. Nawaz Rajabdeen, President, Federation of Chamber of Commerce &amp; Industry of Sri Lanka</p> <p><i>Q &amp; A</i></p>
15.45-16.00 h	<b>Tea</b>
16.00-16.45 h	<p><b>Concluding Session</b></p> <p><i>Chairperson:</i> Prof. BB Bhattacharya, Vice-Chancellor, JNU <i>Presenters:</i> Mahendra P Lama, &amp; Kant K. Bhargava Presentation of Draft Document on SAARC 2015</p> <p><i>Q &amp; A</i></p> <p><i>Remarks by Chairperson</i></p>

# List of Participants & Special Invitees

## Bangladesh

1. Dr. Kamal Hossain, former Foreign & Law Minister; Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
2. Ambassador (retd.) Farooq Sobhan, former Foreign Secretary; President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute
3. Ambassador (retd.) Syed Muazzem Ali, former Foreign Secretary

## India

1. Dr. Karan Singh, Member of Parliament; President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations; Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
2. Dr. Arjun Sengupta, Member of Parliament; former Member of Planning Commission
3. Ambassador (retd.) A.N. Ram; former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs; former Ambassador to European Union
4. Ambassador (retd.) Kant K. Bhargava; former Secretary-General, South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
5. Prof. Mahendra P. Lama, Chairman, Centre for South, Central, South East Asian and South West Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi
6. Mr. Hemant Batra, Secretary-General, SAARC law
7. Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Director-General, Research and Information System for the Developing Countries
8. Prof. Chiranjib Sen, President, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute; Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore
9. Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Director & Chief Executive, Indian Council for Research in International Economic Relations (ICRIER)
10. Ambassador (retd.) Hamid Ansari, former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia
11. Ambassador (retd.) I.P. Khosla, Editor-in-Chief, South Asian Survey
12. Prof. N.C. Pahariya, Fellow, Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS), Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment (CUTS CITEE)

13. Prof. Pushpesh Pant, Dean, School of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi
14. Prof. I.N. Mukherji, JNU, New Delhi
15. Prof. Uma Singh, JNU, New Delhi
16. Prof. P Sahadevan, JNU, New Delhi
17. Prof. Partho Ghose, JNU, New Delhi
18. Dr. Sabita Pande, JNU, New Delhi
19. Dr. Sanjay Bhardwaj, JNU, New Delhi
20. Prof. Abdul Nafey, Chairman, Centre for Canadian, US & Latin American Studies; Coordinator, Canadian Studies, JNU, New Delhi
21. Dr. Nawak K Paswan, JNU, New Delhi
22. Dr. Manmohini Kaul, JNU, New Delhi
23. Prof. Girjesh Pant, JNU, New Delhi
24. Ambassador (retd.) Lakhon Mehrotra; former Secretary ; Ministry of External Affairs; former Envoy of the United Nations in Cambodia and Indonesia
25. Gen. (retd.) Ramesh Chopra; Senior Strategic & Corporate Advisor
26. Dr. Rajaram Panda, Japan Foundation, New Delhi

## **Maldives**

1. Dr. Mahamood Shougee, Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation

## **Nepal**

1. Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, former Ambassador to India; former Minister of Foreign Affairs
2. Dr. Sridhar Khatri; Executive Director, South Asian Centre for Policy Studies, Kathmandu
3. Mr. Binod K. Chaudhary, President of Confederation of Nepal Industries

## **Pakistan**

1. Dr. Sartaj Aziz, former Finance and Foreign Minister; Vice-Chancellor, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore
2. Ambassador (retd.) Khalid Mahmood; former Ambassador to China
3. Ambassador (retd.) Naeem U. Hasan, former Secretary-General, SAARC

4. Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain, Executive Director, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo

## **Sri Lanka**

1. Dr. Saman Kelegama, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka
2. Mr. Nawaz Rajabdeen, President of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka

## **ASEAN**

1. Ambassador (retd.) Sudhir T. Devare, former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs; former Senior Research Fellow, Institute of South East Asian Studies, Singapore
2. Dr. (Ms) Kripa Sridharan, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of South East Asian Studies, Singapore
3. Prof. Mohan Rao, Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore
4. Dr. Aparna Shivpuri, Institute of South Asian Studies

## **Afghanistan**

1. H.E. Dr. Syed M. Raheem, Ambassador of Afghanistan to India
2. Mr. Naimullah Naimi, Scholar on SAARC
3. Dr. Abdul M. Shoogufan, Counsellor, Embassy of Afghanistan, New Delhi

## **Cooperation Council for the Arab States of Arabian Gulf (GCC)**

1. Dr. Jasim M. Abdulghani Al-Khalufi, Director of Research and Studies, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, United Arab Emirates

## **China**

1. Dr. Shao Yuqun, Deputy Director, Department of South Asian Studies, Shanghai

## **Japan**

1. Prof. Nakamura Hisashi, Dean, School of Economics, Ryokoku University, Kyoto

## **Korea**

1. Prof. Seh-Jin Chang, School of Economics, Inha University

## **European Union**

1. Dr. Dick Gupwell, Secretary-General, European Institute of Asian Studies, Brussels
2. Mr. Daniel Reichart, Division for International Cooperation, Department for Development Policy-Asia & Pacific, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn
3. Ms. Gudrun Sraega, Minister Counsellor, Head of Political Department Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi

## **USA**

1. Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Director, Ash Institute for Democratic Governance & Innovation, Harvard University

## **Special Invitees**

1. Dr. I.K. Gujral, former Prime Minister of India; Chairman, Indian Council for South Asian Cooperation
2. Hon'ble Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Commerce, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India
3. Prof. B.B. Bhattacharya, Vice-Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
4. H.E. Mr. Bernd Mutzrelburg, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi
5. Ms. Preeti Saran, Joint Secretary (SAARC), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi
6. Prof. Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka
7. Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, Under Secretary (SAARC), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

## Written Papers and Presentations

1. South Asia and the European Union: How have these regions evolved and what are the prospects for cooperation between the EU and SAARC 2007 – 2015 by *Dick Gupwell*
2. SAARC 2015: Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in a Resurgent Asia: A Bangladesh Perspective by *Dr. Kamal Hossain*
3. South Asia as interacted by a distant friend violence and peace or and commerce cooperation? by *Nakamura Hisashi*
4. SAARC 2015: Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in Resurgent Asia, by *Kripa Sridharan*
5. SAARC 2015: Expanding Horizons and Forging Cooperation in Resurgent Asia, by *Sudhir T. Devare*
6. South Asian Regional Cooperation – Need for Fresh Approach, by *A N Ram*
7. Asian Dynamism and Challenges for External Cooperation of South Asia, by *Dr. Sartaj Aziz*
8. South Asia and the Gulf Countries, by *Naeem U. Hasan*
9. Cooperation between SAARC and Korea: Korea's Perspective, by *Seh-Jin Chang*

# Some related publications of FES on South Asian Regional Cooperation

*Shaping South Asia's Future: Role of Regional Cooperation*, edited by Kant Kishore Bhargava, Heinz Bongartz and Farooq Sobhan; Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd; 1995 ISBN 0-7069-9225-3

*SAARC and The European Union: Learning and Cooperation Opportunities*, edited by K. K. Bhargava and Ross Masood Hussain, published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, New Delhi.

*South Asia 2010: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by K.K. Bhargava and Sridhar K. Khatri , Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd., 2001. ISBN 81-220-0624-8

*Regional Dialogue on “Global Change and the Future of SAARC: Challenges and Opportunities”* Suggestions of Former Secretaries-General of SAARC; 2004

