



**SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION  
SECRETARIAT**

**SECRETARY GENERAL**

**MESSAGE**

**THIRTY-THIRD SAARC CHARTER DAY**

On the auspicious occasion of the Thirty-third Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which falls on 08 December 2017, I wish to warmly felicitate the peoples and Governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

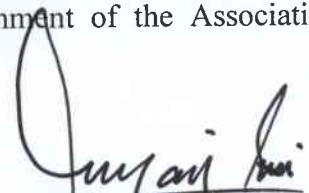
At their historic First Summit at Dhaka in 1985, the Heads of State or Government of the South Asian countries launched SAARC to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life through accelerated cooperation in economic, social and cultural fields.

As enshrined in its Charter, the forum of eight countries in South Asia that are bound by ties of shared history and culture, SAARC is a tangible manifestation of the determination of its Member States to promote peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Though SAARC commenced its journey with limited areas of cooperation, its ambit of cooperation continued to expand over the years. Regional cooperation under the auspices of SAARC today covers areas, such as, poverty alleviation, economic and trade, agriculture, education, energy, culture, regional connectivity, infrastructure development, climate change, investment, finance, security, disaster risk reduction and management, fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, and promotion of people-to-people contacts and tourism, among others. Additionally, SAARC's cooperation with regional and international organizations and its Observers is increasing. The SAARC Apex and Recognized Bodies are making useful contribution to the SAARC process.

Every successive Summit has injected renewed vigour and dynamism to the SAARC process. The Eighteenth Summit (Kathmandu, 26-27 November 2014), devoted to the theme, *Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity, inter alia*, committed the Member States "to deepen regional integration for peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia" and to "achieve South Asian Economic Union in a phased and planned manner."

As we observe the Thirty-third SAARC Charter Day, I remain confident that the Member States would redouble their concerted efforts in the attainment of the Association's objectives.

  
(Amjad Hussain B. Sial)

Kathmandu, 08 December 2017

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