



**SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION  
SECRETARIAT**

**SECRETARY GENERAL**

**MESSAGE**

**THIRTY-FOURTH SAARC CHARTER DAY**

We are happy to commemorate the Thirty-fourth Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on 08 December 2018.

During the First Summit in Dhaka, the Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka adopted the Charter of SAARC on 08 December 1985, marking the beginning of a new era of regional cooperation in the history of South Asia. Afghanistan joined SAARC as the eighth member during the Fourteenth SAARC Summit in New Delhi in April 2007.

The provisions of the Charter of SAARC reflect the desire of the Member States to work collectively 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. The cardinal objectives of SAARC are 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. During the Twelfth SAARC Summit in Islamabad in January 2004, the Heads of State or Government declared poverty alleviation as the “over-arching goal” of SAARC.

SAARC facilitated regional cooperation in a few areas in its initial phase. It today promotes regional collaboration in almost every aspect of development activity having a bearing on the life and livelihood of the peoples of the region. Established as Centres of Excellence in different Member States, SAARC’s Regional Centres and Specialized Bodies promote regional collaboration in specialized fields. SAARC’s Apex and Recognized Bodies facilitate interaction and collaboration among businessmen, civil society organizations, think tanks, litterateurs, artists and professionals from various fields. In addition, SAARC collaborates with regional and international organizations and its Observers in areas of mutual interest.

As we observe the Thirty-fourth SAARC Charter Day, I wish to warmly felicitate the Member States of SAARC. On this auspicious occasion, I also wish to express the confidence that our sustained endeavours will culminate in the attainment of the objectives enshrined in the Charter of SAARC.

(Amjad Hussain B. Sial)