Message on the Occasion of the Commemoration of 35th SAARC Charter Day, 08th December 2019

It gives me great pleasure to extend warm greetings from the people and Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of the founding of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to the Governments and peoples of the SAARC Member States.

The SAARC Charter Day provides an occasion to recall the contribution made by the founders of our Association and to re-dedicate ourselves to furthering the common goals and objectives that we have set for ourselves. Sri Lanka, as a founding member, attributes high importance to the purposes and principles of the SAARC Charter which aims to promote peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and Non-alignment.

The Member States of SAARC are faced with challenges in the areas of education, food security, nutrition, poverty alleviation, and eradication of terrorism. Despite progress made in some of the key areas, these challenges continue to affect the wellbeing of large sections of our populations. As a region, we have to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of our cooperative mechanisms, particularly on areas which are priorities to the people of our region.

We have much to share with the world in terms of art, culture, philosophy and religion. In this regard, we are pleased to host the SAARC Cultural Centre in Sri Lanka which is working towards building close cultural linkages among the people of South Asia. We owe it to the future generations to protect the rich cultural heritage of our region.

The Member States of SAARC are better positioned to provide the necessary safety networks to address major concerns such as security through forming effective alliances. The Region as a whole requires to forge new avenues of cooperation to steer the Organization to be more effective in addressing the emerging challenges.

I take this opportunity to reiterate Sri Lanka’s firm commitment to SAARC and its objectives and remain confident of the determination of the governments and peoples of our region towards fostering stronger cooperation that is essential for peace, stability and economic prosperity in our region.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa

06 December, 2019
Message on the Occasion of the Commemoration of 35th SAARC Charter Day, 08th December 2019

It gives me great pleasure to extend warm greetings and best wishes to the Member States and the people of South Asia on the occasion of 35th SAARC Charter Day.

The SAARC was founded at a time when the world was moving towards regionalism. SAARC, from the inception sought to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia through strengthening collective self-reliance and mutual assistance in diverse sectors, and cooperate with likeminded international and regional organizations. The SAARC Charter Day provides us an occasion to reflect on our achievements notwithstanding any drawbacks, and to rededicate ourselves in furthering the common objective to achieve prosperity that we have set in motion.

While we cherish our common heritage and cultural affiliations, it is both timely and necessary to seek collaboration in new area of cooperation that will be significantly beneficial for our future.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate on this occasion, Sri Lanka’s strong commitment to working towards the promotion of greater regional cooperation through SAARC to achieve our common prosperity in an atmosphere of brotherhood and amity.

Mahinda Rajapaksa, MP

6 December 2019
Message on the Occasion of the Commemoration of 35th SAARC Charter Day, 08th December 2019

It gives me great pleasure to extend greetings and good wishes to the Member States of SAARC and the people of South Asia on this auspicious occasion of 35th SAARC Charter day.

As a founding member, Sri Lanka's relations with SAARC remain a core element of its foreign policy. Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the purpose and principles of the SAARC Charter, and its collective quest for greater regional cooperation under the SAARC Process.

While there have been progress and considerable achievements in diverse fields, SAARC continues to face challenges in reaching the desirable levels of success envisaged by its Founding Charter. It is imperative that the Member States, through concerted efforts and perseverance, revive the SAARC Process to achieve common objectives.

The annual informal Meetings of Foreign and External Affairs Ministers of the Member States, in New York is an encouraging step taken in the correct path in the absence of formal Meetings of SAARC leaders. It is both timely and necessary to reconvene SAARC Meetings that are long overdue, with the consensus of the Member States, to continue working towards our regional priorities.

Sri Lanka remains fully committed to the principles and objectives of the SAARC Charter and will continue to play a constructive role as in the past. While we commemorate yet another Charter Day, let us resolve to redouble our efforts to make the organization, a more dynamic and relevant entity.

Dinesh Gunawardena, M.P.