

**GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING RECOGNITION
BY SAARC TO RECOGNIZED REGIONAL APEX BODIES¹**

GUIDELINES

- i) The organization seeking recognition shall consist exclusively of nationals of member countries and be based in the region. It should be a regional apex body with a minimum of four constituent units at the national level. These units should be of recognized national standing and be endorsed by the Ministries of Foreign/External Affairs of the Governments of their respective countries.
- ii) The organization should be non political and secular in character.
- iii) The organization shall be concerned with matters relevant to the process of promoting social, economic and cultural development of the region as envisaged in the SAARC Charter.
- iv) The aims and purposes of the organization shall be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the SAARC Charter.
- v) The organization shall undertake to support the work of SAARC and to promote knowledge of its principles and activities.
- vi) The organization shall have an established Headquarters with an Executive Officer. It shall have a constitution or similar constituent instrument, a copy of which shall be deposited with the Secretary General of SAARC.

PROCEDURES

- i) The organization shall submit an application for recognition to the Secretary General through the Ministry of Foreign/External Affairs of the country in which the headquarters of the organization is located. Such an application should be supported by the constitution or similar constituent instrument of the organization. The Secretary General shall circulate the same to all Member States together with his recommendations whether the criteria set out in the guidelines have been met.
- ii) The Standing Committee after consideration of the applications shall take decisions thereon and report these decisions to the next meeting of the Council of Ministers for its information.
- iii) Once the recognition is accorded to the organization, it would be authorized to use the SAARC nomenclature and the logo. They may be permitted to present oral or written representations at appropriate levels of SAARC, upon prior arrangement with the Secretary General in consultation with the Chairman of the meeting concerned.

¹ Approved by the 11th CoM (Colombo, 8-9 Jul. 1992) on the recommendation of 1st SSSC (Colombo, 27-29 Apr. 1992)

- iv) Recognition shall be accorded only to one apex organization, in respect of each profession/discipline or activity.
- v) The Standing Committee shall review every five years² the progress achieved by the regional apex organizations in promoting the ideals of the SAARC Charter, and shall make appropriate recommendations to the Council, including the question of continued recognition in respect of a particular organization.
- vi) The Secretariat may recommend to the Standing Committee withdrawal of recognition with regard to the specific Bodies which fail to comply with the guidelines and their obligations.³
- vii) Regional Apex Bodies are required to make a formal request at least three months prior to the expiry date of recognition for continuation of recognition.⁴

² Added by the 15th CoM (New Delhi, 30 Apr. -1 May 1995) on the recommendation of 20th SC (New Delhi, 27-29 Apr. 1995)

³ Added by the 35th CoM (Maldives, 20 Feb. 2014) on the recommendation of 40th SC (Maldives, 19 Feb. 2014)

⁴ Ibid [3]

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE RECOGNIZED REGIONAL APEX BODIES¹

1. Rights of the Regional Apex Bodies

- i) The SAARC Regional Apex Bodies will be entitled to use SAARC nomenclature and logo.
- ii) Regional Apex Bodies may be invited as guests to open inaugural and closing sessions of Summits, Council of Ministers and other Ministerial Meetings, in accordance with the procedure enumerated by the Fifth Special Session of the Standing Committee.
- iii) Presidents, Vice Presidents, Secretaries-General and the Executive Committee Members of the SAARC Apex Bodies, and their spouses and dependent children under the age of 18, are entitled to SAARC Visa Exemption Sticker.²
- iv) In line with the spirit of the Charter, Regional Apex Bodies may propose regional and sub-regional projects in their respective fields, keeping the SAARC Secretariat informed.³

2. Obligations of the Regional Apex Bodies

- i) Regional Apex Bodies shall consist exclusively of Members of the nationals of the Member States and their aims and purposes should be in conformity with the spirit, purpose and principles of SAARC Charter.
- ii) Regional Apex Bodies should have a constitution or similar instrument. A copy of such instrument will be made available to the SAARC Secretariat. The activities of these organizations should be non-political and secular in character. These organizations will submit their annual progress report to the SAARC Secretariat regularly.
- iii) Regional Apex Bodies will have an established office and sound financial status.
- iv) Regional Apex Bodies will hold their annual meetings to consider the activities and programmes to which the SAARC Secretary General or his representative will be invited to attend.
- v) The extension of the recognition to Regional Apex Bodies will be decided by the Standing Committee after every five years based on their performance/evaluation to be carried out by the SAARC Secretariat.

¹ Approved by the 27th CoM (Dhaka, 1-2 August, 2006) on the recommendation of 32nd SC (Dhaka, 31 Jul.- 1 Aug. 2006)

² As per the existing SAARC Visa Exemption Sicker, revised by the 3rd Meeting of SAARC Immigration Authorities (Islambad, 24 June 2010), spouse and children are no longer entitled.

³ Added by the 35th CoM (Maldives, 20 February 2014) on the recommendation of 40th SC (Maldives, 19 Feb. 2014)

- vi) The activities of Regional Apex Bodies should be relevant to the process of promoting social, economic and cultural developments in the region as envisaged in the SAARC Charter.
- vii) The activities/programmes of the Regional Apex Bodies should supplement the SAARC process and refrain from competing with various agencies working on the issues of common interest to the peoples of the SAARC region.
- viii) Regional Apex Bodies should inform the Secretariat about their activities in advance and should make the outcome documents of the activities available soon after the events. The same will be shared with the Member States.⁴
- ix) Regional Apex Bodies will uphold their aims and objectives, as well as identity and integrity.
- x) Regional Apex Bodies should maintain accountability and transparency.
- xi) Regional Apex Bodies should ensure that funds provided are only used for their intended purpose and are properly accounted for.
- xii) Regional Apex Bodies should have adequate and appropriate procedure for financial review and the audit of the accounts should be conducted annually by the panel of independent auditors and should be made public through Annual Reports.

⁴ Ibid [2]