



SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION SECRETARIAT

PRESS RELEASE

SAARC Secretary General, addresses the First Meeting of the South Asia Parliamentarians Platform for Children, in Kathmandu

Secretary General of SAARC, H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, this morning addressed the First Meeting of the South Asia Parliamentarians Platform for Children, being held in Kathmandu. The two-day Meeting organized by UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF ROSA), from 2-3 March 2017, is attended by parliamentarians from Member States of SAARC.

Speaking on the theme, “Making SDGs work for children in South Asia” the Secretary General noted that the presence of the parliamentarians from all SAARC countries at the Meeting is testimony to the importance South Asia attaches to the well-being of children.

In his address, the Secretary General, while emphasizing the importance SAARC attaches to its agenda on children, highlighted major mechanisms and initiatives such as the SAARC’s Social Charter, Declarations of the SAARC Summits, Ministerial Statements, the SAARC Decade of the Rights of the Child and its two major Conventions related to children, namely, Convention on Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution and Convention on Regional Arrangement for the Promotion of Child Welfare. He also highlighted important areas related to children on which SAARC is collaborating with UNICEF, such as nutrition, sanitation, children affected by HIV & AIDS and children in disasters.

While noting the tremendous progress achieved by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in addressing many issues affecting the lives of children, the Secretary General observed that this progress was uneven and more importantly, there were thousands of children, who were left out or left behind. He noted that the transformational, ambitious, yet more inclusive global agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have aspired to change the fate of those left behind.

In his address, Secretary General Sial, stressed five important points for consideration while working to achieve the SDGs, in order to ensure that children are put at the center of the SDGs agenda. These are: among competing objectives policies must be prioritized for resources and investment for children; issues affecting children must not be addressed in isolation and all efforts should be well-coordinated across sectors; partnerships must be sought in order to create opportunities for win-win situations; out-of-the-box solutions should be explored to mobilize resources and investment to make policies targeted at the most vulnerable and marginalized; an actionable plan be prepared for our vision, to ensure that the vision does not remain merely a dream.

The Secretary General expressed his belief that parliamentarians of South Asia, as key policy makers are placed at the center stage of our efforts to transform the lives of the South Asian children for the better. He also stressed the importance of a platform like this, which gives a great opportunity to reflect on experiences, learn from each other, and commit ourselves to do more, together. He expressed his hope that the positive outcome of the Meeting will be a guiding force, for efforts towards making the world a better place for our children. Mr. Sial assured full cooperation of SAARC Secretariat in this respect.

Kathmandu, 03 March 2017