

OPENING SESSION
(11 APRIL 2018)

ELEVENTH SAARC CONFERENCE ON COOPERATION IN POLICE MATTERS,
KATHMANDU, 11 APRIL 2018

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY H. E. MR. AMJAD HUSSAIN B. SIAL, SECRETARY GENERAL OF SAARC

Distinguished Heads of Police Authorities or their representatives,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Opening Session of the Eleventh SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters.

The participation of the Heads of Police Authorities or their representatives in this Conference not only signifies its importance but also testifies their resolve to work together to promote peace, security and stability in the region.

I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Nepal for hosting this important Conference. I also wish to thank our host for making excellent arrangements for this Conference and for the meetings of STOMD and SDOMD yesterday.

Distinguished Delegates,

As you are aware, law and order are crucial to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region. These are essentially the prerequisites for social and economic development, and promotion and protection of human rights, contributing eventually to the welfare of our peoples, which is the cardinal objective of SAARC.

SAARC has, therefore, accorded high priority to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region, while upholding 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.

Inspired by these principles, at the time of launching SAARC during the first Summit at Dhaka in December 1985, our leaders unequivocally expressed their determination to cooperate regionally, to work together towards finding solutions towards their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding and to the creation of an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits.

Fundamentally, therefore, SAARC represents the desire of our leaders to promote mutual trust, confidence and cooperation among the Member States. This is possible only when the region is safe and secure, on which depend the success and sustainability of every human endeavour.

Distinguished Delegates,

As you are aware, in order to institutionalize collaboration to promote peace and security in the region, the Thirteenth Summit in Dhaka in November 2005 created the mechanism of SAARC Home or Interior Ministers. Our Home or Interior Ministers, assisted by the forum of Home or Interior Secretaries, have held eight meetings so far. In their last meeting in July 2017 in Colombo, our Ministers took important decisions to promote and sustain South Asian security.

In spite of concerted efforts of our Member States, terrorism, however, continues to pose enormous challenges to the region's security and endanger lives of our peoples. Therefore, during the Eighteenth Summit in Kathmandu in November 2014, our leaders "unequivocally condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations and underlined the need for effective cooperation among the Member States to combat them." They also agreed to take effective measures to combat illicit trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic substances, arms smuggling, money laundering, counterfeit currency and other transnational crimes.

I am pleased to note that this Conference has several agenda items pertaining to the directive of the Eighteenth SAARC Summit. Besides reviewing progress in the implementation of the past decisions, this Conference is expected to consider the concept papers on SAARCPOL and SAARC Institute of Criminology, and networking among the Police Authorities and combating corruption, among others.

With the vast knowledge and experience that the distinguished delegates bring to this one-day Conference, I am confident that they will be able to give due consideration to the important agenda items within the short span of time available to them.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to thank the delegates from the Member States for their constructive contribution to making the meetings of STOMD and SDOMD fruitful. I also wish to thank the Chairpersons of these meetings for guiding their deliberations to successful conclusion.

Convening after a gap of almost six years, this Conference assumes considerable significance. Better late than never, I am convinced that this Conference is poised to reinvigorate collaboration among the Police Authorities in the identified areas.

I wish the distinguished delegates fruitful deliberations and a pleasant stay in Kathmandu.

I thank you.
