

INAUGURAL SESSION
(08 MAY 2018)

SAARC-PTB Regional Kick-off Workshop of the Project “Strengthening Regional Infrastructure
and
Co-operation in the field of Quality Infrastructure in SAARC”

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

Chief Guest of this Inaugural Session, Hon. Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal,
Director General of Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology,
Distinguished Representatives of PTB and German Embassy in Kathmandu,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address the Inaugural Session of the Regional Kick-off Workshop of Phase 3 of the Project ‘Strengthening Regional Integration and Cooperation in the field of Quality Infrastructure in SAARC’ under SAARC-PTB collaboration.

I wish to thank the Hon. Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal for making it convenient for himself to grace this Inaugural Session with his presence. His presence in our midst this morning signifies the importance of this Workshop.

I wish to extend a very warm welcome to the distinguished delegates to this important Workshop. Their knowledge and expertise will enrich deliberations and conclusions of this Workshop.

I wish to thank PTB-Germany for organizing this Workshop. I also wish to thank Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology for facilitating organization of this Workshop. The arrangements made are excellent.

This Workshop is a testimony to SAARC’s increasing engagement and collaboration with regional and international organizations, as well as with its observers. It is also a good example of SAARC’s interest in project-based collaboration. We are convinced that projects as this will not only bring dividends to the peoples but will also benefit the relevant mechanisms and entities in the Member States in the areas of common interest.

Distinguished Delegates,

As you are aware, SAARC and PTB signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003 with the objective to implement technical cooperation projects in the area of metrology, standards, testing, quality management, accreditation and certification, collectively known as MSTQ, in the Member States of SAARC.

Since the signing of the MoU, PTB has provided numerous capacity building programmes in the field of Metrology and Accreditation to the Member States and has been an important development partner of SAARC.

Under the framework of this Project launched in 2010, which is now in its Phase 3 for the period 2018 to 2021, PTB has been actively engaged in providing technical assistance to the Member States in the field of quality infrastructure with the ultimate objective to reduce technical barriers to trade. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development for approving the funding for the third and final phase of this project.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity also to commend useful contribution of SARSO, a specialized body of SAARC, in facilitating and coordinating the activities under this project. I am confident that SARSO will continue to play its due role in successfully implementing the third phase of this project.

Distinguished Delegates,

Home to one fourth of humanity and endowed with abundant human and natural resources, the SAARC region has vast potential for socio-economic development and improving the quality of life of the peoples. Moreover, with a consumer market of 1.7 billion people, South Asia is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. These advantages provide tremendous potential for enhanced intra-regional trade for sustained economic growth. Our ultimate objective is to achieve the South Asian Economic Union in a phased and planned manner through Free Trade Area, a Customs Union, a Common Market, and a common Economic and Monetary Union, as desired by our leaders during the Eighteenth SAARC Summit.

In order to achieve regional economic integration, intra-regional connectivity is very important. Therefore, we are working on the SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement, SAARC Railways Agreement and SAARC Air Services Agreement. SAARC Passenger and Cargo Ferry Service is likely to commence soon between India and Sri Lanka, that will then be extended to connect Bangladesh, the Maldives and Pakistan.

We are also working on further improvement of SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme. This will also facilitate promotion of people-to-people contacts and economic relations among the Member States of SAARC.

With the expertise and experience that the distinguished delegates from PTB, the Member States and the private sector bring, I am confident of a fruitful outcome of the deliberations of this Workshop, leading eventually to the successful implementation of Phase 3 of the Project, aimed primarily at improving access to trade and demand-oriented quality infrastructure services.

I once again wish to thank PTB for instituting this Project. We look forward to continuing fruitful collaboration with PTB in the years to come.

I wish the delegates a very pleasant stay in Kathmandu.

Thank you.
