



**SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION
SECRETARIAT**

SECRETARY GENERAL

MESSAGE

40th SAARC CHARTER DAY

Today marks the historic 40th Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). On 08 December 1985, the South Asian Heads of State/Government launched SAARC by adopting its Charter at the First Summit held in Dhaka, Bangladesh pronouncing the inception of the important regional cooperation process. On this auspicious day, I wish to warmly felicitate the peoples and the Governments of Member States.

SAARC is a regional organization born out of the consciousness that in an increasingly interdependent world, the objectives of peace, freedom, social justice and economic prosperity are best achieved by fostering mutual understanding, good neighborly relations and meaningful cooperation among South Asian countries, which are bound by ties of history and culture. Our founding Leaders were aware of the common problems, interests, hopes and desires of the peoples in the region and the need for joint action and enhanced cooperation.

The leaders were convinced that regional cooperation among the countries of South Asia is mutually beneficial, desirable and necessary; and that economic, social and technical cooperation would contribute significantly to national and collective self-reliance.

Though SAARC commenced its journey with limited areas of cooperation, its ambit of cooperation continued to expand over the years. Regional cooperation under the auspices of SAARC today covers diverse areas such as, poverty alleviation, economic and trade, agriculture, education, science and technology, energy, culture, regional connectivity, infrastructure development, climate change, investment, finance, security, disaster risk reduction and management, terrorism and drug trafficking, promotion of people-to-people contacts and tourism, among others.

In the meanwhile, inter-governmental efforts are underway to achieve the high objectives enshrined in its Charter, as well as the goal of the South Asian Economic Union (SAEU), as envisioned by our Leaders. Additionally, SAARC's cooperation with regional and international organizations and its Observers has continued over the years.

This milestone 40th Charter Day provides us an occasion to celebrate the numerous achievements SAARC has made in different areas to promote the cause of regional cooperation. This is also an occasion to forge new resolve to strengthen SAARC and reinvigorate all its processes. On behalf of the SAARC fraternity, I wish to reaffirm the conviction and commitment to make SAARC process more robust and dynamic, amply capable of materializing the Charter objectives.

(Md. Golam Sarwar)

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