

THIRD CONVOCATION OF THE SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI, 07 JUNE 2018

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

Visitor's Nominee Honourable Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel, Minister for Education, Science and Technology of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal,  
Chief Guest Honourable Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, Member of the Parliament & President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Members of the Governing Board,  
President, Vice Presidents, Registrar, Faculty and Members of Committees of the South Asian University,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Dear Students,

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for me to address the Third Convocation of the South Asian University in this beautiful city of New Delhi.

I wish to express our appreciation for very warm welcome, generous hospitality extended to us and excellent arrangements made by the University for the Convocation.

I also wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Visitor's Nominee, Honourable Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel, Minister for Education, Science and Technology of Nepal, and the Chief Guest, Honourable Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, Member of the Parliament & President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, for making it convenient for themselves to grace this occasion with their august presence.

As you are aware, the former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, shared his vision of the South Asian University at the SAARC Summit in 2005. Since then, the region had been making collective endeavours for establishment of the University that has now become a major accomplishment of SAARC. The establishment of the South Asian University is the manifestation of the determination of the Member States to promote regional engagement in education. As a Centre of Excellence, the University is a beacon of hope for our youth who are our future.

On the auspicious occasion of the Third Convocation, I wish to congratulate the distinguished Members of the Governing Board, President, Vice Presidents, Registrar, faculty, members of various Committees, staff and students of the South Asian University. We highly commend their hard work, commitment and perseverance.

Since the establishment of the University, its achievements have been laudable. Until last year, 837 students got Masters degrees and seven in M.Phil. This year, 161 students will graduate with Masters degrees and 10 M.Phil. and six PhD degrees will be awarded.

I wish to warmly congratulate the students who are successfully graduating from the University this year. We highly commend the excellent academic achievement of the gold medalists. Their accomplishment is the result of their commitment and diligence, as well as because of the professional faculty that imparted quality education to the students to excel in their studies.

With the knowledge and education that the graduates have acquired from the University, we are confident that they will play important role in the development of their countries and the region. We wish them good luck and great success in their future endeavours.

Hon. Chief Guest,  
Hon. Visitors' Nominee,  
Distinguished Guests,

As we all know, education is of utmost importance to develop our youth into valuable assets for our society. With education, our youth is equipped with the talent and capability for promoting socio-economic development, contributing eventually to the welfare of the peoples. Education is a sine qua non for alleviating poverty from the region, which has about 40% of the world's poor.

One of the primary objectives of SAARC as enshrined in its Charter is to "provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials." As education empowers people, allowing them to realize their potentials, it has been one of the fundamental areas of focus of SAARC. Furthermore, SAARC recognizes literacy as a fundamental human right.

The importance accorded by our leaders to education is reflected in the declarations of the SAARC Summits. At the Eighteenth Summit in Kathmandu in November 2014, our leaders underscored the need for quality education for all by reforming its various dimensions.

For promoting regional cooperation in education, SAARC has important forums like Meetings of Education Ministers and Heads of University Grants Commissions or Equivalent Bodies.

An important aspect of regional collaboration in education is mutual recognition of degrees by the Member States. We should strenuously work to put a system in place for this purpose. This will enable our students to pursue their studies in the region as well as contribute to the economies of the Member States by taking up important assignments.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Government of India for allocating 100 acres of land in Maidan Garhi, in Delhi, and its magnanimous contribution for constructing a permanent complex of the University.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to once again thank all those associated with the University for their unflinching commitment and valuable contribution towards the attainment of the objectives of the University.

I wish the University further success in its endeavours and the students fruitful learning.

I thank you.

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