

Kathmandu Declaration

The Kathmandu Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on November 4, 1987.

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Sri Lanka assembled for the Third Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Kathmandu on 2-4 November, 1987.

2. The Heads of State or Government recalled with pleasure the launching of SAARC which marked the beginning of a new era of regional cooperation for the promotion of peace and progress, mutual trust and goodwill in South Asia and underlined the importance of annual meetings at their level, as a prime mover, in consolidating and accelerating the pace and process of overall social, economic and cultural development in the region. They renewed their commitment to the SAARC Charter. They reiterated their desire of promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and Nonalignment, particularly respect for 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.

3. The Heads of State or Government emphasized that a fundamental goal of SAARC was to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to provide them with the opportunity to live in dignity and realise their full potential. They were conscious of the formidable tasks ahead of eradicating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment and alleviation of environmental degradation facing South Asia today. They were convinced that the peoples and governments of South Asia could, acting in unison, surmount these challenges.

4. The Heads of State or Government expressed their faith in and commitment to the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nation Charter. They further believed that the United Nations has an important role to play in promoting universal trust, understanding and concerted actions for the attainment of lasting peace, global development and general disarmament. They reiterated their concern at the crisis facing the United Nations. They expressed their commitment to the multilateral negotiating process and called upon all states to help strengthen the UN system. They reaffirmed their belief that SAARC will reinforce this process by promoting South Asian cooperation.

5. The Heads of State or Government also reaffirmed their deep commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement. They underscored the validity of its philosophy and the historic role the Movement has been playing and continues to play in strengthening world peace and harmony as well as in promoting development with justice and equity. They also noted that institutionalization and strengthening of regional cooperation in South Asia had further nurtured the spirit of South-South cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, equity and common benefit. They expressed satisfaction over the result of the Ministerial Conference on Nonaligned Countries held in Pyongyang in

June 1987 and urged the Non-aligned and other developing countries to take action to implement effectively the Pyongyang Declaration and Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation.

6. The Heads of State or Government recognised that the external environment had a critical bearing on the development of the economies of the South Asian Region. They noted with deep concern that growth in the world economy had again slowed down with adverse consequences for South Asia and other developing countries, especially for the least developed and landlocked countries. They observed that equitable participation of the developing countries in international trading and economic systems and in arrangements for the coordination of global macro economic policies was essential for enhancing prospects and performance of the world economy.

7. The South Asian leaders noted that the world economy had long suffered from a structural disequilibrium. The pace of global economic expansion had further slowed down. The downward trend in commodity prices had continued. The net export earnings had fallen aggravating payment imbalances in developing countries. The terms of trade had further deteriorated with enormous losses to developing countries. At the same time, the diminishing financial flows to developing countries remained unchanged with contraction in new lendings and growing burden of debt servicing. In fact there had been a reverse flow of resources from developing to developed countries. The trade conflicts had also sharpened with the rise of protectionism thus further weakening the international trading system and eroding the principle of special and differential treatment in favour of developing countries.

8. The Heads of State or Government reiterated the urgent need for resumption of North-South Dialogue with a view to promoting coordinated actions by developed and developing countries to channel trade surpluses for development, revive growth in flagging economies, overcome debt difficulties, expand export access to the developing countries and stabilise commodity prices, regulate capital flows and exchange rates more closely, and provide emergency relief and assistance to the poorest countries. They called for an early convening of the International Conference on Money and Finance for Development. They also stressed the need for preserving and liberalizing the multilateral trading system with renewed efforts both within and outside the GATT Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. They also underscored the importance of the developed countries fully respecting the commitments made in Punta del Este on "standstill and rollback" and called for the early and effective implementation of this commitment. The Heads of State or Government also reviewed the outcome of UNCTAD VII. They hoped that UNCTAD would play an increasingly effective role in promoting harmonious and equitable international economic relations.

9. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed the need for special measures in favour of the least developed countries in order to strengthen their resource capabilities and structural transformation and urged the international community, in the light of recent decisions at UNCTAD VII, to speed-up tangible assistance including increased resource flows to these countries within the framework of the Substantial New Program of Action (SNPA) for the Least Developed Countries for 1980s.

10. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern at the deteriorating international political environment which was due to great power policies and practices of domination and intervention as well

as the increased resort to threat or use of force, aggression, occupation, pressure, economic coercion and interference in violation of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. These destabilising measures were creating a climate detrimental to the policies of peace, goodwill, stability, prosperity and respect for each other.

11. The Heads of State or Government believed that the escalation in military expenditure was a major constraint on world development. In this regard they noted that the UN Conference on Disarmament and Development had clearly established a link between disarmament and development and had provided a valuable frame work for future action in this vital area.

12. They welcomed the understanding reached between the United States and the Soviet Union on Intermediate Nuclear Forces. This should be a precursor of further accords between them to reduce drastically their strategic nuclear missiles and to refrain from extending the arms race to Outer Space. They called for the early conclusion in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a Convention to Ban Chemical Weapons. They declared their intention to continue their efforts to contribute to the realisation of the objective of halting the nuclear arms race and eliminating nuclear weapons. They declared their resolve to support every effort to conclude a treaty prohibiting vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons.

13. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep concern at the fast and continuing degradation of the environment, including extensive destruction of forests, in the South Asian region. They also noted that South Asia was afflicted with such natural disasters as floods, droughts, landslides, cyclones, tidal waves which have had a particularly severe impact recently, causing immense human suffering. At the same time they expressed concern over the danger posed by the global sea level rise and its effects on South Asian countries. These natural disasters and the degradation of the environment were severely undermining the development process and prospects of the member countries. They, therefore, decided to intensify regional cooperation with a view to strengthening their disaster management capabilities. They also decided to commission a study for the protection and preservation of the environment and to the causes and consequences of natural disasters in a well-planned comprehensive framework. They entrusted the Secretary-General with this task.

14. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their conviction that the region being most populous in the world and having age-old socio-cultural links, rich and varied human and natural resources, offered immense scope and potential for regional cooperation and that the growing interaction among its people had added stimulus towards this end. They reiterated their determination to pursue their individual and collective efforts for the optimal utilisation of the vast human and untapped natural and other material resources.

15. The Heads of State or Government reviewed with satisfaction the progress made so far in the implementation of the SAARC Integrated Programme of Action and emphasised the need to further consolidate and streamline the process. They were conscious of the need to exercise greater discretion in the selection of activities in different sectors. They took note of the criteria and procedures relating to administrative structuring and financing of regional institutions endorsed by the SAARC Council of

Ministers. They directed that the establishment of such regional institutions should proceed only after taking into account their viability and benefits to the member countries with due consideration to economy and efficiency.

16. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction at the launching of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange programme coinciding with the opening of the Third SAARC Summit in Kathmandu. While taking note of the dates for the institution of the SAARC Chairs, Fellowships and Scholarships and the commencement of Organised Tourism among SAARC member countries, they directed that the schemes for the SAARC Documentation Centre and the SAARC Youth Volunteer Programme be implemented at the earliest.

17. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the signing of the Agreement establishing a South Asian Food Security Reserve and expressed confidence that this will provide a much-needed cushion against food shortages and scarcity situations in the region.

18. The Heads of State or Government expressed happiness at the signing of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and considered it a historic step towards the prevention and elimination of terrorism from the region. In this regard, they also reiterated their unequivocal condemnation of all acts, methods and practice of terrorism as criminal and expressed their abhorrence of their impact on life and property, socio-economic development, political stability, regional peace and cooperation.

19. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their agreement to expand SAARC activities in other concrete areas of cooperation in order to ensure more tangible benefits from SAARC to the peoples of the region. They were convinced that regional cooperation could be consolidated and expanded on the basis of growing regional complementarities and inter dependence. They believed that the SAARC long-term perspective should, therefore, focus on measures to expand and strengthen such areas of regional complementarities and interdependence not only through formulation and implementation of more concrete and action-oriented programmes but also through coordination of national policies and approaches for finding common solutions to their common problems.

20. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the first annual review of the Situation of Children in the SAARC member countries. They reiterated their commitment made in the Bangalore Declaration to accord highest priority to the needs of children in national development planning and emphasised that more intensified action should be taken for the welfare and well-being of children. They further reiterated their call for an early conclusion and adoption of a United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

21. The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction at the establishment of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, strengthening further the process of regional cooperation in South Asia. They expressed their gratitude to His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev for most graciously inaugurating the SAARC Secretariat.

22. The Heads of State or Government were conscious of the aspirations of the peoples of South Asia to communicate and cooperate with each other at the people-to-people level. They recognised that academics, researchers, non-governmental organizations and others have an important role to play in promoting the SAARC spirit and giving impetus to regional programmes and projects. They further observed that the interest and enthusiasm so far demonstrated by the increased interactions and exchange of information at the inter-governmental level should be capitalised and translated into tangible programmes and projects. They recognised the vast potential for the generation of friendship, goodwill and trust through interactions between the peoples which would foster harmonious relations in South Asia.

23. The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep conviction that the Kathmandu Summit has further consolidated the gains of SAARC and given a renewed thrust and direction to the future course of regional cooperation. They were also convinced that the Kathmandu Summit has helped to create an atmosphere conducive to strengthening this process, besides generating further goodwill and friendship among the member countries in the larger interest of the region.

24. The Heads of State or Government were conscious that SAARC should be increasingly oriented to the people's needs and aspirations so that the masses of the region could be drawn to a greater extent into the mainstream of SAARC activities. This, they firmly held, would help bring about a qualitative improvement in the general atmosphere of the region contributing to peace, friendship and cooperation in the areas.

25. The Heads of State or Government reiterated their firm commitment to the spirit and objectives with which the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was launched and reaffirmed their determination to work, individually and collectively, towards the attainment of these objectives.

26. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were deeply appreciative of the exemplary manner in which His Majesty the King of Nepal discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by His Majesty's Government and the people of Nepal and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

Joint Press Release

Joint Press Release Issued on November 4, 1987 at the End of the Third SAARC Summit, Kathmandu.

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of Maldives, the King of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and President of Sri Lanka met in Kathmandu during November 2-4, 1987. Their meeting was marked by warmth, cordiality and mutual understanding.

2. They issued the Kathmandu Declaration providing a renewed thrust and direction to the future course of regional cooperation in South Asia.
3. They considered several issues of common concern, both regional and international, and assessed the overall progress in the context of SAARC objectives.
4. They expressed their happiness at the signing of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and the Agreement establishing South Asian Food Reserve by the Foreign Ministers of the SAARC Member States in their presence. They firmly believed that the Convention and the Agreement constituted landmarks in their collective endeavours to eradicate terrorism and hunger from the region.
5. They declared their intention to initiate the process of dealing with the causes and consequences of natural disasters and decided to commission a study on natural disasters and the protection and preservation of the environment in a well planned and comprehensive framework. They entrusted the Secretary-General with this task.
6. They expressed their satisfaction with the progress achieved in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action in the eleven agreed areas of cooperation and also with the concrete programmes related to the Five New Ideas identified at the last Summit for expanding and strengthening cooperative programmes under SAARC.
7. They also reaffirmed their view that measures for expanding regional cooperation should be progressively carried out within a broad framework of long-term perspective and stressed, in particular, the need for further consolidation and rationalization of the on-going activities pursued within SAARC framework.
8. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the need for strengthening inter-governmental efforts with increased people-to-people cooperation and called for greater participation of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including professional bodies in the private sector, in the process of promoting socio-economic and cultural development of South Asia as envisaged in the SAARC Charter, under the auspices of the SAARC Secretariat.

9. They further welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu as well as the assumption of office by the SAARC Secretary-General with effect from 16 January, 1987 and considered these as important events in strengthening the institutional framework of regional cooperation in South Asia. They expressed their appreciation to His Majesty's Government of Nepal at the cooperation and assistance extended and facilities provided to the SAARC Secretariat.

10. The Heads of State or Government took note of the Report submitted by the Council of Ministers relating, inter alia, to administrative structuring and financing of regional institutions and directed that for economy and efficiency all sectoral programmes should justify the establishment of such regional institutions.

11. They instructed that in its examination of the question of the admission of new members and the grant of observer/guest status in the Association, the Standing Committee should also include the aspect of the establishment of relations with similar organisations.

12. They gratefully accepted the offer of the President of Sri Lanka to host the Fourth SAARC Summit in 1988 in Sri Lanka.

13. They also gratefully accepted the offer of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the Fifth SAARC Summit in Pakistan in 1989.

14. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were deeply appreciative of the exemplary manner in which His Majesty the King of Nepal discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by His Majesty's Government and the people of Nepal and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.