



**SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION
SECRETARIAT**

**MESSAGE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE THIRTIETH SAARC CHARTER DAY**

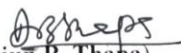
On the occasion of the Thirtieth Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) falling on 8 December 2014, I would like to extend my warm felicitations to the peoples and Governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

At their first-ever Summit meeting held in Dhaka in December 1985, the South Asian Heads of State or Government launched SAARC by endorsing its Charter. The Charter spells out the Association's objectives, and principles of and general provisions and financial arrangements for regional cooperation. The Charter also defines functions of the SAARC mechanisms like the Meeting of the Heads of State or Government, Council of Ministers, Standing Committee, Technical Committees and Action Committees.

A forum of eight countries in South Asia that are bound by ties of history and culture, SAARC is a tangible manifestation of the determination of its Member States to promote peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to 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. SAARC aims to promote peace, freedom, social justice and economic prosperity by fostering mutual understanding, good neighbourly relations and meaningful cooperation among its Member States. Moreover, SAARC provides a platform to its Member States to share their common problems in order to find common solutions to them.

With the convening of the Eighteenth SAARC Summit in Kathmandu in November this year, the Association has injected renewed vigour and dynamism to the SAARC process. The Summit that was devoted to the theme, *Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity*, laid emphasis "to deepen regional integration for peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia by intensifying cooperation, *inter alia*, in trade, investment, finance, energy, security, infrastructure, connectivity and culture; and to implement projects, programmes and activities in a prioritized, result-oriented and time-bound manner." The Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity) that was signed during the Eighteenth Summit is one among several such initiatives that are underway to intensify regional integration in South Asia. At the same time, I do believe that two more Agreements, namely, SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement and SAARC Railways Agreement will contribute in no small measure towards deeper integration of the region, when signed and ratified by all the Member States.

As we commemorate the Thirtieth SAARC Charter Day, I would like to call upon all the Member States to redouble their efforts to further strengthen SAARC in order to be able to deliver on the hopes and aspirations of our peoples in the region.


(Arjun B. Thapa)
Secretary-General

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