

FORUM OF MINISTERS ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FROM ASIA
26-27 MAY, 2006
BHURBAN – PAKISTAN

BHURBAN DECLARATION

1. Upon the invitation of H.E. Federal Minister Daniyal Aziz, Chairman, National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB), Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Forum of Ministers on Social Development of Asia met on 26 and 27 May, 2006 in Bhurban, Pakistan. Ministers and High Level Officials of the following countries attended this first meeting co-organized with UNESCO and with the assistance of UNDP: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

2. H.E. Mr. Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Minister for Social Welfare of Bangladesh, H.E. Dr. Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, Member of the Planning Commission of India, H.E. Ms. Aishath Mohamed Didi, Minister for Gender and Family from the Maldives, Mr. Rabindra Man Joshi, Secretary of the Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare from Nepal, H.E. Mr. Douglas Devananda, Minister for Social Services and Social Welfare from Sri Lanka attended the meeting as did H.E. the Minister of Social Development, Solidarity and Elderly People of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Djibril TANGARA and Mr. Adama Diarra, President and Secretary of the Forum of Ministers of Social Development of the Economic Council of West African States (ECOWAS), and Mr. Pierre Sane' UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences.

Communications of regret conveying inability to be present at this first meeting of the Forum at Bhurban were received from countries from across Asia.

3. Approving the initiative for organizing this first Forum, the Ministers present, committed themselves to support it and adopted the following Declaration:

DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ASIA

We, the Ministers on Social Development from Asia meeting in Bhurban on 26 and 27 May, 2006:

- Recognize the predominant place which needs to be accorded to the social dimension of development;
- Reaffirm our political will and determination to promote development policies which take into account all human development dimensions, and to fight against poverty;
- Seek to strengthen regional and inter-regional networks for greater solidarity;
- Commend UNESCO for assistance in organizing regional Fora;

We Decide:

- To strengthen cooperation among our countries in the field of social development and to institutionalize the Forum of Ministers on Social Development

from Asia in order to enhance consultations, dialogue and exchange of experiences with a view to optimizing the effectiveness of social policies;

- To set up a Forum to consolidate and make sustainable the outcomes of this first meeting and to confer the Chairpersonship to the host country Pakistan, represented by the Chairperson of the National Reconstruction Bureau. The respective host country will provide a Technical Secretariat on a rotating basis;
 - To mandate the Chairperson of the Forum, Mr. Daniyal Aziz elected by consensus for a one-year period, to define, in consultation with participating countries (and focal points in these countries if any appointed within the respective Ministries), the practical modalities for: organizing the Forum, promoting the networking of relevant national institutions, as well as to propose modalities for collaboration with civil society and recognized research institutions;
 - To establish sustainable cooperation among networks and to propose the convening of a meeting of inter-regional Fora;
- To adopt at each meeting the principle of identifying the country that will host the next meeting and assume its chairmanship for a period of one year. Members present agreed to endorse the candidature of India for the next meeting;
 - To adopt the theme of public accountability as the principal substantive focus of the Forum for the first year;
 - To share this Declaration with other Asian countries and invite them to join this Forum;

And express gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for its warm hospitality in the efficient organization of the first Forum.