

SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR
REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

**SAARC FRAMEWORK
FOR EDUCATION 2030**

South Asia



- **SAARC is an Economic and Geological Organization of Eight member Countries that are primarily located in South Asia. SAARC has formally established on 8th December 1985.**
- **Afghanistan , Bhutan, Bangladesh, India Maldives , Nepal, ,Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are the members States and the SAARC Secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.**
- **The combined economy of SAARC is the 3rd largest in the world in the terms of GDP (PPP) after the United States and China and 5th largest in the terms of nominal GDP.**
- **SAARC nations comprise 3% of the world's area and contain 21% (around 1.7 billion) of the world's total population and around 9.12% of Global economy as of 2015.**

At the Eighteenth SAARC Summit (Kathmandu, 26-27 November 2014), the member State expressed their resolve to eliminating illiteracy from the region in line with the global goal of education for all and ensuring quality education in all institutions by reforming curriculum, teaching methods and evaluation systems adequately supported by **Physical, Technical and other facilities.**

The Member Countries agreed to promote regional cooperation in the field of vocational education and training directed the Education Ministers to develop a Regional Strategy for Enhancing the Quality of Education in order to raise the standards of South Asian educational institutions in order to better serve the youth in the region.

A number of Ministerial Forums meet regularly focusing on specific areas of concern and these have become an integral part of the consultative structure. The 2nd Meeting of SAARC Ministers of Education/Higher Education was held at New Delhi on 31/10/2014 the next meeting scheduled to be held in Male 2016 .

The **New Delhi Declaration on Education** was also adopted at the conclusion of the Meeting identifying SAARC Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Agenda and Regional Priority Areas of Action and it was agreed to expand the scope of cooperation.

- The SAARC Education Ministers' and Senior Officials' Level Meetings have highlighted the following on SAARC national achievements in gaining the Millennium Development Goals and the SAARC Development Goals:-
- It is fact that illiteracy and deprivation have not only held up the development of SAARC nations but have also increased the susceptibility of people for exploitation; SAARC holds regular meetings of the Heads of University Grants Commissions / Equivalent Bodies;
- Member States have together established a South Asian University, which has been upholding the agenda of SAARC in education/higher education;
- Highlighted the importance of equitable and inclusive education systems which ensure gender equity, requirements of children with special needs including the gifted;
- Need to establish sustainable education systems using ICT for rapid capacity building and to develop e-resources / libraries as repositories of knowledge by the Member States of SAARC;

- South Asian University (SAU) is an international university established by the eight member nations of South Asian in 2010 Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- The university now offers post-graduate and doctoral programmes in various disciplines that include **Development Economics, Computer Science, Biotechnology, Mathematics, Sociology, International Relations and Law**. It will ultimately have 11 post-graduate faculties and a faculty of undergraduate studies. SAU attracts students from all member nations and its degrees are recognized by all the eight SAARC countries.
- SAARC member Countries - Tuition Fee US\$ 440 per semester
- Non SAARC member Countries: US\$ 4500 per semester
- The University is currently functioning from Akbar Bhawan Campus in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi before it eventually moves in to its 100 acre campus in Maidan Garhi, South Delhi where the construction is starting very soon.

- Necessity to improve links among Universities in the region increasing the mobility of faculty and students contributing to further enhancing regional cooperation.
- Education Ministers Meeting in New Delhi in October 2014, through a Joint Declaration resolved to collaborate on increased use of information technology and improving the quality of education. The highlights of the declaration are:
 - Enhance the learning and developmental readiness of pre-school age children for primary education;
 - Accelerate progress towards the goal of education for all and ensuring that all primary/elementary school-age children are enabled to realize their right to free and compulsory education and are supported to complete a quality primary education that is relevant, inclusive, learner-centered and gender-equitable, with all of them achieving expected learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) defined for different levels of education;
 - Ensure quality education opportunities for the disadvantaged by evolving and adopting policies and programmatic responses required for:-
 - (i) ensuring that all education programs are made accessible, inclusive and responsive to children and young people from disadvantaged population groups, particularly children with special needs and children with various forms of disabilities;
 - (ii) ensuring that all enrolled pupils are supported to enable them achieve the expected learning outcomes;
 - (iii) ensuring that social, regional and gender gaps in education are eliminated and gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment are promoted throughout the education system;
 - (iv) ensuring that young people in the age group 15-24 years including those who have not been able to complete the compulsory stage of education and young people working in the informal sector of the economy, are provided with opportunities to attain skills for employability; and
 - (v) undertaking system-wide reforms that are needed to tackle the barriers that prevent students from disadvantaged population groups from continuing their education and enhancing their skills for employability;

- Expanding opportunities for skill development including technical and vocational education and training programs,
- Revitalize higher education system in each SAARC Member States by strengthening capacity of higher education institutions to ensure equitable access to tertiary education by expanding the availability of higher education institutions, including technical and professional education institutions, by facilitating mutual recognition of qualification and mobility of students and faculty, as well as alternative learning modes such as open and distance learning modes, narrowing group inequalities in access to higher education, and improving teaching and research across all higher education institutions.
- Network with Centres of Excellence and encourage channels of communication on an on-going basis;
- Foster quality education by enabling all learners attain relevant learning outcomes through reforms relating to curricula, learning materials, pedagogic processes, learning assessment frameworks, teacher quality and performance, improvement in institutional leadership and management;

- Ensure effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for improving access to education, enhancing the quality of teaching-learning process, training of teachers, and strengthening educational planning and management.
- Ensure that the systems of teacher preparation, and teacher management and development are reformed to ensure adequate supply of qualified and competent teachers to meet the demands of all levels/stages of the education system and that measures are put in place to institutionalize continuing professional development of serving teachers leading to professionalization and enhanced capacity of teachers;
- Institutionalize a responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational planning, governance and management by ensuring that the structures for the planning and management of the education sector at the national , sub-national and local levels are strengthened, educational planning and management practices are improved and made more responsive to the emerging educational priorities and to the demands of the expanding education sector in each of the SAARC Member States;

● **SAARC ACTION PLAN FOR FUTURE COOPERATION IN EDUCATION**

- Formulation of the SAARC Framework for Action for the Post-2015 Education Agenda;
- Technical cooperation and exchange of experts in the field of education and related fields for meeting the capacity building and research needs of SAARC Member States and for developing appropriate strategies for attaining the post-2015 education development goals and targets in a sustainable manner;
- Generating/expanding the knowledge base required to support the formulation of policies and programmatic interventions that match the needs and situation in each of the SAARC Member States; Sharing/dissemination of information/knowledge, including research results, best practices and innovations, relating to education policies and programs, among countries to facilitate the formulation of evidence-based policy options and programmatic initiatives.
- Policy dialogue among SAARC Member States on issues concerning education development;
- Advocacy for improved policies/practices and formulation of effective programmatic interventions for achieving the education sector development goals and targets set by each of the SAARC Member States;
- Periodic monitoring of and reporting on progress towards post-2015 SAARC education development goals/targets.

- **HEADS OF UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSIONS/EQUIVALENT BODIES**

- The last Meeting of Heads of University Grants Commission/Equivalent Bodies held in Islamabad in June 2015 issued a Joint Statement on Higher Education in South Asia'. The highlights of the Statement are:
 - Member State will develop their National Qualification Framework and align this with assessment and accreditation mechanism with a view to ensure access to quality higher education;
 - Necessary to establish the SAARC Quality Assurance Network to promote the culture of quality higher education in Member States
 - To consider developing a mechanism for collaborative research program among institutions of higher learning in the Member States, addressing the common issues like energy, water, environment, natural disasters, etc. in coordination with the SAARC Regional Centres in the Member States;

● **SAARC AND UNESCO**

- Considering the need to strengthen cooperation between UNESCO and the Member States of SAARC and realizing that education, culture, communication, information and the sciences play a key role in socio-economic development and cultural progress, SAARC and UNESCO signed an MoU in January 2008, taking into account the Charter of SAARC and the Constitution of UNESCO and its Medium-Term Strategy. Under this MoU, SAARC and UNESCO agreed to cooperate mutually to:
- Achieve education for all, agreed upon at the World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000;
- Promote science and technology education, quality education and teacher training through increased use of ICTs and distance learning;
- Conserve the cultural, tangible and intangible, heritage of the Member States; promote and protect the cultural diversity of the Member States, in particular their cultural, natural and intangible heritage as well as through their cultural expressions, while supporting a fruitful intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, notably through:
- Protecting and safeguarding activities for cultural heritage

- Promoting accession to and implementation of UNESCO's relevant standard-setting instruments; and enhancing capacity-building initiatives in these fields;
- Protect their environment and ecosystem;
- Build the capacity required for further advancement of education, culture, communication and information and the sciences in the Member States;
- Facilitate technical cooperation including capacity-building in the areas of education
- Promote freedom of expression and universal access to information.
- To achieve these aims, SAARC and UNESCO may:
- Inform each other of their initiatives and plans relevant to education, culture,
- Exchange reports, technical publications and other documentation relevant to promote research, analysis and dissemination of information on such themes as communication and information and sciences; education, culture, communication and information and science activities;
- Enhancing technical cooperation and human resource development, including programs in the mutually agreed areas:
- Develop mutually agreed projects and programs of collaboration.

• **Areas of Cooperation**

- According to the Global Framework for Action on ED 2030 (paragraph 89), inclusive and efficient regional coordination should focus on such aspects as:

- Data collection and monitoring, including peer reviews among countries;
- Mutual learning and exchange of good practices;
- Policy-making;
- Dialogue and partnerships with all relevant partners;
- Formal meetings and high-level events;
- Regional communication strategies;
- Encouragement and resource mobilization;
- Capacity building; and
- Implementation of joint projects.



