

MALÉ DECLARATION

The Malé Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Member Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation issued on 23rd November, 1990.

The President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, His Excellency Mr. Hussain Muhammad Ershad, the King of Bhutan, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Chandra Shekhar, the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal, The Right Honourable Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and the Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. Dingiri Banda Wijetunga met at the Fifth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Male' on 21-23 November, 1990.

2. The Heads of State or Government reiterated that cooperation among the countries of South Asia was necessary for improving the quality of life of the peoples of the region. They recalled their conviction that the objectives of peace and stability in South Asia could be best served by fostering mutual understanding, cooperation and good neighbourly relations. They reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and renewed their resolve to intensify cooperation under its aegis in pursuit of their common objectives.

3. The Heads of State or Government stressed their desire to promote peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Non-aligned Movement, particularly respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and peaceful settlement of disputes.

4. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the launching of SAARC in 1985 and the initiatives under the Integrated Programme of Action for strengthening regional cooperation in South Asia had generated much enthusiasm and hope in their peoples, and that the South Asian consciousness necessary for the success of regional cooperation was gradually permeating the region. They reiterated their resolve to make optimal use of the positive forces of good-will, trust and understanding existing among their peoples and to turn SAARC into a dynamic instrument for achieving its objectives and creating an order based on mutual respect, equity, cooperation and shared benefits.

5. The Heads of State or Government reviewed the status of children in South Asia and noted that the recent World Summit for Children had imparted a new impetus to the ongoing efforts in this field. They believed that relevant recommendations of the World Summit could be usefully incorporated into a Plan of Action in the South Asian context and its implementation should be reviewed annually. The guidelines for such Plan of Action could be prepared by a panel of experts to be appointed by the Secretary-General and examined by the Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities. They also welcomed the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its entry into force. They expressed the hope that those Member States, who have not already become party to the Convention, would do so at an early date.

6. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the recommendations made by the Second SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Women in Development held in Islamabad in June 1990. They noted with satisfaction the enthusiastic response in all Member States to their collective call for the observance of 1990 as the "SAARC Year of the Girl Child". They decided that in order to maintain focus on the problems of the Girl Child, the years 1991-2000 AD should be observed as the "SAARC Decade of the Girl Child".

7. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the growing regional cooperation in combating the problems of drug trafficking and drug abuse. They expressed serious concern over the growing linkages between drug trafficking and international arms trade and terrorist activities. They agreed that observance of 1989 as the "SAARC Year for Combating Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking" had had a profound impact in drawing attention to the menace and to the need for its elimination. They expressed satisfaction that following the decision of the Fourth SAARC Summit, the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances had been signed at Male'. They urged the Member States to take early measures to ratify the convention for its entry into force. They were convinced that the Convention would help in making SAARC efforts in this area more effective.

8. They endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers in regard to the timeframe for completion of the Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment. They noted with satisfaction that the methodology for undertaking the Study on the 'Greenhouse Effect' and its impact on the region was likely to be finalized in the near future and desired that the Study itself be completed for consideration at the Sixth Summit. In this context, they noted that the destruction of rainforests, the world over, was contributing significantly to adverse climatic changes and this aspect should also be covered in the proposed Study. They expressed the hope that these Studies would lead to an action plan for meaningful cooperation in the field of Environment and Disaster Management.

9. Recognizing that environment had emerged as a major global concern, the Heads of State or Government noted with alarm the unprecedented climatic changes predicted by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). They urged the international community to mobilize additional finances and to make available appropriate technologies to enable the developing countries to face the new challenges arising from climate changes and sea-level rise. They agreed that Member Countries should coordinate their positions at international fora on this issue. They also decided to observe 1992 as the "SAARC Year of Environment".

10. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the national studies on Trade, Manufactures and Services had been completed. They underlined the need for expeditious action for completing the Regional Study within the timeframe stipulated by the Council of Ministers. They expressed the hope that it would open new avenues of cooperation for the prosperity of the peoples of the region.

11. The Heads of State or Government approved the recommendations of the Council of Ministers regarding Special SAARC Travel Document and decided to launch the scheme.

12. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern that Member States were compelled to divert their scarce resources in combating terrorism. They called for expeditious enactment of enabling measures for the implementation of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of

Terrorism. They also urged Member States to continue to cooperate in accordance with the Convention.

13. The Heads of State or Government noted that as their countries stood on the threshold of the next millennium, the world was undergoing profound transformations characterised by popular upsurge for democracy, liberty and exercise of human rights, lowering of ideological barriers and the relaxation of global tensions and progress towards disarmament and the resolution of a number of regional and global conflicts. There was also a welcome trend towards the opening up of the global economy and integration of national economies into the mainstream of the world economy. They further noted the trend of increasing integration of the pattern of global production, consumption and trade, growing multipolarity of the world economic structure and integration of the markets of the developed countries in order to maintain their technological lead and competitive edge. These changes presented new challenges and opened up new opportunities to the South Asian countries, as to the rest of the developing world. The Heads of State or Government were convinced that their mutual cooperation can be a critical factor in enabling them to pursue these objectives more effectively.

14. The Heads of State or Government, noting the vital importance of bio-technology for the long-term food security of developing countries as well as for medicinal purposes, decided that cooperation should be extended to this field and, in particular, to the exchange of expertise in genetic conservation and maintenance of germplasm banks. In this connection, they welcomed India's offer of training facilities and agreed that cooperation in the cataloguing of genetic resources stored in different SAARC countries would be mutually beneficial. Taking note of the proposal made by the Group of Fifteen Developing Countries (G-15) for the establishment of a gene bank for developing countries, they agreed to participate in this venture.

15. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the idea of setting up of a Fund for regional projects which could make available credit on easy terms for the identification and development of regional projects. They agreed that representatives of the national development banks of the Member Countries should get together to work out the precise modalities for the source of funds and the manner in which these could be related to joint venture projects. They accepted India's offer to host this meeting.

16. The Heads of State or Government regarded the recent developments in the Gulf as the most unfortunate aberration from the present trend of detente, cooperation and peaceful settlement of disputes. They reaffirmed their adherence to UN Security Council Resolutions on this issue. While emphasizing the need for a peaceful solution of the issue, they called for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of its legitimate Government. They stated that the Gulf crisis had dealt a severe blow to their economies. They needed massive international assistance to compensate the loss suffered by them due to a sharp decline in remittances, setback to their exports and severe strain on their balance of payments position imposed by increased oil prices. They recognized the potentiality of cooperation among themselves for mitigating the impact of these adverse consequences.

17. The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that the initiative of the Government of the Maldives for the Protection and Security of Small States at the UN in 1989, which they all supported, had also received overwhelming support of the international community.

They agreed that, because of their particular problems, small states merited special measures of support in safeguarding their independence and territorial integrity.

18. The Heads of State or Government expressed the hope that the talks between the two Super Powers on arms control would culminate in the conclusion of an agreement for substantial reduction in their nuclear arsenals leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. While welcoming the measures being considered for arms reduction at the global level, they were convinced that the objective could be best achieved through the promotion of mutual trust and confidence among the Member States. They underlined the inherent relationship between disarmament and development and called upon all countries, especially those possessing the largest nuclear and conventional arsenals, to rechannel additional financial resources, human energy and creativity into development. They expressed their support for the banning of chemical weapons and early conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In this context, they welcomed the convening of the UN Conference in January 1991 to consider amendments to the Partial Test Ban Treaty to convert it into a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

19. The Heads of State or Government expressed concern that the international economic environment for the developing countries had been characterised by negative resource flows, high trade barriers, serious external debt problems and high interest rates. The need of SAARC countries for increased concessional resources and technology as well as access to markets for their exports could not, therefore, be under-estimated. They called for collective efforts based on mutuality of interest and felt that regular North-South consultations were essential for ensuring equitable management of global interdependence.

20. The Heads of State or Government recalled the usefulness of the First Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues held in Islamabad in 1986. They agreed that the second such Ministerial Meeting be held in India in 1991 to review the outcome of the Uruguay Round and to coordinate positions at international conferences including the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, 1992.

21. Notwithstanding the continuing efforts on the international economic plane, the Heads of State or Government emphasised the pressing need for the Ministerial Meeting to address itself vigorously to the objective of self-reliance. They directed the Ministers to prepare a strategy for mobilising regional resources which would encourage and strengthen individual and collective self-reliance in the region.

22. The Heads of State or Government expressed their support for the Paris Declaration (1990) and the Programme of Action adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. They called upon the international community to contribute to the successful implementation of the Programme of Action which is of special importance for the socio-economic development of the region.

23. The Heads of State or Government recognized the imperative need for providing a better habitat to the peoples of South Asia through optimum utilization of indigenous technology, know-how and material, and decided that 1991 be observed as the "SAARC Year of Shelter".

24. The Heads of State or Government noted that millions of disabled persons lived in the SAARC region and immediate action was required to reduce their sufferings and to improve their quality of life. They decided to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons".

25. The Heads of State or Government were particularly happy that the Fifth SAARC Summit coincided with the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Independence of the Maldives which provided them with the opportunity to express their solidarity with the people and the Government of the Maldives. They expressed their conviction that the Male' Summit had helped in consolidating the gains of regional cooperation and in strengthening the institutional base of SAARC.

26. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Sixth SAARC Summit in 1991.

27. The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the President of the Maldives had discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Maldives and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

Joint Press Release

Joint Press Release issued on 23 November 1990 at the end of the Fifth SAARC Summit, Malé.

The President of Bangladesh, the King of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of India, the President of the Maldives, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka met at the Fifth Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at Male' from 21-23 November 1990. The Meeting was held in an atmosphere of warmth, cordiality and mutual understanding.

2. The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of SAARC and reiterated their resolve to intensify cooperation under its aegis. They issued the Male' Declaration.

3. They welcomed the signing of the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances by the Ministers at Male' and undertook to take early measures to ratify the Convention.

4. The Heads of State or Government decided to launch the Special SAARC Travel Document which would exempt its holders from visas for travel within the region. They decided that Supreme Court Judges, Members of the National Parliaments, Heads of national academic institutions, their spouses and dependent children would be entitled to this Document.

5. The Heads of State or Government endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers to launch the Scheme for the Promotion of Organised Tourism during the first half of 1991. They also welcomed the proposal for institutionalised cooperation among the tourist industries of the Member States with a view to attracting more tourists from outside the region.

6. They noted with satisfaction that all Member States had completed their national studies on Trade, Manufactures and Services. They underlined the need for completing the Regional Study within the stipulated time-frame.

7. They decided that measures for establishing joint ventures in the field of cottage industries and handicrafts should be taken up forthwith to set a stage for promoting collective self-reliance in the region. They directed the Secretary-General to appoint a group of 2-3 Experts selected from within the region, to prepare a paper suggesting the modalities for the setting up of joint ventures, sources of funding and other necessary details for consideration at the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

8. The Heads of State or Government noted the proposal for the establishment of a SAARC Regional Fund and directed the Standing Committee to submit its recommendations on the proposal for consideration at the next session of the Council of Ministers.

9. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of cooperation among the SAARC Member States in the field of mass media and directed the Secretary-General to facilitate, under the auspices of SAARC, increased interaction among federations/associations of journalists, news agencies and mass media of the region.

10. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the decision authorizing the Secretariat to share information and exchange reports, studies and publications with the European Community (EC) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to begin with, in the identified areas of cooperation.

11. The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the work was well under way for the setting up of a nucleus Centre for Human Resource Development in Pakistan. They were of the view that the Centre would contribute towards optimizing regional cooperation in this vital field.

12. They called for early completion of a regional plan "SAARC 2000 - A Basic Needs Perspective" to facilitate activities within a broad framework of a long term perspective.

13. They directed that the theme of 'Poverty Alleviation' Strategies be discussed in depth by Planners for formulating suitable recommendations.

14. The Heads of State or Government decided that in order to maintain focus on the problems of the Girl Child the years 1991-2000 AD would be observed as the "SAARC Decade of the Girl Child". They were deeply moved by the SAARC Girl Child's appeal for love and care for them and their right to childhood. They reiterated their resolve that the welfare of the child in general and the girl child in particular, would figure at the top of their list of priorities.

15. The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of regular exchange of views among the representatives of the SAARC Member Countries at international economic fora with a view to concerting positions, as far as possible, on matters of common concern. They decided to hold the Second Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues in India in 1991.

16. The Heads of State or Government underlined the imperative need for providing a better habitat to the people of South Asia and decided that in order to focus attention on the problems of the Homeless, the Year 1991 be observed as the "SAARC Year of Shelter". They decided that each country would organise a series of events on this theme and share their experiences in order that the people of the region could derive practical benefit from the "SAARC Year of Shelter".

17. They directed that the Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Protection and Preservation of the Environment and the Study on the 'Greenhouse Effect' and its impact on the region be finalized before the next Summit. They stressed that, pending the completion of the studies, Member States should take necessary steps at national levels in this vital field. They decided to observe 1992 as the "SAARC Year of the Environment".

18. The Heads of State or Government stressed that immediate action was required to reduce the sufferings of the millions of disabled people who lived in the SAARC region. In order to focus attention on their problems and to improve their quality of life, they decided to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons".

19. They decided that appropriate programmes should be worked out for observing the SAARC Year of the Shelter 1991, the SAARC Year of the Environment 1992, and the SAARC Year of Disabled Persons 1993. In order to derive the maximum benefit and to sensitize the peoples

in the region in the above vital fields, they noted that Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan respectively will circulate the recommended Plans of Action for implementation at national level.

20. The Heads of State or Government noted that SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) was already functioning at Dhaka. They decided that the SAARC Tuberculosis Centre and the SAARC Documentation Centre would be set up in Nepal and India respectively. They directed that necessary steps to establish the two Centres should be taken up urgently.

21. The Heads of State or Government stressed the need for adopting a more business-like and functional approach in the conduct of meetings held under the aegis of SAARC. They requested the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit and the President of Bangladesh to initiate consultations with the Member States in this regard.

22. The Heads of State or Government directed the Chairman of Council of Ministers to prepare recommendations on rationalizing SAARC activities with a view to promoting effective functioning of the Association.

23. The Heads of State or Government expressed appreciation for the pioneering work done by Ambassador Abul Ahsan, the first Secretary-General, during the formative years of the Secretariat. They welcomed his successor, Ambassador Kant Kishore Bhargava, and appreciated his valuable contribution to the on-going activities of SAARC.

24. They expressed profound happiness that the Fifth SAARC Summit coincided with the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Independence of the Maldives which provided them with an opportunity to express personally their solidarity with the people and the Government of the Maldives.

25. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Sixth SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1991.

26. The Heads of State or Government highly appreciated the exemplary manner in which the President of the Republic of Maldives conducted the meetings of the Association as the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit. They also expressed their sincere gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Republic of Maldives and for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.