



# 2ND SAARC BUSINESS LEADERS CONCLAVE

17-18 February, 2007  
Mumbai, India

The Second SAARC Business Leaders Conclave (SBLC) organized by the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) was held in Mumbai, India on February 17-18, 2007. The Conclave focused on developing new mindsets and changing attitudes in the SAARC region to ensure economic and social stability and prosperity. The Conclave provided a channel to discuss new comparative advantages in South Asia to efficiently allocate resources and thereby enable the whole economy to expand and develop optimally. The objective of the Conclave was to bring together business and government leaders from South Asia to create and expand business opportunities that will certainly help in the economic development of the SAARC economies.

The Conclave was officially inaugurated by the lighting of a lamp by Hon'ble Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of External Affairs, India. Dashu Ujain Tachhap Dorji, President SCCI presented the welcome address and said, "This as a region need to attain sustainable economic growth. The first and the foremost step on our part is to overcome political differences that encompass the two leading players of the region, India and Pakistan, without which even regional development cannot be ensured." His Excellency Ujain Tachhap Dorji, Secretary General SAARC presented a keynote address at the occasion.

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The panel of Ministers from SAARC nations including Hon'ble Jeevan Ramoeli, Minister of State for Commerce of India, Hon'ble Dr. Ram Sharan Mahal, Finance Minister of Nepal, Hon'ble Prof. G. L. Peiris, Foreign Trade Minister of Sri Lanka and Hon'ble Harish Var Hira, Minister of State for Commerce of Pakistan were distinguished speakers at the conclave. The presence of the commerce and finance Ministers from all SAARC countries reinforced the commitment of the government-industry partnership that will always be fruitful in promoting regional economic cooperation in SAARC. Additionally, over 200 leading business persons from the region attended the Conclave.

The Conclave focused on the following themes:

- Regional Trade, Investment & Employment Generation: Creating an Enabling Policy Environment
- Shaping Sustainable Regional Development through Capacity Building, Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Creating Peace Constituencies for Regional Development: Role of Second Track Diplomacy
- Harvesting Benefits of Regional Development for Economic Transformation of Small Nations in South Asia
- South Asia Economic Union: Necessary for Economic Growth in South Asia

Pratul Patel, Vice President of The World Bank, Sultan Hashim Rahman, DSG - South Asia Department, ADB, Pervaiz A Khan, CEO of Uch Power Ltd, Pakistan, DN Raje Lal, MD & CEO, IDPL, India and Paul Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director at The Earth Institute at Columbia University, USA, addressed various sessions of the Conclave.

Dr. Wolfgang Kerhardt, Chairman- FNSR, and Gerson Wheeler, Managing Director of The World Bank presented their views at the valedictory session of the Conclave. Mr. Wheeler emphasized that the trade between India and Pakistan could rise to over US \$9 billion over the next five years from the current US \$1 billion if barriers relating to policies, infrastructure, corruption and red tape are eliminated.

The Second SAARC Business Leaders Conclave concluded by adopting the 13 points Policy Reform Agenda which aims to increase intra-regional trade to US \$20 billion by 2010 for submission to the 14th SAARC Heads of States Summit. It was agreed that the SAARC Chamber of Commerce will immediately begin a dialogue with policymakers to implement the reforms and will report the progress at the next SAARC Business Leaders Conclave. The 13 points are:

1. Implement SAFTA in letter and spirit; reduce the sensitive lists; remove NTBs and regularize and liberalize trade in services.
2. Reduce the cost of doing business in South Asia.
3. Adopt a regional investment protocol to promote and protect intra regional investments and joint ventures in South Asia.
4. Harmonize standards and customs procedures and ensure mutual recognition

of certificates.

5. Finalize and expeditiously implement Regional Motor Vehicle Transport Agreement.
6. Introduce World class infrastructure at land border ports of SAARC countries.
7. Adopt open sky policy in South Asia - improve air connectivity by ensuring direct

flights between capital and other major cities and giving access to private airlines in all countries to operate in the region.

8. Promote regional energy cooperation to enhance energy production and transmission among SAARC members

countries thereby reducing cost.

9. Expand scope of cross border water cooperation from water sharing to benefit sharing (e.g. Hydropower).
10. Provide easy and long term multiple entry visas to businessmen and tourists.
11. Adopt and implement a Regional Environment Treaty.
12. Promote and facilitate SAARC countries owned shipping vehicles to have priority berthing at each other's ports, create special facilities for land-locked countries.
13. Allow broadcasting of TV Channels (Government and Private) of all SAARC Countries in the entire region; allow content sharing and co-production in entertainment sector.

The First SAARC Business Leaders Conclave was held on November 17-18, 2005 in New Delhi, India. Both the first and second conclaves provided the right platform for broader and intense engagement between the SAARC member governments and the South Asian Business community. The Third SAARC Business Leaders Conclave is scheduled to be held in Pakistan in 2008.

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PARTNERS OF THE CONCLAVE

