

3rd SAARC Business Leaders Conclave 09



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3rd SAARC BUSINESS LEADERS CONCLAVE '09

22-23 November, 2009 - COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

The Third SAARC Business Leaders Conclave with its theme of Regional Cooperation: A catalyst for Socio-Economic Growth in South Asia was held on November 22-23, 2009 at Colombo (Sri Lanka).

The Conclave was organized by SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI), in collaboration with Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL), supported by Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), knowledge partner World Bank, Partners of the conclave Afghan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ACCI), Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI), Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Maldives National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MNCCI), Federation Of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI) and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI).

The Conclave was inaugurated by Hon'ble Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka, Prime Minister of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka who regarded private Sector as the engine of growth and said that the open policies of the government of Sri Lanka will be helpful for enhanced economic cooperation to foster integration process in South Asia. He thanked the leadership of SAARC CCI to organize the most prestigious event of the Private Sector of the region in Sri Lanka and assured all possible cooperation towards promoting economic cooperation in the region.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI commenced the conclave by presenting the welcome address. Mr. Tariq Sayeed in his address identified several issues and challenges faced by SAARC region including global financial crises, climate change, trade facilitation, trade in services, tourism etc and put forth various policy suggestions for the implementation of proposals under SAFTA. He termed Investment as life line of



Inaugural session of 3rd SBLCL (L-R) Dr. René Klaff, Regional Director, South Asia, FNF, Mr. Kosala Wickramanayake, President, FCCISL, Hon'ble Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka, Prime Minister, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President, SAARC CCI, Chief Guest, Mr. Gulam Dastagir, Senior Director, SAARC Secretariat, Mr. Nawaz Rajabdeen, VP SAARC CCI-Sri Lanka, Mr. M K. Saharia, Chairman, 3rd SBLCL Steering Committee & Mr. Fayez Omar, Senior Advisor to the World Bank.

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economic cooperation and urged for regional investment treaty, which would increase trade in Services manifold. He demanded adoption of Trade Facilitation mechanism open sky policy, establishment of SAARC power grid & liberal visa policy to improve people to people contacts which could propel the process of economic integration.

The conclave was attended by as many as 400 leading businessmen from SAARC member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan besides representatives of SAARC Secretariat-Kathmandu, GTZ/SAARC Trade Information Project, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)-Colombo, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)-Bangladesh, Centre for Policy Research (CPR)-India, Sri Lankan Standard Institution, Beacon House University-Lahore, Department of Commerce, Government of Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) and Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC).

Panel of Ministers from SAARC nations including Federal Minister for Science & Technology, Government of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Azam Khan Swati, Minister for Food & Disaster Management, Government of Bangladesh, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Minister of International Trade and Export Development, Government of Sri Lanka, Prof. G.L.Peiris, Minister for Tourism, Arts & Culture, Government of Maldives, Dr. Ahmad Ali Sawad, Minister of Public Administration & Home Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka, Mr. Sarath Amunugama and former Secretary Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, Mr. Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi were the distinguished speakers at the conclave.

The First SAARC Business Leaders Conclave held on November 17-18, 2005 at New Delhi, was a culmination of SAARC CCI's efforts in augmenting economic co-operation among SAARC member states. The Delhi Conclave provided the right platform for broader and intense engagement between the SAARC member governments and the South Asian Business community.

Second SAARC Business Leaders 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



Chief Guest, Hon'ble Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka, Prime Minister, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President, SAARCCCI, at 3rd SBLC

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thereby enable the whole economy to expand and develop optimally. The objective of the conclave was to bring together the business and government leaders from South Asia to create and expend business opportunities that will certainly help in building an enabling environment.

The third SAARC Business Leaders Conclave - Regional cooperation: a catalyst for socio-economic growth in South Asia" focused on the following themes;

- a. Global Financial Crisis: Impact on South Asian Economies;
- b. Addressing Climate Change & Food Security Challenges in South Asia;
- c. Trade Facilitation: An Enabler of Regional Connectivity in South Asia;
- d. Trade in Services: Prospects and Challenges for Regional Integration;
- e. Promoting Cooperation in Media, Entertainment and Tourism: Fostering Socio-Cultural Ties in South Asia; and
- f. Creating Synergies for Enhanced Regional Cooperation.

Session 1: Global Financial Crisis: impact on South Asian Economies

The session was chaired and moderated by Mr. Bibek Debroy, Professor, Centre for Policy Research, India. Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh and Dr. Deshal De Mel, Research Economist, Institute of Policy Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Mr. Bibek Debroy briefed the participants about core reasons of current financial crisis and its impact on South Asian Economies. He said that Asia's rapid advancement has been the outcome of openness of countries in the region to global trade and finance. Notwithstanding this consensus, the considerable progress of these countries in developing domestic institutions, policies, and industrial capacity--together with their strong growth in the initial phase of the ongoing global financial crisis--led some to speculate that the Asian economies had "decoupled" from the advanced economies of North America and Europe. Of course, in hindsight, given the magnitude of the shocks that have struck these advanced economies over the past two years, as well as their strong economic and financial links to Asia, it should not have been surprising that Asia was ultimately hit quite hard by the global downturn.

The speakers quoting World Bank report on socio-economic impact of global financial crisis said that the social impact was likely to be quite severe, trapping 30 million more people in poverty in South Asia by 2010. In addition, the crisis is likely to lead to around 180,000 more deaths of infants and children in South Asia, more than 5000 mothers dying at childbirth and more than 3 million more people going

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hungry. This slow down will adversely affect the targets envisaged for South Asia under Millennium Development Goals 2015.

The session deliberated on the Global Financial Crisis as a challenge for the region and stressed for adoption of coordinated initiatives to overcome this economic recession and put-forth various suggestions to face the challenges arise in wake of financial meltdown.

Session 2: Addressing Climate Change and food security challenges in South Asia

Session on addressing Climate Change and food security challenges in South Asia was chaired by Hon'ble Mr. Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister, Ministry for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan and moderated by Mr. Sultan Ahmed Chawla, President, FPCCI. Hon'ble Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Member of Parliament & Minister for Food and Disaster Management, Government of Bangladesh delivered key note address while presentations were made by Mr. R. S. Seshadri, Director, Tilda Riceland Pvt. Ltd. & Secretary, All India Rice Exporters' Association. India. Mr. Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, Trishakti Cable Industries Pvt. Ltd. Trishakti Group, Kathmandu, Nepal. Dr. Lalith N Senaweera, DG/CEO, Sri Lanka Standards Institution and Prof. Ajith de Alwis, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.

In his remarks Hon'ble Mr. Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister, Science and Technology, (Pakistan) termed Climate change and Food Security as priority concerns for the region and proposed collaborative efforts to face these challenges. He said that application of S&T techniques could help increase yield per acre and make region more secure in terms of availability of food. He highlighted important initiatives undertaken by Government of Pakistan in this respect and demanded for functioning of SAARC Food Bank.

Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque in his presentation said that Higher cereals prices during 2006-08 had decreased poor households' purchasing power by 24 % in Asia-Pacific region and 18% in South Asia. The region represented 35% of the world's under-nourished including 30% of the people in Bangladesh, 22% of Sri Lanka, 20% of each of Nepal and India, 23 % of Pakistan, 23% of Afghanistan are malnourished and the region had the 2nd highest percentage of malnourished population after the Sub-Saharan Africa region.

The presenters Mr. R. S. Seshadri, Mr. Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, Dr. Lalith N Senaweera, DG/CEO and Prof. Ajith de Alwis, were of the opinion that Impacts of climate change have led change of rainfall pattern, droughts, increased cyclones and floods, sea level rise, which subsequently lead to creating food security problems.

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They identified some serious challenges in respect of Food Security in South Asia, which include Low productivity, Degeneration of yield, Low adoption of technology, Low profitability of small farmers, Less investment in agriculture especially in infrastructure and research, Environmental degradation and climate change impacts, Global food market volatility/uncertainty, Increasing population and number of poor, Skewed distribution of assets/income, Low allocation/coverage to safety net programs, Low allocation to health care services as

The session put forth various suggestions to address the challenged posed by Climate Change and Food Security in South Asia, the few of them are as follows:

- Promoting of Low-carbon economy by reducing use of Choloflora Carbons (CFCs)
- Improvement in Submergence and salinity intrusion; and
- Increased investment in agriculture, health and social protection
- Share best practices, findings of research and resources
- Enhance networking of people: Government, Private and CSOs
- Rural non-farm sector must grow along with agriculture
- Proactive role of business leaders to increase agricultural trade between South Asian countries
- Joint efforts to raising climate change issues to the world forums
- Prepare a charter addressing 'Right to Food'
- Take stock of the initiatives under SAARC, then consolidate and expand
- Need to work with the spirit of mutual co-operation and respect specified in the SAARC charter
- Sustain increased investment to agriculture
- Increase profitability of small and marginal farmers
- Diversify, produce high value crops and non-crops
- Raise agricultural activities from subsistence to commercially viable
- Invest in developing and adopting appropriate technology
- Promote financial services to all door steps
- Introduce risk sharing mechanisms
- The SAARC Chamber and



Speakers at 3rd SBLC, (L-R) Mr. Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, Trishakti Cable Industries Pvt. Ltd, Mr. R. S. Seshadri, Director, Tilda Riceland Pvt. Ltd. & Secretary, All India Rice Exporters' Association. Mr. Sultan Ahmed Chawla, President-FPCCI, Hon'ble Mr. Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minster, Ministry for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan, Dr. Laliith N Senaweera, DG/CEO, Sri Lanka Standards Institution, Prof. Ajith de Alwis, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI & mr. iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI.

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the business leaders of individual countries may evolve mechanism to support rural non-farm sector to a great extent

- Loss of land (e.g. Maldives and Coastal Bangladesh)
- Our people are victims of the circumstances for which they are not responsible in this context
- Huge work ahead:
- Promoting awareness;
- adopting structural and non-structural measures for adaptation and mitigation
- Need enhanced investment in research and extension
- Need international support to enhanced structural and non-structural measures for adaptation and mitigation

Mr. Sultan Ahmed Chawla while concluding the session said that the issues like Climate Change and Food security were inter-linked and negatively impact the lives of common man in South Asia. He said that it was encouraging that Leaders in South Asia in 15th Summit had already decided the formation of SAARC Food Bank, SAARC Development Fund while agreement on Environmental protection was already approved. The coordinated efforts under the umbrella of these bodies would greatly help South Asian countries to face the challenges. Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik offered vote of thanks to the chair.

Session 3: Trade Facilitation an Enabler of Regional Connectivity in South Asia

The session was chaired by Mr. Ashutosh Bajpai, Chairman, SAARC CCI Council on "Trade Facilitation" whereas Mr. Amer Zafar Durrani, Senior Trade & Transport Facilitation Specialist, World Bank-Pakistan was the moderator of session. In the session Dr. Nisha Taneja, Professor, ICRIER, India, Mr. Roshanjith Siriniwasa, Advisor ICT, GTZ/SAARC Trade Information Project, Mr. Shantha De Silva, Consultant in Trade Facilitation and e-Business in UN system Panelists, Dr. Anura Ekanayake, Chairman, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC), Sri Lanka, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Managing Director, Panchakanya Group, Kathmandu, Nepal, Mr. Somi Hazari, former President India-ASEAN Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce & Industry presented their papers.

During the session, distinguished speakers expressed their comments and opinions, which covered the following broad areas:

- Current status of trade facilitation process in SAARC countries
- Steps required for further development of trade facilitation in the region
- WTO provisions regarding trade facilitation etc. and other relevant issues

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Mr. Ashutosh Bajpai, Chairman, SAARC CCI Council on "Trade Facilitation" brief the participants about concept of Trade Facilitation as trade facilitation as the simplification and harmonization of international trade procedures covering the activities, practices and formalities involved in collecting, presenting, communicating and processing data and other information required for the movement of goods in international trade. He criticized coordination among the SAARC countries which is yet to reach a convenient level. The progress so far is not sufficient. He also laid emphasis on talks between businessmen of the SAARC countries to find out the problems, possibilities and potential of trade in the region. He advocated for finding specific and prioritized issues in the region to deal with trade, which is not gaining momentum. Mr. Amer Durrani, Senior Trade & Transport Facilitation Specialist, World Bank-Pakistan emphasized the need for a regional transport agreement to facilitate regional transportation and exchanges. Progress in infrastructure building, banking, insurance, visa regime, quality control and harmonization of customs code are also important.

Dr. Nisha Taneja, Professor, ICRIER, India, added to ongoing debate that South Asian Region faces some constraints while doing business like adequate infrastructure for transportation of goods. Inadequate land, sea and air links lead to increased costs and delay in delivery. Apart from these, non-tariff barriers are restricting trade and only add to costs and increase time for delivery. Non-tariff barriers list should be revised and reviewed in a time bound manner to expand the number of tradable items. She suggested countries like India, Pakistan, Bhutan and Bangladesh may adopt 'Visa on arrival' practice, especially to facilitate businessmen their easy access to destinations.

Mr. Shantha De Silva, Consultant in Trade Facilitation and e-Business in UN system Panelists, criticize that intra-regional trade potential became a much talked about issue but less worked out subject, so SAARC region suffers economically. He pointed out significant numbers of NTBs still hinders potentials in SAARC intraregional trade and bureaucracies in the countries are greatly responsible for that.

Mr. Roshanjith Siriniwasa, Advisor ICT, GTZ/SAARC Trade Information Project, stressed for SAARC Government to ensure effective utilization of the automated system by setting up required infrastructure and providing capacity building program for the govt. officials and members of the private sector.

Speakers & Panalist was of the opinion that Lack of political commitment and trade barriers are the major hurdles, impeding growth of intra-regional trade in South Asia. He stressed for need of recognition of mutual agreements on harmonization of standards, Regional Multimodal Transport and urged upon the SAARC countries to make compatible efforts for implementation of WTO Agreements on Customs Valuation, Import Licensing, Pre-shipment Inspection, Rules of Origin, Technical Barriers to Trade, which are the integral components of any trade facilitation regime.

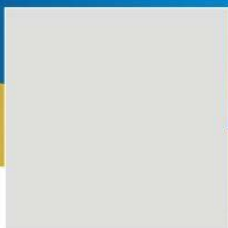
Mr. Bajpai offered vote of thanks to participants on the base of foregoing discussion during the session, presented the following recommendations.

- Implement SAFTA Agreement and to reduce the sensitive lists; remove NTBs and regularize and liberalize trade in service sectors

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- Integration of regional infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods, services, and people across the SAARC region for:-
- Road connectivities
- Port connectivities
- Rail connectivities
- Open sky policy for air travel
- Adopt a regional investment protocol to promote and protect intra regional investments and joint ventures in South Asia;
- Finalize and expeditiously implement Regional Motor Vehicle Transport Agreement.
- Introduce World-class infrastructure at land border ports of SAARC member nations.
- 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.
- Promote energy cooperation to enhance energy production and transmission among SAARC member countries thereby reducing cost.
- Expand scope of cross border water cooperation from water sharing to benefit sharing (e.g. Hydropower)
- Provide easy and long term multiple entry visas to businessmen and tourists.
- Adopt and implement a Regional Environment Treaty.
- Promote and facilitate SAARC countries owned shipping Vehicles to have priority berthing at each other's ports; create special facilities for land-locked countries.
- Introduce broadcasting of TV Channels (Government and Private) of all SAARC Countries in the entire region.



Speakers at 3rd SBLC (L-R) Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Managing Director, Panchakanya Group, Kathmandu, Nepal, Dr. Nisha Taneja, Professor, ICRIER, India, Mr. Roshanjith Siriniwasa, Advisor ICT, GTZ/SAARC Trade Information Project, Mr. Shantha De Silva, Consultant in Trade Facilitation and e-Business in UN system, Sri Lanka, Mr. Amer Zafar Durrani, Senior Trade & Transport Facilitation Specialist, World Bank-Pakistan, Mr. Ashutosh Bajpai, Chairman, SAARC CCI Council on Trade Facilitation, Dr. Syed Akmal Hussain, Professor of Economics, Beacon House University, Lahore, Pakistan, Dr. Anura Ekanayake, Chairman, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) and Mr. Somi Hazari, former President India-ASEAN Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, on 23rd Nov, 2009, Sri Lanka

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Session 4: Trade Facilitation: An Enabler of Regional Connectivity in South Asia

The session was chaired by Hon'ble Prof. G. L. Peiris, "Minister of International Trade and Export Development Government of Sri Lanka" whereas Mr. Shams-ud-duha, Past Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) was the Co-Chair & moderator of session. In the session Mr. Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi, Former Secretary Commerce, Bangladesh, Mr. Laveesh Bhandari, Director, Inicus Analytics Pvt Ltd, India presented their papers and Mr. Gomi Senadeera, Director General Commerce, Dept. of Commerce, Sri Lanka, Mr. Prasad Madhavan, Director & Trustee, Tanstia FNF Service Centre (TFSC), Mr. Bap Kinga, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bhutan) were the panelist in the session.

In introductory remarks Hon'ble Prof. G. L. Peiris, "Minister of International Trade and Export Development Government of Sri Lanka Said that" with growing global trade and investment flows in services along with technological advances, the service sector presents South Asian countries with opportunities to diversify their economies as well as their export baskets and markets, to tap emerging segments that leverage their inherent and acquired sources of comparative advantage, and to address domestic concerns of service quality, accessibility, and economic efficiency". Mr. Shams-ud-duha, Past Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) added that common factors that can contribute to growth in the service sector include policy reforms, deregulation of commodity & factor markets, and privatization of state owned enterprises.

Speakers & the panelist if the session was of the view that many services are key inputs to all or most other key businesses in South Asia. They quoted the examples of services such as energy, telecommunications and transportation; financial services which facilitate transactions and provide access to finance for investment; health and education services which contribute to a healthy, well-trained workforce; and legal and accountancy services which are part of the institutional framework required to underpin a healthy market economy. These service sectors are thus a key part of the South Asian investment climate, and can have a much wider impact on overall business performance and the level of investment, and

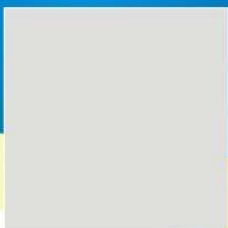


Hon'ble Prof. G. L. Peiris, Minister of International Trade and Export Development Government of Sri Lanka, addressing at session "TRADE IN SERVICES: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION" of 3rd SAARC Business Leader Conclave. Other seen in Picture (L-R) Mr. Gomi Senadeera, Director General Commerce, Dept. of Commerce, Sri Lanka, Mr. Bap Kinga, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bhutan) & Mr. Sultan Ahmed Chawla, President FPCCI.

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hence growth and productivity in the regional economy. Speakers stressed for the common Banking & insurance system of the region. Banking & Insurance facilities are crucial to the smooth handling of business transactions and insurance is vital for risk management. Regional banking facilities should exist to expedite business transactions for increased business activity. However, the SAARC region has inadequate regional banking infrastructure and in many cases the existing banks do not facilitate regional business transactions. The region needs to realize that in order to ease doing business among the South Asian countries and to facilitate trade, adequate banking facilities and efficient insurance services must be offered. Business transactions especially between India and Pakistan are routed through foreign banks rather than using the infrastructure of local national banks. They quoted examples of services of foreign banks like Royal Bank of Scotland (ABN Amro) and Standard Chartered Bank are utilised. The rate of transactions becomes higher with the involvement of foreign banks.

Mr. Prasad Madhavan, Director & Trustee, Tanstia FNF Service Centre (TFSC), was of the opinion that South Asia is the fastest growing region in the export of services. Exports of services from South Asia grew at 14% per annum over the period 1995–2003 compared to less than 8% for East Asia. It is not only India that did well, but Pakistan and Sri Lanka, too, which have grown faster than East Asia in service exports. Bangladesh services exports have also grown fairly rapidly, averaging about the rate in East Asian economies. India and Bangladesh have performed well in the exports of computers and information communications and other commercial services, while Pakistan has done well in the export of transport services and Sri Lanka in travel services. However if services are the fastest growing sector in all South Asian countries, trade in services has not significantly developed in the region.

Mr. Bap Kinga, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bhutan) highlighted the businessman concerns and said that concerns of region are not yet developed enough to venture into liberalizing the services sector, there are enough non-LDCs in the group to make service liberalization a viable option

Mr. Shams-ud- duha, Past Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) Co-Chair & moderator of session offered vote of thanks and presented following outcomes from forth going suggestion.

Identify the complementarities in services trade and then liberalize these areas on a priority basis.

- Continue information Exchange on domestic laws, rules, regulations etc. in Services.
- Policy reforms of SAARC countries with respect to service sector.
- Privatization of state owned enterprises.
- Deregulation of commodity & factor markets.
- Insurance, Banking, Aviation, telecom, air cargo, transport, tourism & medical services of the region needs special attention
- Regional Software Technology Parks, e-governance including government intranet, multipurpose

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telecasters, IT education and training, e-commerce, design, development and database management, Portal Programming and Open Source Application development.

- Building data on intra-regional trade in services for smooth negotiations.
- Taking account of the fact that a mode-wise approach does not fully reflect the economic reality of simultaneously supplying services through multiple modes and linkages between modes of supply for the delivery of services. Barriers to one mode translate into actual/potential barriers to other mode.

Mr. Shams-ud-duha, while concluding the session said it is important to address this issue through greater cooperation between the regulatory bodies within the region and also learning from regulatory bodies in other countries that have entered into agreements on trade in services. There are also significant asymmetries in existing standards, and hence the qualifications of many services suppliers will not be recognized by fellow Members. Mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) will be required to harmonize standards in the region.

Session 5: Promoting Cooperation in Media, Entertainment and Tourism: Fostering Socio-Cultural Ties in South Asia

The session was chaired by Mr. Macky Hashim the Past President of SAARC CCI from Sri Lanka. The key note address was given by Hon'ble Dr. Ahmed Ali Sawad, Minister- Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Government of the Republic of Maldives. Other speakers were Mr. S Kalaiselvam, Director General, SLTDA, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Mr. Salman Javed, Former MD, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, Pakistan and Ms. Munira Chudasama, Proprietress Golden Thimble, India. The panelists were Ms. Feryal Ali Gauhar Research Scholar Cultural Heritage and Conservation Management from Pakistan, Mr. Ravindra Randeniya, Actor/Parliamentarian from Sri Lanka and Mr. Noman Ijaz, Artist from Pakistan.

The speakers and panelist



Speakers of 3rd SBLC, (L-R) Mr. Noman Ijaz, Artist, Pakistan, Mr. Salman Javed, Former MD, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, Pakistan, Mr. Macky Hashim, Past President, SAARC CCI, Hon'ble Dr. Ahmed Ali Sawad, Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Government of Republic of Maldives, Ms. Feryal Ali Gauhar, Artist & PhD Scholar on Cultural Heritage & Conservation Management, National College of Arts-Pakistan and Mr. Ravindra Randeniya, Actor/Parliamentarian, Sri Lanka.

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were of the view that media can play vital role in enhancement of entertainment and tourism promotion in South Asia. The speakers stressed that continued efforts needed to be made by the Member States at all levels to promote people-to-people contact by facilitating travel among SAARC countries, promotion of youth exchanges in culture and sports, promotion of intra-SAARC tourism, establishment of linkages among professional bodies and through adoption of other concrete measures.

Mr. Salman Javed, Former MD, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, Pakistan said that South Asia has the grand land countries with immense product diversity in the region and have possibility to attract dense multi-directional tourist traffic. He shared some statistics and informed that the World wide tourist arrival in 2008 was 922 millions and Tourist arrival into South Asia was 10.3 million. He added that tourism is the main source of foreign exchange in several countries. He said that cultural exchange programs with other countries can also be arranged in which tourist can help to boost the respective countries tourism industry. He stressed the need to devise a comprehensive strategy to make use of the rich heritage of the SAARC countries. He suggested to upgrade the SAARC CCI Tourism Council in to full fledged body for tourism, to organize the SAARC Promotional Fares, to ease the visa policy for tourist and businessmen. He also urged both the print and electronic media to play their role for promotion of tourism.

Ms. Feryal Ali Gauhar Research Scholar Cultural Heritage and Conservation Management from Pakistan highlighted in her presentation the human history and cultures phases in South Asia, she showed the pictures of Baltistan and Silk road routes mentioning the history including Buddhist pilgrims along the routes of the hanging chains or suspended crossings, Northern areas of Pakistan archaeological sites, prehistory period of hunters and gatherers (DADAM DAS), north and central Asian influence in the bronze age late 3rd and early 2nd millennium B.C., Scythian Siberian animal style art of the Sarmantians 4th century B.C., Megalithic Grave Seleharan Das (YASIN), Iranian Influence during the Achaemenid empire in 6th B.C., Indo-Scythian period, early, climax and late phase of Buddhism.

Session 6: Creating Synergies for Enhanced Regional Cooperation.

The session was chaired by Mr. M.K. Saharia, Chairman- Steering Committee on 3rd SBLC from India. Special address was given by Mr. Salman F. Rahman, Vice Chairman, Bangladesh Export Import Company & Former President SAARC CCI. The session was also addressed by Mr. Horst Ammann, Program Manager GTZ/SAARC-TIP, Nepal, Dr. René Klaff, Regional Director, FNF,(India) presented the remarks.

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Mr. Salman F. Rahman, Vice Chairman, Bangladesh Export Import Company & Former President SAARC CCI in his address said that Lack of political will to address trade, business and investment issues in South Asia still remains a major hurdle in the way of promoting the concept of regionalism. Other issues like non-tariff barriers, absence of developed infrastructure among regional countries and many more policy matters are of secondary nature or may be called artificial obstacles in the way forward. He said that no government in this region can afford to ignore the private sector, and urged business leaders to pressurise governments to strengthen regional trade, business and investment.

Mr. M K. Saharia, Chairman, 3rd SBLC Steering Committee & EC Member, SAARC CCI said that the trust deficit should be transformed into the trust surplus among the South Asian countries. "The environment of discussions and debates should be continued to change the mindset towards positivism," he said. He also offered vote of thanks to the chair, speakers, participants, sponsors, supporters and the organizers of the 3rd SBLC.

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI put forth the SAARC Business Leaders Conclave declaration that adopted the following Policy Reform Agenda with a consensus to take concrete action for promoting regional integration and growth which will be submitted to SAARC Summit scheduled in April 2010 in Bhutan. The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry will immediately begin a dialogue with policymakers to implement these reforms and will report the progress at the next SAARC Business Leaders Conclave.



Mr. M K Saharia, EC Member (India) & Chairman 3rd SBLC Steering Committee addressing at the Valicditory session "CREATING SYNERGIES FOR ENHANCED REGIONAL COOPERATION" at 3rd SBLC on 23rd Nov, 2009, Sri Lanka.

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Colombo Declaration of 3rd SAARC Business Leaders Conclave Regional Cooperation: A Catalyst for Socio-Economic Growth in South Asia November 22-23, 2009, Hilton Colombo, Sri Lanka

1. The Conclave adopted "Regional Cooperation: a catalyst for socio-economic growth of South Asian Region" as main theme of the Conclave and recommended special focus by the Governments of the SAARC Nations to take appropriate urgent measures to improve socio-economic conditions in their respective countries;
2. The Conclave deliberated on the Global Financial Crisis which has been a challenge for the region and stressed for adoption of coordinated initiatives to overcome this economic recession;
3. The Conclave recognized Food Security, Climate Change, Energy Security as the serious challenges for the Region and pledged for adoption of necessary collective measures to address these challenges and urged for urgent implementation of Regional Environment Treaty.
4. The Conclave urged for implementation of Trade Facilitation Mechanism as an urgent necessity to promote intra-regional trade and demanded for up gradation of infrastructure, cooperation in energy and liberal Visa regime;
5. Realising enormous potential in the Services Sector in the region, the business community recommends the conclusion of Services and Investment in SAFTA eventually leading to a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement for the Region;
6. To foster socio-cultural ties in South Asia, the Conclave recommends the Governments to take appropriate measures to augment cooperation in Tourism, Media and Entertainment Sector;
7. To foster the process of regional cooperation in South Asia, the Conclave urged for immediate and adequate measures for the following;
 - Harmonisation of customs procedure and mutual recognition of Standards and Certifications
 - Finalise and expeditiously implement Regional Motor Vehicle Transport Agreement.
 - Adopt open sky policy in the region – linking direct flights between capital and other major cities
 - The Conclave strongly recommends a common SAARC Energy policy for trans border transmission and trade in energy
 - The Conclave reiterated its earlier demand for easy and long term multiple entry visas to businessmen and tourists and to increase number of SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers from 100 to 300 for each member country.
 - 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 next SAARC Business Leaders Conclave will be held in Bangladesh in 2011. The SAARC Chamber of Commerce will immediately begin a dialogue with policymaker to implement above reforms and will report the progress at the next SAARC Business Leaders Conclave.

A Quick Review of 3rd SAARC BUSINESS LEADERS CONCLAVE '09



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Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI, Presenting Souvenir to Mr. Salman F. Rahman, Former President SAARC CCI.



Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI, Presenting Souvenir to Mr. Macky Hashim, Former President SAARC CCI

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Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI
Presenting Souvenir to Mr. Horst Ammann,
Program Manager GTZ/SAARC-TIP



Mr. Tariq Sayeed President SAARC CCI
Presenting Souvenir to Mr. Sultan
Ahmed Chawla, President FPCCI

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Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI, Presenting Souvenir to Mr. Kosala Wickramanayake, Former President SAARC CCI



Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI, Presenting Souvenir to Mr. Nawaz Rajabdeen, Vice President SAARC CCI



Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI presenting a souvenir to Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik for his remarkable services to SAARC CCI & 3rd SAARC Business Leaders Conclave 09.

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Hon'ble Mr. Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister, Ministry for Science and Technology, Government of Pakistan,



Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI



Mrs. Fauzia Qasim, Dr. Shela Javed Akram, President Central and North Punjab WCCI & Miss Kokab Parveen at Launching

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