



# Term Report

2010-11

SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry

[www.saarcchamber.org](http://www.saarcchamber.org)

In pursuance of my duty under Article-25-b-ix of SCCI constitution,  
I present the term report of SAARC CCI for 2010-2011.



**Muhammad Iqbal Tabish**  
Secretary General  
SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry



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Looking back to January 2010, when I assumed the office of the President of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) gives me a feeling that how rapidly time has passed. During 2010-2011, the world economy witnessed dramatic changes and robust recovery after global financial crisis. Particularly South Asian countries were able to maintain over 6% growth rate even in time of this global meltdown. The economic performance of South Asian countries particularly of India, Sri Lank, Bangladesh and Maldives remained encouraging.

To serve the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) as a representative of South Asian Business Community is always a matter of great honour and pride for any businessman in South Asia. I also felt honoured and privileged to head this Regional Apex Body on various regional and international forums.

I, appreciate my team of Vice Presidents Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed from Bangladesh, Mr. Thinly Palden Dorji from Bhutan, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney from India, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha from Nepal, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik from Pakistan and Mr. Kosala Wickramanayake from Sri Lanka for their dedicated efforts to make my tenure a great success. I also appreciate the services of my predecessor for his devoted attachment to the organization particularly by organising sizeable delegation in all the events during my tenure. It was because of the effective support of my colleagues, which helped me in keeping up the momentum and make humble endeavours to further promote the cause of the organization.

Being an avid representative of the private sector, I believe that a vibrant private sector is an indispensable factor for triggering economic dynamism, enhancing productivity, transferring and diffusing new industrial technologies, maintaining competitiveness, and contributing to entrepreneurial development and an ultimate solution to combat poverty. The role of business and industry assumes critical importance in the economic prosperity of countries as it lays the basis for a viable regional bloc in South Asia as well as an integrated world altogether. As the SAARC member countries continue their drive for economic growth, the key factor which will enable them to achieve high rates of growth and sustained high economic performance, will be a strong private sector that shares the development objectives and aspirations of the government in its journey of economic development irrespective of the political differences.

During my two year tenure, I particularly focused on effective involvement of youth and women entrepreneurs in addition to socio-cultural exchanges and Media, which I believe were quite helpful for image building of SAARC CCI. The overwhelming success of the 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave held in Nepal and Lead 2012: Youth in Rising South Asia: promises and Dreams which can be regarded as the most successful events of the history of SAARC CCI. The main objective was to create hype and give exposure to the organization and I am happy that these events fulfilled the objectives.

I once again thank my all office bearers, EC and GA members, Presidents of National Chambers and above all my Secretariat for their dedicated support and welcome the upcoming management of SAARC CCI under the leadership of Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney. I am quite certain that he would take further appropriate measures to achieve the objectives of the organization.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annisul Huq', written in a cursive style.

**ANNISUL HUQ**  
President  
SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry

## Office Bearers of SAARC CCI 2010-2011



India  
**Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney**  
 Senior Vice President



Bangladesh  
**Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed**  
 Vice President



Bhutan  
**Mr. Thinley Palden Dorji**  
 Vice President



Nepal  
**Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha**  
 Vice President



Pakistan  
**Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik**  
 Vice President



Sri Lanka  
**Mr. Kosala Wickramanayaka**  
 Vice President

## Past Presidents of SAARC CCI



Pakistan  
**Mr. Tariq Sayeed**  
 Jan 2008 - Jan 2010



Bhutan  
**Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji**  
 Mar 2006 - Dec 2007



Sri Lanka  
**Mr. Deshabandu Macky Hashim**  
 Jan 2004 - Mar 2006



Nepal  
**Mr. Padma Jyoti**  
 Jan 2002 - Jan 2004



Maldives  
**Mr. Qasim Ibrahim**  
 Jan 2000 - Jan 2002



India  
**Mr. Kantikumar R. Podar**  
 Nov 1997 - Jan 2000



Bangladesh  
**Mr. Salman F. Rahman**  
 Oct 1995 - Nov 1997



Pakistan  
**Mr. S.M. Inam**  
 Oct 1993 - Oct 1995

## Executive Summary

During the Presidency of Mr. Annisul Huq (2010-2011), the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) remained active and witnessed tremendous achievements in some targeted areas.

The SAARC CCI, under the Memorandum of Cooperation with Friedrich Naumann Foundation: Fur Die Freiheit, organized 29 activities during the period under review, including seminars, conferences and 6 Executive Committee Meetings in various member countries, as compared with 28 activities organized in the previous term i.e. 2008-2009. The major areas under focus were regional integration, Trade facilitation, Tourism promotion, socio-cultural exchanges, Media, Women entrepreneurs and Youth development during the term under review.

In addition to the customary activities, the President SAARC CCI represented the organization on regional and International Forums including meetings/ conferences organized by various International organizations like World Chambers Federation, CSABF, KOTRA, SAWTEE, FES, and visited Malaysia and France in addition to visit of South Asian countries including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. He also had the privilege to interact and meet the Prime Minister/ President of Nepal and Sri Lanka and many Government officials in South Asia countries. His participation in various events has helped in institutional linkages and promotion of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry in more profound manner.

Particular attention was given on publication of post-event reports. About 20 brief reports and one research report on Investment was published during the term 2010-2011 as compared with only 8 reports published in the previous term. These reports helped providing input to SAARC Secretariat and it is matter of pride for SAARC CCI that six of its proposals were included in the declaration of 17th SAARC Summit held in Maldives. Because of its input on policy issues, H.E. the current Secretary General SAARC appreciated the role of SAARC Chamber during her video conference on 4th SAARC Economic Summit held in Dhaka in October 2011 towards promoting regional cooperation.

It was the first time in the history of SAARC CCI, a response paper to 16th SAARC summit was presented to SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, which was acknowledged with thanks by SAARC Secretariat with remarks that it would help in developing a road map.

The SAARC CCI also formed the core academic group comprising renowned economists from the region to prepare policy papers. Realizing the importance of information technology, the website of SAARC CCI has been professionally upgraded where important information is regularly placed and upgraded. The official website of SAARC CCI now provides plentiful interesting information and linkages with our partner agencies. Further development work is in progress.

An important development was made in respect of amendment in SAARC CCI Constitution; which has many contradictory clauses. The Constitution now provides more clarity and will help in smoothing the affairs.

The under reviewed tenure (2010-2011) was the most successful in the history of SAARC CCI during which 266 businessmen were registered as the Life members against 191 registered in the previous term. During the term 2010-2011, membership from Pakistan were accounted for 168 followed by Bangladesh 77 and India 21 while Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives could not generate membership. The success is attributed to the President, Chairman Finance/Accounts Committee and Vice President, Pakistan Chapter and Bangladesh for this marvelous improvement in membership.

It is pertinent to mention here that during the last four years, the campaign for Life Membership has been remarkably successful. During the first 13 years of the establishment of SAARC CCI i.e. by January 2008, the registered members of SAARC CCI were only 210, which now have increased to 691 (300 times increase in last four years) including 438 from Pakistan followed by 192 from Bangladesh, 53 from India, 04 each from Maldives and Sri Lanka and 01 from Nepal.

This vigorous membership campaign enabled SAARC CCI to generate sizeable fund meant for construction of SAARC CCI Headquarters Building. Overall Rs. 98 million (\$ 1.12 million) were generated during 2010-2011. In terms of fund generation the term under reviewed remained the most successful era in the history of SAARC CCI.

It is worthwhile to mention here that a revolutionary increase in fund has been witnessed particularly during last three years. In January 2008, the amount available in this account head was estimated only Pak Rs. 17.2 million (\$ 0.2 million), which dramatically increased to Pak Rs. 119.6 million (\$1.32 million) by end of 2011. This indicates that the funds grew by more than 300 times per annum for last four years and the credit goes to all the SAARC team for their well coordinated efforts.



## Organizational Overview



### **Creation of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry:**

Established in 1985, SAARC had hitherto avoided including core economic issues in its programme, but in the wake of the desire for a SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the SAARC Secretariat commissioned a study on Trade, Manufactures and Services in 1988. The study was completed in 1991 and strongly supported to establish a SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry to bring about improvement in the business environment disseminate information about potential tradable goods and identify joint ventures in the SAARC region.

Pursuant to the directive of the SAARC Secretariat, SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry, assisted by the National Federations, submitted its draft constitution to the SAARC Secretariat and received its approval in December 1992. This signified the official recognition of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) by all the national governments of SAARC as the apex body of all the National Federations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of SAARC as follows:

- Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry( ACCI)
- Bangladesh Chambers 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)
- Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI)
- Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL)

Presently all National Chambers/ Federations of the respective member countries serve as focal points to facilitate the SAARC CCI Secretariat in Islamabad.

### **Recognition as an apex body of SAARC CCI:**

In recognition of the SAARC CCI's efforts and achievements, the SAARC secretariat, in April 2000, extended its recognition of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry as the apex chamber of the region for another period of 15 years, instead of a procedure to review this recognition after a period of every 2 years.

The president of the SAARC CCI is now a permanent invitee to the Committee on Economic Cooperation (CEC) of SAARC to give a presentation of the private sector's view points to the commerce secretaries of the seven nations of SAARC.

### **Headquarters of SAARC CCI:**

The constitution of SAARC CCI designates Pakistan as the Permanent Secretariat of SAARC with a Secretary General to be the Chief Executive Officer of the Secretariat. Soon after the formation of SAARC CCI Headquarters was set up in the premises of FPCCI in Karachi and later on in December 1997 was shifted to Islamabad.

### **Management & Operations:**

In October 1993, Mr. S.M Inam from Pakistan was elected as the President of the SAARC CCI. In Feb 1994, SAARC CCI was formally inaugurated in Dhaka by the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Since its establishment, the Presidency of SAARC CCI has been enjoyed by all seven founder members. Mr. Salman F Rahman of Bangladesh, Mr. Kantikumar R Podar of India, Mr. Qasim Ibrahim of Maldives, Mr. Padma Jyoti of Nepal, Mr. Macky Hashim from Sri Lanka, Dasho Ugen Tshechup Dorji from Bhutan and Mr. Tariq Sayeed from Pakistan have so far been the President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Presidency of SAARC CCI rotates amongst the member countries for a two-year term and after completing its circle, the Presidency has been once again handed over to Bangladesh. Mr. Annisul Huq, a former President of FBCCI is the incumbent President who has assumed the office since January 18, 2010.



### Organs:

The SAARC Chamber shall comprise the following organs:

- a. The General Assembly (also to be known as GA)
- b. The Executive Committee (also to be known as EC)
- c. The General Secretariat

### Membership:

The membership of SAARC CCI is as follows:

- Constituent Bodies- all Federations/National CCI
- Executive Committee Members
- Life Members- Individuals
- Associate members- leading chambers / Association other than National CCI
- Annual Members
  - 1- Corporate members
  - 2- Individuals

### Objectives:

The objectives of the "SAARC Chamber" are:

- To encourage Trade, Service, Industry, Small & Medium Enterprise, Agriculture, Intra-Regional through creating strong business linkages amongst the entrepreneurs of the region of South Asia
- To make recommendations to safeguard the economic and business interests of the SAARC
- To serve as a consultative body of the Private Sector of the region to provide input/ feed back on regional economic issues
- To encourage Member Countries to accord preferential terms of trade to each other and finally strive towards the gradual realization of the SAARC Economic and Monetary Union.
- To promote the exchange of commercial, technical, industrial management and scientific information, education and know-how amongst its members
- To collate, collect and disseminate statistical data and joint research and development among the SAARC Member Countries.

### Focused Areas:

The thrust areas for the SAARC CCI can be divided in to five major areas:

- Awareness building on key economic issues i.e. trade facilitation, NTBs, TBTs, Harmonization of Customs Procedures, intra-regional investment and such others pertaining to promote economic cooperation at the regional level
- Develop global linkages as a part of its outreach strategy
- Provide services to its members and representatives of the private sector
- Work closely with governments, NGOs, CSOs to raise the concern on socio-economic issues
- Develop an institutional framework for supporting economic cooperation

### Services:

SAARC CCI offers following services:

- Liaison with parent body to exchange views on the areas of activities
- Dissemination of data/information amongst members on socio-economic issues
- To create awareness amongst the stakeholders about economic issues in the region
- To voice concerns of the Private Sector of the region at relevant platforms
- To provide input /feedback of the Private Sector on economic and trade related issues to SAARC Secretariat for policy formulation etc.



SAARC CCI Activities  
2010-2011



### »» Change of Guard: Handover/Takeover Ceremony of SAAR CCI Presidency for term 2010-2011, 17th January, 2010 – Dhaka, Bangladesh

The SAARC CCI presidency from Pakistan has been hand over to Bangladesh in Grand Ceremony organized by FBCCI in Dhaka on 17th Jan, 2010. The grand ceremony was addressed by Chief Guest H.E. Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Federal Minister for Finance, Government of Bangladesh, Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor of State Bank of Bangladesh. Diplomats from region of South Asia including Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan & Leading businessman from all over the region attended the hand over take over ceremony followed by dinner and cultural show. Mr. Annisul Huq, a leading businessman of Bangladesh and the President of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry has taken over as the President of SAARC CCI for the term (2010-2011). Mr. Annisul Huq, while taking over the command of SAARC CCI showed a firm commitment to continue the mission of Mr. Tariq Sayeed and his team to foster economic cooperation in the region.



*Mr. Tariq Sayeed, outgoing President of SAARC CCI is handing Over SAARC CCI Flag to Mr. Annisul Huq, newly elected President of SAARC CCI at handover/takeover ceremony performed on 17th Jan, 2010 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) & Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI are also presents at the occasion.*

### »» Seminar on Regional Cooperation in South Asia: Potential for Joint Ventures and Investment, 19th January, 2010- Dhaka, Bangladesh

SAARC CCI organize one day seminar on “Regional Cooperation in South Asia: Potential for Joint Ventures and Investment” in collaboration with Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry on 19th January, 2010 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The seminar was comprised of inaugural session followed by technical session.

The inaugural session was addressed by Mr. Tariq Sayeed, immediate President SAARC CCI, Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI, Dr. S.A. Samad, Executive CEO, Board of Investment, Government of Bangladesh, Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI. The objective of the seminar was to identify Potential sectors for Joint Ventures & Investments in South Asia to promote economic cooperation in the region.

Mr. Annisul Huq, the newly elected President SAARC CCI from Bangladesh in his welcome remarks said that South Asian region has been endowed with enormous natural and human resources and formed 22% of global population, despite that size of exports was only \$242 billion, which was even less than Singapore. He said that the region should focus on value addition and the Governments of SAARC nations should provide investment friendly policies to attract FDI, which was required to take quantum leap in export and to boost the economy.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President Regional of SAARC CCI, during his key note address said that the region of South Asia has immense potential for intra-trade, industry and services, which need to be tapped through coordinated efforts at Private Sector level, however, greater political cooperation is required to

make SAFTA workable. Citing some examples of Joint Ventures established within SAARC Member nations, he said as the results of 10 Joint Ventures in area of Textiles and Garments, 20000 jobs have been created and exports of the valued added products has increased from 20% to 25%. Highlighting the importance of Investment, he said that China's radical growth (from 40th to 3rd largest economy from 1952 to 2008, was the result of FDI, which China attracted from the World.

Dr. S.A. Samad, Executive CEO, Board of Investment, Government of Bangladesh said that pooling of resources will be instrumental for promoting regional economic cooperation. He said that FDI was essential to bring about technological changes, institutional capacity building, innovation, which was required to improve overall productivity of Industrial units in South Asia. He asserted the Private Sector to focus on Joint Ventures and Investment, which would help increase trade manifold. Mr. Iqbal Tabish, SG-SAARC CCI moderated the session.



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President-SAARC CCI, delivers welcome address at the inaugural session of the conference on "Regional Cooperation in South Asia: Potential sectors for Joint Ventures and Investment" in Dhaka, on 18th August 2010. Others includes (L-R) Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh), Dr. S.A. Samad, Executive Chairman, Board of Investment, Bangladesh, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President SAARC CCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI.*

Later on in Technical Session of Seminar "Potential Sectors for Joint Ventures and Investments in South Asia", Prof. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister Nepal, Mr. Kumar Mallimaratchi, Past President, Tourist Hotel Association of Sri Lanka, Dr. Usman Mustafa, Head of Training Wing, PIDE, Pakistan made the presentation on Potential sectors for Joint Ventures and Investment within South Asia.

### » SAARC CCI Lecture Series on Regional Economic Integration: Deepening of SAFTA, 2nd March, 2010- Islamabad, Pakistan

Lecture Series on "Regional Economic Integration: Deepening of SAFTA" organized by SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry in collaboration with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) supported by Friedrich Naumann Foundation on March 2, 2010 in Islamabad.

Dr. Safdar Sohail, Director General, Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD), gave a detailed presentation highlighting the constraints which are hampering regional integration and regional trade potential. He said that SAFTA was created with much hype, but it could not produce the desired results for the Region as South Asia is still considered the least integrated region in terms of economic cooperation and trade. He stressed on the big countries of the region to play leading role in making SAFTA a successful experience as was done by France and Germany in making EU a thriving regional block. He urged upon the need for elimination of all trade barriers so that the region could benefit from a more liberal trading environment otherwise, the SAFTA could be a pessimistic venture.

Addressing to SAARC CCI Lecture Series, Dr. Rene Klaff, Regional Director, South Asia, FNF emphasized that private sector should be given enhanced role to promote regional economic integration by expanding and

deepening inter-regional and intra-regional trade and exports. He said state has no role to play in business and it should play the role of a facilitator and give more space to entrepreneurs to promote regional cooperation in South Asia. For this purpose, institutional framework should be put in place. He said market economy, economic freedom and regional integration are the best tools to promote prosperity in South Asia. He further said the world has witnessed the terrible end of communism in former USSR and other communist countries which could not to promote their private sectors and met with failure. He said India achieved outstanding economic performance by bringing in market reforms and opening its economy. He said all governments of SAARC countries should play a positive role in making SAFTA truly workable to usher in better quality of life for their people.



*(L-R) Mr. Zubair Ahmed Mail, former EC Member, SAARC CCI, Dr. Rene Klaff, Outgoing Regional Director, FNF, Dr. Safdar Sohail, Director General, Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD), Mr. Zahid Maqbool, President, Islamabad Chamber Commerce and Industry and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI*

Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Chief Coordinator of EFN Pak said lethargic attitude of governments has hampered the private sector from fully implementing SAFTA depriving 1.5 billion people of the region of new economic opportunities. He urged that leadership of South Asia should extend full support to private sector to exploit untapped trade potential in the region.

Mr. Zahid Maqbool, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry in his concluding remarks said that if we look at intra-regional trade agreements in other parts of the world, the outcome is far better than SAFTA agreement. He said South Asian governments should sit together and talk to create new economic opportunities for the benefits of both larger and smaller economies in the region while private sector should be assigned the leading role in promoting B2B contacts` in the region.

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SCCI, while moderating the lecturer added that intra-regional trade in South Asia was estimated only \$ 11 billion against the revealed potential of \$ 40 billion in 2008, indicating that Members countries failed to tap 73% potential, available and stressed for promotion of economic cooperation to exploit the untapped potential.

Dr. Bashir Ahmad, Professor & Head of Economics Department, NUML, Dr. Aliya H. Khan, Professor & Head of Economics Department, Quaid-e-Azam University responded to the lecturer said that functional linkages was imperative to transform informal channels of trade into formal, which will give boost to generation of revenue, the contribution of which to GDP was insignificant. They proposed joint initiatives both on Government and private Sector level and appreciated the role of SAARC CCI towards promoting economic activities in the region. Mr. Muhammad Shanazar, International recognized Poet from Pakistan, Award holder "Poet in Residence" (U.S.A.-2004) narrated poem on "The Real Victory" during the session.

A group of Trade and Commerce officers, obtaining training in Foreign Trade Institute of Pakistan and scholars from NUML also participated in the program. The event was attended by a large number of participants from public and private sector and academia. The stakeholders, representing academia, industry and Government officials were jointly of the opinion that elimination of all types of barriers including change of political mindset was much needed to make SAFTA workable.



»» **Seminar on Trade Facilitation in South Asia: Prospects and Challenges for Regional Integration, 3rd April, 2010 - Karachi, Pakistan**

Seminar on “Trade facilitation in South Asia: Prospects and challenges for regional integration” was organized by SAARC CCI in collaboration with FPCCI supported by Friedrich Nauman Foundation, on 3rd April, 2010 in Karachi. Mr. Zafar Mehmood, Federal Secretary, Commerce, Government of Pakistan, was chief guest of the seminar. The session was moderated by Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI. The inaugural session was followed by two technical sessions, i.e. Trade Facilitation: A propeller of Regional Economic Integration & Trade Facilitation; Addressing Challenges through compatible policy measures.



*Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI, presenting SAARC CCI official crest to Chief Guest of the Seminar Hon'ble Mr. Zafar Mahmood, Federal Secretary, Minister of Commerce, Government of Pakistan. Mr. Sultan Ahmed Chawla (Left), President, FPCCI and Dr. Ishrat Husain (Right) Dean & Director-IBA and former Governor, SBP also seen.*

The Chief Guest Mr. Zafar Mehmood, Secretary Commerce said that trade is not only instrumental to bring people close together but also made people prosperous. He said that the inflexible visa regime and in absence of trade facilitation mechanism, South Asian countries could not exploit the true potential.

Earlier Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI during his key note speech said “Harmonization of standards and procedures relating to customs, non-tariff barriers and political mindset are the major bottle-necks in trade facilitation issues in South Asia”. Referring comparative Trade analysis with other Trade blocks such as EU, NAFTA&ASEAN, he said that SAARC was the least integrated region in the world. He applauded policy measures of the Govt. of Pakistan towards South Asia and requested compatible measures from other member countries to promote intra SAARC trade.

Dr. Ishrat Hussain Dean and Director IBA and former Governor SBP while addressing to the inaugural session of seminar presented four trends in global trade while emphasizing on shift in policies for promotion of exports in Global Markets compatible to International requirements. He said that in the era of competitiveness, country need to focus on innovative measures and R&D to produce quality products and to stay competitive in the international market.

Mr. Sultan Ahmed Chawla, President FPCCI in his welcome address said that South Asia has enormous potential focusing economic integration to reduce poverty and move the region to unprecedented prosperity. The progress till date in regional integration has been limited as compared to other sub regions in Asia and elsewhere. The Intra-SAARC trade has not increased much since SAFTA has been implemented and there remain considerable tariff and no-tariff barriers within SAFTA. Trade directions of members are mostly involved in western market that incurs higher transportation cost with low profit margin.

First Working session i.e Trade Facilitation “A propeller of Regional Economic Integration” was chaired by Muhammad Ashraf Janjua, Sr. Fellow-Prof. (Eco.), Dean of IBM & For. Deputy Governor-SBP and the Presentations were made on “Harmonization of Custom Procedures and Standards” by Ms. Suwendrani Jayaratne, Research Assistant, Institute of Policy Studies-Sri Lanka, a presentation on Para Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers” by Dr. Muzaffar Ali Isani, Professor of Economics - Iqra University and another presentation on “Indo-Pakistan relations: bottlenecks & way forward” by Dr. Riaz Ahmed Shaikh, Vice Rector-Biztek-Karachi.

The 2nd session "Addressing Challenges through compatible policy measures was Chaired by Engr. M.A Jabbar, former VP-FPCCI and life Member, SAARC CCI who also gave presentation on "People to people contact and Visa Regime in South Asia". The presentation on Pakistan Policy towards South Asia was made by Mr. Mujeeb Khan-Head WTO Cell, TDAP and Mr. Faridul Hussain, Ex-Director General EPB-Government of Bangladesh presented paper on "Para Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers-Bangladesh perspective".

Some of the suggestions to augment Trade Facilitation in South Asia were put forth by speakers, which are as follows:

- Implementation of SAARC Motor Vehicle Agreement in true perspective
- Adoption of a single page document for customs clearance
- Harmonisation of Procedures and Standards regarding Customs
- Removal of Para-tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers
- Reduction of sensitive list of items from SAFTA
- Increase in number of Visa Stickers from 100 to 300 for each member states to improve people-to-people contact in the region
- Road connectivity and improvement in Transportation, Road and rail infrastructure
- Easing Visa regime particularly by India, Bangladesh and Pakistan

### » Roundtable on SAFTA: A precursor to 16th SAARC Summit Operationalizing SAFTA: Issues and Options, 28-29th April, 2010 - Kathmandu, Nepal

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) in collaboration with the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI), organized a two-day Roundtable Conference on SAFTA, supported by Freidrich Naumann Foundation on April 20-21, 2010 at Katmandu, Nepal. The Conference organized as a precursor to 16th SAARC Summit, aimed at identifying bottlenecks at various levels and to suggest policy measures for consideration of Heads of States of South Asia in 16th SAARC Summit scheduled on April 28-29, 2010. The conference comprises of inaugural session followed by four working sessions.



(LR) Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General-SAARC CCI, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Past President-SAARC CCI, Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President-FNCCI, Hon'ble Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General-SAARC, Mr. Annisul Huq, President, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President (India) and Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President (Nepal) SAARC CCI during the Inaugural session of roundtable.

The Roundtable discussed various issues like Socio-Political Obstacles in the Implementation of SAFTA and Cost of non cooperation, Impact of Para-tariff, Non-Tariff Barrier on intra-regional trade under SAFTA and creating synergies for regional cooperation in South Asia.

The Roundtable was inaugurated by Chief Guest of Conference Hon'ble Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General-SAARC. Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General-SAARC CCI offered introductory remarks and highlighted some enterprising and brighter aspect of South Asia and briefed the participants about the objectives of Roundtable on SAFTA. Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President FNCCI in his welcome address urged for undertaking appropriate and speedy measures to reap maximum benefits from SAFTA.

In key note address, Hon'ble Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General-SAARC regarded the Private Sector as engine of growth and endorsed the proposals of the leadership of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He said that intra-regional trade under SAFTA has been growing consistently from \$ 227 million in 2007 to \$ 670 million in January 2010 under SAARC rules of origin. He assured the private sector that the SAARC Secretariat would present policy recommendations of the Private Sector to Heads of States for consideration.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI in his keynote speech said that South Asian region with 23% population and enormous potential could win the World but it was unfortunate nations could not win each other. He said if Governments of South Asian Nations had the desire to achieve the objectives of SAFTA, they will have to adopt a workable mechanism and have to make binding commitments to reduce their negative lists, eliminate or substantively reduce Non-tariff Barriers and shorten the period of implementation of the tariff liberalization. He regarded sluggish approach towards implementing the decisions taken by Heads of State of South Asia as one of the main reasons for slow progress and growth of SAFTA.

Earlier Mr. Tariq Sayeed, the Immediate Past President SAARC CCI in his address demanded for greater political will to achieve the targets envisaged under SAFTA. He demanded of the Heads of States of South Asia for signing of Regional Investment Treaty and reiterated for increasing SAARC Visa Stickers from 100 to 300 for each member nation and issuance of 500-multiple Business Visas by all member nations.

Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Senior Vice President SAARC CCI (India) in his address said that signing of SAFTA had given a ray of hope in liberalization of trade in the region and need for SAFTA can not be over-emphasized: the intra- SAARC trade was insignificantly low at 5% as compared with other leading trade blocs like EU (55%), NAFTA (52%) and ASEAN (1%). He hoped that with SAFTA coming into picture the current level of trade would be doubled within three years.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shreshta, Vice President SAARC CCI from Nepal in his concluding remarks at the inaugural session said that the Heads of states should feel the need for inclusion of Private Sector in SAARC Summit and should give representation on all working groups and allied institutions of SAARC so that they could provide adequate input for policy formulations. He said that if Germany and France could put an end to their centuries long disputes in the larger interest of people of Europe, two major players in South Asia should resolve their problems, which will give maximum boost to SAFTA. He said that since Tourism Council of SAARC CCI is chaired by Nepal, FNCCI should take the lead to organize a mega event on Tourism in 2011, which is year of tourism in Nepal. He also emphasized for formation of Energy Council under chair of Nepal.

The Roundtable was addressed by scholars, academicians and Private Sector representatives from South Asia who presented their papers and held series of debates during two-days Roundtable. The prominent speakers include Dr. Zafar Mueen Nasir, Chief Researcher, Pakistan Institute of Development in Economics (PIDE-Pakistan) Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Department of International Relation, Dhaka University Bangladesh, Mr. Deshal de Mel, Research Economist at Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)anka, Mr. R. B. Rauniar – EC member SAARC CCI from Nepal & MD. Interstate Multi-Modal Transport (P) Ltd., Dr. Selim Raihan of Dept. of Economics Dhaka University, Bangladesh Mr. Mujeeb Khan, Head of Research and Analysis Directorate, TDAP, Ms. Suwendrani Jayaratne, Research Assistant IPS, Sri Lanka, Engineer M. A. Jabbar, Life Member SAARC CCI, Mr. Ashutosh Bajpai, Chairman SAARC CCI council on Trade Facilitation (India), Mr. Shafquat Haider, Chairman ICT Council of SAARC CCI, Mr. Saifuddin N. Zoomkawala Chairman EFU Life Insurance Ltd., and Mr. Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, Coordinator Hydropower Forum, Nepal.

### Policy proposals

In order to come out with policy proposals, a six member group, comprising Dr. Salim Raihan (Bangladesh), Prof. I.N.Mukherji (India), Mr. R. B. Rauniar (Nepal), Mr. Mujeeb Khan and Engr. M.A. Jabbar (Pakistan), Mr. Deshal de Mel (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, SG-SAARC CCI after reviewing proposals presented by speakers worked out key proposal as the outcome of the two-day Roundtable Conference which are as follow.

1. Increase of SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers from 100 to 500 and issuance of 500 multiple business visa, exempted from city restrictions by each member state of South Asia.
2. Since SAARC CCI is an accredited organization of SAARC, its representation should be ensured at Ministerial and Summit levels. Participation of SAARC CCI as a consultative representative of the Private

Sector in allied institutions of SAARC should also be protected.

3. Non Tariff Measures (NTMs) and Para-tariff Measures (PTMs) not notified in WTO should be prohibited.
4. It is recommended that Governments of SAARC should give effect to the implementation of already identified Multimodal Transport System at the 15th SAARC Summit held in Colombo in 2008 in the interest of promoting intra-regional trade.
5. To encourage the Governments of SAARC countries to recommend their respective trade and commerce ministries to initiate processing and expediting of considerable reduction in the list of sensitive items under SAFTA
6. Cross border trade regulations and documents should be made available online as the conducting of trade through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) will be a predictable and cost effective.
7. Up-gradation of SAFTA into a Comprehensive Economic Frame Work Agreement covering services and Regional Investment Treaty are recommended for consideration by the summit for enhancing the pace of economic integration in the interest of the region
8. Studies should be commissioned through respective trade and commerce Ministries of SAARC countries to make quantified analysis of impact on trade due to barriers (other than tariff) and the improvement of trade with gradual phasing out of barriers
9. SAARC CCI should have liaison office at SAARC Secretariat for stronger linkage between SAARC Secretariat (public sector) and the Private Sector of the region
10. It is recommended that the Governments of SAARC as policy matter should agree to allow exchange of expertise from Power, Water, Agriculture, Industry, Science and Technology to ensure sharing knowledge in the overall interest of development of economies of SAARC countries.
11. It is recommended to the Summit that Government of SAARC may pass appropriate orders/declarations as deem necessary to cover the objectives hereunder mentioned;
  - i) Ministries, dealing with water and power and environment should have coordination so that the multilateral obligations towards environment are ensured being reconciled with.
  - ii) Water scarcity and conservation; storages of water should also be made subject of critical studies so that within the cooperation of countries of SAARC, the storages should act as a water supply resources during the short water supply period. Increasing evidence of water shortages due to global climate changes are already registering the needs to prepare for adjustments and actions as would require. This becomes more imperative for the reason that one country of SAARC at upstream can hold the flood water of down stream and allows the releases during the shortages or required period for agriculture purposes. This will help a better agriculture management with the cooperation of SAARC countries and as well as make the region food secure.
12. Rules of Origin should be simple, non-restrictive, as far as practicable and should be based on value addition criteria.
13. Areas of the work programme:
  - Facilitation and liberalisation of trade and investment, including non-tariff barriers;
  - Promotion and protection of investment;
  - Regulatory issues affecting trade and investment policies;
  - Trade in services, including Modes 1, 3 and 4;
  - Information and communications technology;
  - Biotechnology;
  - Tourism;
  - Trade-related capacity building and technical cooperation;
  - Enhancing the participation of SMEs in trade and investment; and
  - Other areas of economic cooperation to be mutually agreed upon.

The Roundtable Conference on SAFTA concluded with adoption of resolution comprising above proposals by President SAARC CCI, who was chairing the session. The meeting was concluded with vote of thanks to the chair, learned speakers and the members of the Executive Committee of SAARC CCI.

### »» Conference on Regional Consultation on Tourism Potential in South Asia, 8th July, 2010 – Colombo, Sri Lanka

SAARC CCI in collaboration with FCCISL in partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation organized conference on Regional Consultation on Tourism Potential in South Asia. Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI was the Chief Guest of the conference while Mr. Shafique Alam Mehdi, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Govt. of Bangladesh was the guest of Honour. The inaugural session of the conference was followed by two technical sessions i.e Tourism in South Asia: Potential & Opportunities - country Perspective and Issues & bottlenecks in promotion of Intra-SAARC Tourism and where were addressed by prominent speakers of the region.



*(L-R) Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sharestha, Vice President (Nepal) Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President SAARC CCI, Mr. Kosala Wickramanayaka, President, FCCISL, Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI, Hon. Shafique Alam Mehdi, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Govt. of Bangladesh, Mr. Macky Hashim, Past President, SAARC CCI during inaugural session of seminar.*

Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI while addressing to Inaugural Session said that visa was the most important issue, and flexible visa regime in South Asian could be instrumental to promote Tourism in region. The governments of SAARC countries have recently recognized the need to work together to promote the sub-region as a unique Tourism destination. They have acknowledged that complementary natural endowments and cultural heritage provide an opportunity for sub-regional cooperation in tourism, which can lead to joint product development, cost-effective marketing strategies, and joint investments in tourism infrastructure development with resulting greater efficiencies.

Guest of Honour Hon. Shafique Alam Mehdi, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Govt. of Bangladesh while addressing to the inaugural session said relaxation in visa policy for journalists, businessman and actors of socio-cultural activities must be considered as a proactive move, which may helps to achieve the goal for greater people-to-people contacts. Relaxation of visa for journalists will also be a step towards confidence-building among the nations. Though there are a number of hurdles to be crossed, the 13th SAARC Summit seems to have rekindled a hope that tourism development in the region will on the right track for the benefit of millions of people in the region.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI said that Tourism stimulates economic growth both at the national and local levels and promotes the growth of the agricultural, industrial and service sectors. Tourism provides a wide range of employment opportunities easily accessible by the poor. Tourism businesses and tourists purchase goods and services directly from the poor or enterprises employing the poor. This creates opportunities for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in which the poor can participate. He stressed for relaxed visa policy to promote tourism in South Asian countries.

Earlier Mr. Kosala Wickramanaekay, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka) and President FCCISL, in his welcome address criticized to current visa policy, as one of the major hurdled in promoting intra-SAARC Tourism. He said that tourism industry employs a high proportion of women and creates micro-enterprise opportunities for them. It promotes women's mobility and provides opportunities for social networking. He



## SAARC CCI Activities 2010-2011

further added Tourism promotes the integration of isolated economies with regional and global flows of trade and investment

The extensive discussions were held during technical session of seminar on various issues, impeding the growth of Tourism promotion in South Asia, includes Security and Visa related Problem, Infrastructure & Transportation, Hotel and Hospitality Industry, Government Policies: political and bureaucratic hurdles and Policy regulations.

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI and Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Vice Chairman, SAARC CCI Council for Young Entrepreneurs Forum addressed the Conference along with prominent speakers from the region. The speakers identified the needs for corrections by Governments of SAARC to give acceleration to economic integration of the region led by Private Sector.

The conference was attended by prominent Scholars, journalist and prominent business leaders of the region. Mr. Chris Dharmakirti, COO of Strategic Enterprise Management Agency (SEMA), Mr. Shafique Alam Mehdi, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Govt. of Bangladesh, Mr. Mahendra P Lama, Vice Chancellor, Sikkim University-India, Mr. Thuji Dorji Nadik, Director (ES), Plans and Programmes, Tourism Council of Bhutan, Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Vice Chairman- SAARC CCI Young Entrepreneur Forum-Pakistan, Mr. S. Kalaiselvam, Director General, Sri Lanka Tourism Development, Dr. Saj Mendis, Director General, Investment & Tourism of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Economic Development –Colombo, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha-VP SAARC CCI and Mr. Kumar Mallimaratchi, Vice President, FCCISL and Mr. Anura Lokuhetty, President Tourism Association of Sri Lanka.

### »» Seminar on Economic Freedom in South Asia: A catalyst for socio-economic development, 3rd August, 2010 – Goa, India

Perceiving enormous benefits of Economic Freedom, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) organized a seminar under the theme of “Economic Freedom in South Asia: A catalyst for socio-economic development” in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) on 3rd August, 2010 at Goa, India.



*Mr. Annisul Huq,  
President, SAARC CCI*

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI was the Chief Guest of the Seminar and Mr. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister, Nepal graced the event as guest of honour. The inaugural session of the seminar was followed by a technical session i.e. “Economic Freedom: Socio-economic implications on South Asian Society” which was chaired by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President from Nepal.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI in his keynote address demanded of the respective Governments of South Asia to remodel their economic policies in line with roadmap provided under SAFTA and liberalize trade through elimination of Non-tariff Barriers, which were hampering the process of economic integration



in South Asia. "Since SAARC with 22% of the World population forms the biggest Economic Grouping of the World, the success of economic freedom movement in the region will help unleash its true potential" said President SAARC CCI and added that the efforts for economic liberalization in South Asia have started with the signing of SAFTA since July 2006. He hoped that the trade liberalization program to be concluded by 2016 would provide a level play field to all member states and usher them towards right direction in achieving the ultimate goal of a South Asian Economic Union.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, the Immediate Past President SAARC CCI said that the countries having high score of Economic Freedom Index (EFI) had better rating in Human Development Index (HDI), poverty alleviation, job creation, export growth, Gross Domestic product and Investment and hence contributed overall growth of Society. Presenting a brief comparison between SAARC and ASEAN countries he said that only one country of ASEAN i.e. Singapore had more exports (\$ 267 billion) as compared with all eight nations of South Asian Trade bloc with \$ 224 billion. "Maldives was the only nation falling amongst first 100 countries in HDI while none of the South Asian nations had any position in the EFI of first 100 nations. He asserted the need for undertaking compatible measures to improve Economic Freedom Index to have the multiplier effect on Socio Economic development of the society.

Mr. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister, Nepal said that the role of government in pursuing economic friendly policies was crucial. Although, the countries in South Asia have opened up economies policies, there is dire need to educate the masses about economic freedom and their socio-economic rights.

Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Pakistan), while concluding inaugural session said Economic Freedom creates positive social and economic dynamics. In economically free nations, people succeed by creating goods or services that others want to buy. He urged for coordinated efforts of the public and Private sector, Civil Society Organization, NGOs, Media and particularly educationists to promote economic freedom in Society.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Mr. Subodh Kumar, Program Executives FNF, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI and during Technical session Mr. Abdul Haque, Director FBCCI-Bangladesh, Mr. Thinley Palden Dorji – VP SAARC CCI- Bhutan, Engr. M.A.Jabbar, member FICCI-ADB Advisory Board and Life Member, SAARC CCI-Pakistan, and Dr. Athula Ranasinghe, Head of the Department, Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka made the presentations and highlighted core issues in respect of Economic Freedom related endeavors by the respective government of South Asia. The Conference was attended by large number of representative from Private sector of South Asia, Journalist, and Civil society representatives.

A set of policy recommendations was worked out at the conclusion of the Conference:

- 1) The private sector must take a lead to transform itself by shedding the 'feudal mindset'
- 2) Consciously build a new business culture in South Asia where all are empowered with ethical leadership and entrepreneurship skills and treated as equals, like brothers and sisters of the same family.
- 3) Get all nations to truly believe that it is business that actually creates national wealth and employment and not the state.
- 4) Economic bureaucracy' needs to be promoted as a tool to promote economic freedom
- 5) Awareness creation campaign should be launched to promote Economic Freedom in respective countries of the region
- 6) In addition to the Private Sector, NGOs and CSOs should also be engaged in process of promoting values relating to Economic Freedom both at national and regional levels
- 7) Misconception about Economic Freedom need to be removed by advising the Governments to remodel economic policies
- 8) Each SAARC country's national consciousness must be awakened by having constant institutionalized dialogues between religious leaders to create a spiritual environment for peace, harmony and justice.
- 9) Finally, as most of SAARC nations have promulgated the Right of Information Act, it would be advisable for the SAARC Chamber Secretariat to be engaged in the development of the South Asia Justice Index to strengthen the SAARC Social Charter.
- 10) Involvement of the Private Sector in policy-making mechanism needs to be ensured.

### » Seminar on Trade Facilitation: a catalyst for workable SAFTA, 4th August, 2010 – Goa, India

SAARC Chamber of commerce & Industry in collaboration with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry in partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation organized Seminar on Trade Facilitation on August 04, 2010 at Goa, India.

H.E. Dr. Shivinder Singh Sidhu, Governor of Goa, was the chief guest of the seminar. While addressing to the inaugural session he urged upon the respective governments in the South Asia to take adequate and compatible measures to facilitate Trade in South Asia, regarding it a crucial element for Economic well being of the region. He reiterated the need for adoption flexible visa regime to encourage and promote people to people contacts, which was vital for promotion of Economic Cooperation in the region. He ensured that he would request the Govt. of India to promote tourism through flexible visa policies.



*(L-R) Mr. Siegfried Herzog, Regional Director, FNF, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Senior Vice President, SAARC CCI, Dr. Shivinder Singh Sidhu, Hon'ble Governor of Goa, Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Cesar Menezes, President, Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Mr. Ashutosh Bajpai, Chairman, SAARC CCI Trade Facilitation Council during Inaugural session of the Seminar.*

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI in his key note speech identified core issues hindering free flow of goods and services, through tangible trade facilitation mechanism and said that without a unified and integrated trade facilitation mechanism the SAFTA would not be workable document. He regarded inflexible visa regime as a serious hurdle towards promotion of trade in South Asia. He urged upon the political leadership of South Asia to resolve such sensitive issues which are impeding the growth of the whole region.

Earlier, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Sr. Vice President, SAARC CCI in his welcome address demanded the Government of Pakistan to grant MFN status to India, which will help not only increase the level of bilateral trade but also foster the process of economic integration process.

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI in his introductory remarks said that the trade under SAFTA rule of origin was insignificantly \$ 682 million in the year 2009, which was due to absence of workable Trade facilitation mechanism” The lessons of other regional trade agreements make it clear that the hope of benefits from these agreements itself will not be realized until and unless Trade Facilitation measures are vigorously implemented”.

Mr. Ashutosh Bajpai, Chairman Trade Facilitation Council of SAARC CCI said that the council would soon formulate a strategy , suggesting policy measures to the Governments of South Asia and urged for the coordinated efforts to make SAFTA a success.

On Behalf of Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President (India) H. E Dr. Shivinder Singh Sidhu, Governor of Goa presented a mementos to Mr. Annisul Huq, president SAARC CCI and Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI for assuming the office of the Vice President of Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry respectively.

The inaugural session was followed by technical session – “Is SAFTA useless without Tangible Trade Facilita-

tion Mechanism”, Chaired by Mr. Arvind Mehta, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India and addressed by Mr. Shahabuddin, former Secretary, Govt. of Bangladesh, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shreshta, VP-SAARC CCI, Engr. M.A. Jabbar, member FICCI-ADB Advisory Board and Life Member, SAARC CCI-Pakistan, Mr. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister, Government of Nepal, Mr. Ashutosh Bajpai, Chairman-SAARC CCI Trade Facilitation Council, Mr. I K Jaiswal- EC member-SAARC CCI and Dr. Athula Ranasinghe, Head of the Department of Economics, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

### Recommendations

Based on the foregoing expert discussion, the following recommendations have been taken:

- The integration of transport, transit and communication links across the region (improvement of infrastructure)
- Concluding transit and transport agreement at bilateral and regional level.
- Embarking upon the new supply chain initiatives through the development of multimodal corridors.
- The emphasis should be on achieving inter-modal competition between road and rail transport (reducing transport costs through increased competition).
- The member countries of SAFTA need to expedite their work in trade facilitation issues and development of transport linkages.
- Improve logistics services and also focus on efficient operation of gateway port.
- Enhance Customs Reform process with focus on introduction of risk management module and development of electronic interface with the traders in lodging declaration and payment of customs duty.
- Logistics service providers are needed to enhance their capacity by training and keeping them informed of the changes taking place in international logistics business.
- Creating and making effective institutional mechanism to enhance the public/private partnership to improve transit and trading regimes.
- Framing and enacting laws on carrier's liability on road and rail movement, and marine insurance and improve the regulatory regime of inter-modal transport of goods that will help to create a sound base for promoting trade logistics.
- Promoting collaboration among the freight forwarders, transporters and business communities at the sub-regional or regional level in order to promote greater linkages and partnership in providing logistics and transport services.
- Political will to implement TF measures lacking and serious consideration required on TF in FTAs
- Pressure from stakeholders to implement TF measures – lacking.

### »» Round Up on 16th Summit, Deepening Economic Integration: Strengthening Role of Private Sector in Regional Initiatives, 30th September, 2010 – Colombo, Sri Lanka

SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized “Roundup on 16th SAARC summit” to analytically review the economic decisions of the Heads of States during Summit concluded in Bhutan recently. The conference was organized in Collaboration with Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry Sri Lanka and in Partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Mr. Rishad Bathuideen, Honorable Minister for Commerce & Industry, Govt. of Sri Lanka was the Chief Guest of the Conference. The conference convenes with introductory remarks of Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI. Mr. Kosala Wikramnayake the Welcome address.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI during his key note address said that South Asia is not acting sufficiently fast because they are engaged in more polemics than the real business. Many regional trade blocks in other continents are on the way of total economic integration following the path of European Union. Therefore, SAARC countries need to move fast because the world is progressing faster. "SAARC countries should wind up 2010 with a vow to make 2011 a year of SAARC Chamber making more effective and meaningful contribution to carry forward the SAFTA process as the important first step towards South Asian Economic Union.

He further added that South Asia's private sector today lays great emphasis on physical connectivity, people to people, socio cultural, telecom and IT and infrastructure connectivity.



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI presenting SAARC CCI Official crest to Chief Guest, Hon'ble Ishad Badiudeen, Minister of Industry & Commerce, Government of Sri Lanka*

The political leadership should take adequate measures to implement SAARC multi-modal transport agreement including railway and motor vehicle agreement in a phased manner. He insisted the importance of improving cross border physical infrastructure and freedom of movement across borders through the adoption of a flexible visa regime.

Meanwhile, the Chief Guest of seminar Mr. Rishad Bathuideen, Honable Minister for Commerce and Industry, Govt. of Sri Lanka said that trade in the SAARC region accounts for 5pc of total trade in the region whereas in other regions in the EU intra trade accounts for 55pc, NAFTA 52pc and ASEAN 22pc. However, the Minister he was optimistic about SAARC's future. He further added that we reap the benefits of any agreements made between member countries in order to compete with other regions in the world. He was confident that the region will be integrated further into a wider economic union as envisaged”.

The inaugural session was followed by three technical sessions which were addressed by prominent speakers from the region including Dr. Abdur Rob Khan, Professor, North South University, from Bangladesh, Mr. Macky Hashim, Past President SAARC CCI, Mr. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister, Nepal, Dr. Saman Kalegama, Executive Director, IPS- Sri Lanka, Mr. Abdur Rob Khan, Associate Professor, International Relations, North South University, Bangladesh, Mr. Mujeeb Ahmed Khan, Head WTO Wing, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, Dr. Thusitha Tennakoon, Secretary General, FCCISL, Dr. Nawal K Paswan, Asst. Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-India, Dr. Saj Mendis, Director General, Ministry of Economic Development, Sri Lanka, Mr. Abdul Wassay Haqiqi, Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Economy, Professor-American University of Afghanistan, Lecturer & VC-Bakhter University-Afghanistan, Mr. G. Senadhira, Director General, Dept. of Commerce, Sri Lanka, Mr. Tilak Collure, Secretary, Ministry of Industry & Commerce, Government of Sri Lanka, Mr. Tilak Collure, Secretary, Ministry of Industry & Commerce, Government of Sri Lanka, Mr. Mujeeb Ahmed Khan, Head WTO Wing, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, Mr. Deshal deMel, Research Officer, IPS - Sri Lanka, Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Snr. Executive Guard Group & Chairman SYEF -Pakistan Mr. Kumar Mallimaratchi, Vice President, FCCISL.

The experts suggested the following suggestion during the conference for workable SAFTA.

### **Recommendations for workable SAFTA**

- Tariff Liberalisation in goods - Fast track for key tariff lines of trade interest in the region
- Binding commitment for the removal of NTBs & implementation and S&DT for LDCs required
- Ceiling of 20% of tariff lines (Non-LDCs) should be cut down annually
- Identify a few key trade facilitating measures and implement these with binding commitments
- Common sub-sector approach to encourage commitments in trade in services
- identify a few key measures producing tangible results in the short run

- 1) Simplify, improve transparency and where possible harmonize customs operation
- 2) Transit simplification
- 3) Standards Harmonization

- Establishes a framework for liberalizing and promoting trade in services in accordance with Article V of the GATS.
- Negotiations for schedule of specific commitments shall take place keeping in view the national policy objectives, the level of development and the size of economies of Contracting States both overall and in individual sectors.
- Progressive liberalization of trade in services with broad-based and deeper coverage of majority of services sectors/sub-sectors.
- Special and Differential treatment for LDCs should be introduced
- Increasing contacts and interactions between the peoples of our region are an important aspect of the SAARC process and must receive the encouragement of Governments through more flexible Visa regime. Our specific proposal in this regard is increase in SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers from 100 to 500 and issuance of 500 multiple visa, exempted from city restrictions by each member state of South Asia
- An efficient trade facilitation mechanism based on harmonization of Standards and Procedures should be implemented. We reiterate the need for Open sky policy, single mobile phone SIM for the region, improvement in infrastructure
- Governments of SAARC should give effect to the implementation of already identified Multimodal transport system at the 15th SAARC Summit held in Colombo in 2008 in the interest of promoting intra-regional trade.
- There is need to enhance cooperation from Production to Trade level through establishing Joint Marketing Strategy/Network to boost trade and investment cooperation between both countries.
- Synergize Partnership especially at the level of business Enterprises for forging trade and investment linkages to realize existing potential.
- The inclusion of services in SAFTA has though broadened its sphere, which will augment economic cooperation manifold, there is need for upgradation of SAFTA into a Comprehensive Economic Framework Agreement covering Regional Investment Treaty.

### SAARC – Services Sector Potential

- It contributes more than 50% of GDP growth in South Asia.
- Employs around 35% of its population in the organized sector.
- South Asian countries are more competitive in different categories of services;
  - Pakistan and Sri Lanka in transport.
  - India in computer and information services.
  - Maldives and Nepal in travel services.
  - Bangladesh in financial services, and;
  - India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in communication services.
- Sectors like telecommunication, transport and financial services attract around 50% of the total FDI into the services sector.
- Services like BPO, outsourcing and professional services have grown steadily from the region.
- India accounts for the largest share of trade in services, followed by Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- Computer and Information services now account for the bulk of exports of services from South Asia.

### »» SAARC CCI Lecture: Importance of Free Trade in Regional Economic Cooperation, 26th October, 2010 – Islamabad, Pakistan

SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized a Lecture on “Importance of Free Trade in strengthening regional cooperation in South Asia” in collaboration with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry at Islamabad on 26th October, 2010.

Mr. Siegfried Hezog, Regional Director of Friedrich Neumann Stiftung and economist from Germany delivered lecture on the importance of Free Trade in Regional economic Cooperation and highlighted various aspects of Free Trade and urged for creating synergies to achieve the goals of free trade. He highlighted the rationale for free trade and mentioned that free trade is not a zero sum game as perceived by many who oppose it. In fact, free trade provides synergies to expand the volume of trade and its derived benefits. He appreciated the role of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry for prompting economic cooperation in South Asia and voicing the concerns of South Asian Business community in true perspective.



Earlier Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, in his introductory remarks said that though the success of leading trade blocs like NAFTA, EU, ASEAN and COMESA have given momentum to other Free Trade Agreements, the pace of development of SAARC was slow because of the presence of long list of negative items, small economies misperceptions, and hidden barriers, which were impeding to trade in South Asia. He said that although the volume of intra-SAARC Trade was estimated \$ 16 billion in 2009, the share of trade under SAFTA rule of origin was only \$ 682 million, which was insignificant.

Mr. Mahfooz Elahi, President ICCI while emphasizing on the importance of movement of labour and capital said that the benefits of Free Trade were enormous, however, coordinated efforts and flexible Visa regime was required to achieve them. He further added that the restrictive trade policies and hindrances of the factor of production in general and mobility of labour in particular are responsible for the division of World between the masters and the slaves. Removal of protectionist policies will have to be ensured if promotion of Free Trade was required



*(L-R) Mr. Muhammad Tauseef Zaman, Vice President, ICCI, Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Member Technical Committee of SAARC CCI Building, Mr. Siegfried Hezog, Regional Director, FNF, SAARC CCI, Mr. Mahfooz Elahi, President, ICCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI & Mian Akram Farid, Incharge FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad.*

Dr. Ayub Mehar while responding to the lecture discussed factors and consequences of free trade in the South Asian Paradigm. He was of the opinion that free trade requires free mobilization of the factors of production including capital, labor, entrepreneurship and land' though physical mobility of land is not possible its benefits are always transferable. The most problematic area is the mobility of labor where several hindrances are working against the free mobility of labor. He indicated that such restriction will divide the each country in two parts: masters and slavers.

The other respondent Miss. Faiqa Umer, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad said that unfortunately, it was coincidence that several unpredictable hindrances have been observed in the migration of people at the time of trade. These protectionist policies, growing terrorism, clashes between the cultural and ethnic group, an uneven living standards are included in those hurdles.

The session was concluded by Mr. Zubair Malik who highlighted the points raised and discussed by the participants. He regarded mind set of political leaders as the serious impediment and demanded for positive change.

Ms. Birgit Lamn, Director International Academy for Leadership Germany also graced the occasion. The Lecture was attended by journalists, core diplomats, and prominent businessmen of Pakistan.



### » SAARC CCI Institutional Capacity Building Workshop, 10th November, 2010 – Kathmandu, Nepal

The Institutional Capacity Building Workshop 2010” of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry was organized in collaboration with FNCCI and partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation on 10th November, 2010 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The workshop was organized with objective to create greater network and to enhance the role of officials of the National Chambers of SAARC member states for promoting intra-regional economic cooperation.

The workshop was jointly moderated by Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI and Mr. Subodh Kumar, Executive Programs, In addition to Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General, SAARC CCI and other officials who attended the workshop included Mr. Waliur Rehman, Assistant Secretary FBCCI, Miss



*L-R) Mr. Mahmood Habib Mir, Chief Accountant, SAARC CCI, Mr. Pritam Kumar, Executives Accounts, FNF, Mr. Waliur Rehman, Assistant Secretary FBCCI, Ms. Ranjani Tudugala, Head South Asian Division & International Affairs at FCCISL, Mr. Subodh Kumar, Programmes Executives, FNF, Miss Shivani Bansal, Assistant Secretary FICCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Miss Sonam Cheki, Assistant Secretary BCCI, Syed.Nasir Ali Mirza, Manager Business Development FPCCI, Mr. Ratish Basniyat, Deputy Director, FNCCI and Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General, SAARC CCI.*

Sonam Cheki, Assistant Secretary BCCI, Miss Shivani Bansal, Assistant Secretary FICCI, Mr. Ratish Basniyat, Assistant Secretary FNCCI, Syed Nasir Ali Mirza, Manager Business Development FPCCI and Ms. Ranjani Tudugala, Head South Asian Division & International Affairs at FCCISL.

The workshop was commenced with welcome remarks of Deputy Director & Incharge SAARC Desk, FNCCI. The Secretary General, SAARC CCI thanked the participants for their support towards promotion of SAARC CCI events in their respective countries. He reiterated the need for improvement in response of national chambers with respect to nominations of members on various Councils constituted under the aegis of SAARC CCI. He also requested the in-charge SAARC Desks to regularly forward the activities of their chambers for inclusion in SAARC Biz and provision of economic data from their respective countries.

Executive Programs, FNF briefly presented the institutional capacity-building program and expressed satisfaction over the achievement of targets envisaged under the Workshop held in Colombo on 26th August 2008. He also requested the in-charge SAARC Desks to keep regular liaison with.

In-charge SAARC CCI desks and representatives of all national chambers made the presentations on working of their respective chambers/federations. They rendered valuable suggestions to improve the coordination between their chambers and SAARC CCI.

Mr. Pritam Kumar, Account Executive, FNF gave a brief presentation on FNF accounting guidelines, which created better understanding about the procedures required by FNF from SAARC CCI and other national chambers. The meeting was concluded with the consensus that the findings of the session shall be placed before upcoming EC meeting for implementation.

### » SAARC CCI 1st Young Entrepreneurs Forum: vision 2020, 11th November, 2010 – Kathmandu, Nepal

As one of the strategic initiatives, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) organized the 1st Young Entrepreneur Forum: vision 2020 in collaboration with the Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs Forum and the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation, at Kathmandu, Nepal, on 11th November, 2010.

The core objective of the forum was to bring together young business leaders so as to groom them to be the next generation of business leaders for South Asia and to identify their role in the formation of south Asian future business community.



*Group photo taken at SAARC CCI 1st Young Entrepreneurs Forum*

Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President, FNCCI, who was the Chief Guest, delivered a key not speech at conference, which was attended by over 100 young entrepreneurs from the region. The Inaugural session was followed by two working sessions wherein experts and the young Business Leaders from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka shred their views in context of their respective countries.

The conference commenced with lighting of oil lamp by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) followed by introductory remarks of Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI in which he highlighted the objectives of the Conference and said that SAARC CCI intended to enable its members, who were amongst the most successful in South Asia, to hone their leadership and strategic business skills, and to gain broad perspectives beyond company and industry concerns. He added that about 75% of young enterprises in South Asia were either 2nd or 3rd generation of business community, while only 25% were new entrants. On account of allied problems, the inclination of youth in South Asia was focused on developing managerial skills instead of entrepreneurial skill. He reiterated for the need of providing business friendly environment to unleash the true potential of Young Entrepreneurs.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) in his welcome remarks said that the last SAARC summit in Thimpu has declared 2010-2020 'the Decade of intra-regional connectivity in SAARC' to further boost economic cooperation in South Asia and urged upon the need for finding ways and means to collectively exploit all available resources not only for business but also to make individuals and economies competitive globally. "Without the collective approach, competing with the world at large will be extremely

difficult,” he added and urged for coordinated efforts.

Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Chairman of SYEF in his keynote address said that the youth have the ability to transform the present challenges into opportunities provided the SAARC member states offer business friendly environment and contribute towards promotion of young entrepreneurs as a priority agenda. He underscored the need for futuristic plan for promotion of SYEF.

The Chief guest of the conference Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) in his keynote address said that despite geographic advantages of contiguity, proximity and familiarity, regional cooperation and integration, full liberalization and economic integration have not taken off because of ‘the burden of history’ in the region.

Mr. Subodh Kumar, Program Executives, FNF and Mr. Anuj Kumar Shrestha, President, Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs Forum during his concluding remarks emphasized for proactive role of youth in investment promotion and the intra-regional trade in South Asia and hoped that the forum would be successful in bring the future community closer together which will help achieve objectives envisaged under SAFTA.

The first working Session “Youth Entrepreneurship in South Asia: Experience Sharing” was chaired by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal). Speakers Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, Vice Chairman-SYEF (Nepal), Mr. Amandeep S. Sahney, Vice Chairman, SYEF (India), Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bader, Vice Chairman, SYEF (Pakistan) and Mr. Sanjaya Jayaratne, Vice Chairman, SYEF (Sri Lanka) made the presentations during the session.

The second working session on “Prospects of Youth Entrepreneurship in South Asia” was chaired by Mr. Padma Jyoti, Past President SAARC CCI. Mr. Sujeev Shakya, Prominent Economic Analyst and Management Consultant from Nepal and Mr. Anil Chitrakar, Social Entrepreneur, Ashoka Fellow made the presentation. Two working papers -Youth Entrepreneurship in South Asia: Experience Sharing and Importance of Youth Entrepreneurship in South Asia -were also presented during the conference, where the participants from all the SAARC member countries except Bhutan and Afghanistan took part.

In last & final session SYEF Meeting was conducted which was participated by Chairman, all vice chairmen and members of NYEF who were briefed by Secretary General SAARC CCI about the objectives of the Forum. The participants worked out as a road map to activate SYEF and expressed firm commitment to transform South Asia into an economically vibrant region and leader of the global economy through shared-vision and collaborative efforts.

The SAARC Young Entrepreneurs Forum was launched on November 24, 2009 to share ideas amongst youth of the region and bring together the like-minded young entrepreneurs to one platform and work collectively for the socio-economic development of the region.

### »» 25th SAARC Charter Day, 8th December, 2010 – Islamabad, Pakistan

To commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation ( SAARC), the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized a seminar under the theme of Intra-Regional connectivity in South Asia: Challenges & Prospects” in Islamabad on 8th December, 2010.

The seminar was inaugurated by Chief Guest H.E Mr. Sharat Sabharwal, Indian High Commissioner, while Mr. Jahangir Bader, Secretary General, Pakistan People’s Party was invited as Guest of Honour. Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President (Pakistan) SAARC CCI, in his welcome address said that lack of political commitment, protectionists policies, non-resolution of issues have been regarded as the main hurdles in the process of development of South Asia despite the fact that all member states of SAARC have been making endeavors for enhancing cooperation at socio-economic level, however earnest commitment to resolve political issues is drastically required to achieve the objective of SAFTA.

Chief Guest of the event H. E Mr. Sharat Sabharwal, Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan in his key note address that the SAARC had started cooperation in many important areas. He mentioned in particular the



*Cake Cutting Ceremony on 25th SAARC Silver Jubilee Celebrations. Mr. Sharat Sabharwal, Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Jahangir Bader, Secretary General, Pakistan People's Party, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI, Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Mr. Rehmat Ullah Javed, Mr. Durga Parsad Bhandari, Deputy High Commissioner, High Commission of Nepal.*

SAARC development fund, Food Bank, SAFTA & South Asian University as a few examples. He further added that to facilitate connectivity among SAARC countries India proposed to develop 13 integrated check posts at its border with different SAARC countries at a cost of 6.35 billion Indian Rupees. He mentioned that India has participated actively and with a positive attitude in the celebrations of SAARC member countries to develop intra-regional connectivity through the Indian Territory.

Guest of honor of the event, Mr. Jhangir Bader, Secretary General, Pakistan Peoples Party, in his speech said that SAARC has every potential to grow. It form one fifth of the world market and offers enormous opportunities for economic cooperation. He further added that the broader mandate of SAFTA after the inclusion of services provides excellent opportunity to business community of South Asia in the areas of education, health, tourism, transportation, banking & finance. He also proposed the idea of common currency for South Asian countries.

Earlier Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI, in his introductory remarks said that SAARC as the organization was not a failure rather; it is sluggish on account of the political mindset, which is the biggest impediment to the growth of South Asia. He urged upon the people to people connectivity, infrastructure development, and connectivity through telecommunication, air, road, sea and land to achieve the objectives envisaged under SAFTA.

Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Former EC Member, SAARC CCI, while concluding the inaugural session said that the Governments of South Asia will have to demonstrate greater political will to make SAARC a successful organization.

Working session of the seminar was chaired by Dr. Safdar Sohail, DG- Ministry of Commerce while Dr. Zafar Mueen Nasar, Chief of Research at PIDE (Islamabad) delivered lecture on "Intra-regional Connectivity in South Asia" and highlighted the Challenges and prospects for SAARC. Mr. Rehamatullah Javed Vice Chairman of SAARC CCI Trade Facilitation Council responded the lecture. Some valuable suggestions and recommendations for policy making were discussed by the distinguished speakers at the occasion representing SAARC Countries including Mr. Durga Parasad Bhandari, Deputy High Commissioner, Royal Embassy of Nepal, Dr. Muhammad Pervaz, Program Leader, Technology Transfer and Mr. Shahzada Khalid, Deputy Director at SAARC Energy Centre, and the vote of thanks was extended to the respected delegates and participants by Mr. Shahrulk Mailk, Chairman of SAARC CCI Young Entrepreneur Forum.

The seminar was widely attended by the senior diplomats from SAARC member and observer countries in Pakistan including Mr. Afrasiab, Director General South Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Govt. of Pakistan, H.E Mr. Suhrab Hossain, High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Pakistan, CEOs/Presidents of SAARC affiliated institutions, business leaders, academic experts, professionals and civil society representatives etc. who met and shared their views to make SAARC a prosperous region.



### »» Regional Integration through Tourism Promotion in South Asia, 12th January, 2011 - Kathmandu, Nepal

To express solidarity with Government and the people of Nepal on the occasion of Country's Tourism year 2011, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) organized a special session on tourism under the theme "Regional Integration through Tourism Promotion in South Asia" which was inaugurated by Mr. Sarat Singh Bhandari, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism of Nepal. The session was also graced with the presence of Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Quader, Hon'ble Minister for Aviation and Tourism, Bangladesh and Mr. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Hon'ble Minister for Economic Affairs, Bhutan and H.E. Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General, SAARC.



*Mrs. Pramila Acharya Rijal, incoming Chairperson of SCWEC, Mrs.V.L. Indira Dutt, out going chairperson of SCWEC, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal), Mr. Ghulam M Qadir, Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism-Bangladesh, Hon'able Minister Mr. Khandu Wangchuk, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Bhutan, Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI, Hon'able Sarat Singh Bhandari, Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Officiating President, FNCCI, Dr. Sheel Kant Sherma, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Mr. Seigfried Herzog, Regional Director, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, H.E Syed Abrar Hussain, Pakistani High Commissioner in Nepal.*

The session was organized in collaboration with the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI) supported by Friedrich Nuamann Foundation: fur die Freiheit, New Delhi India. Mr. Suraj Vaidya, officiating President of FNCCI and Chairman SAARC CCI Council on Tourism chaired the session, which was moderated by Secretary General, SAARC CCI Mr. Iqbal Tabish and concluded by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI from Nepal.

Mr. Annisul Huq in his welcome address urged upon the leadership of South Asia to pursue a flexible visa regime regarding it as a fundamental requirement for promotion of tourism in the region. Citing the tourism inflow and revenue generation thorough Tourism in France, EU and ASEAN Nations, he said that the region could fetch only 1% of the total revenue through Tourism despite having enormous potential.

H.E. Secretary General SAARC in his address said that Regional tourism had the enormous potential to integrate South Asia as it had multifarious impact particularly social amalgamation and economic benefits were the immediate effects which were drastically required for regional integration of South Asia.

Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Quader, Hon'ble Minister for Aviation and Tourism, Bangladesh said that the Government has been taking proactive measures to promote tourism including infrastructure development in the member nations. He was of the opinion that by developing roads and rails the region could be physically integrated. In this respect he identified number of areas where complementarities for economic cooperation existed.

Mr. Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Hon'ble Minister for Economic Affairs, Bhutan while expressing his view said that the Government of Bhutan was determined to promote tourism while ensuring the beauty of the nature and green environment. He said that mountainous Bhutan offered unique opportunities for investment in many other areas including Tourism.

Chief Guest, Mr. Sarat Singh Bhandari, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism of Nepal said that Nepal was like a compact disc which had all the software of Tourism promotion as the country had the highest and the lowest point of the World and its multi-cultural environment had a lot of attraction for regional and international tourists. He was of the opinion that all the countries of South Asia had unique cultural and religious heritage which provided enormous complementarities to bring nations closer together.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President SAARC CCI said that it was imperative for regional integration to promote Tourism as it was one of the few powerful weapons which could win hearts through noble value, courtesy and hospitality services. Since the arrival of tourists in Nepal is growing gradually, the country was in a position to offer investment in allied industries and services.

While concluding the session, Mr. Suraj Vaidya said that the Governments in South Asia need to make earnest efforts to promote tourism. He demanded of the leadership of SAARC member nations to relax visa regime to maximize interaction of the people in the region and construct infrastructure to minimize the cost of traveling, which on account of non-availability of direct air and land-routes was higher as compared with other regions. He urged upon the need to adopt open sky policy and mobility of the tourists.

The session was attended by Government representatives and diplomats of South Asia regions particularly H.E. Syed Abrar Hussain, Pakistan Ambassador in Nepal, H.E. Thosapala Hewage, Sri Lankan Ambassador, Mr. Ahmed Saleh, permanent Secretary, Government of Maldives, SAARC Directors and government officials. Later on SAARC CCI hosted dinner in their honour and the session was concluded with vote of thanks to the chair and the guest by Secretary General SAARC CCI.

### » SAARC CCI Interaction with Afghanistan Parliamentarians, 31st March, 2011 – Islamabad, Pakistan

A 30-member group of Afghan parliamentarians led by Syed Ishaq Jilani was invited to an exclusive dinner meeting hosted here by Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice-President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the PPP Senator Jahangir Bader.



*Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI is presenting SAARC CCI official Crest to Syed Ishaq Jilani, Member Parliament, Government of Afghanistan. The other seen in the picture includes (L-R) Senator Ghulam Ali, President FPCCI, Sheikh Imtiaz, President Jhelum CCI, Mr. Adnan Jali, EC Member, SAARC CCI, Mr. Fazal Elahi, VP-FPCCI, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI, Senator Jahangir Bader, Mian Akram Fareed & Mr. Hamayun Sayeed.*

Afghan parliamentarians have offered Pakistani business community to invest in the reconstruction phase of Afghanistan and extend technical assistance in the areas of mutual interest to enhance economic cooperation.

Engr Abdul Ghaffar, Afghan MP said that the Pakistan had always helped Afghanistan in the time of need, particularly providing shelter to the Afghan refugees. He observed that the effective implementation of the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement would help promote economic cooperation between two countries.



Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Vice Chairman, Confederation of Asia Pacific Chamber of Commerce and Industry assured the delegates that Pakistan's private sector would request their government for implementing the ATTA in letter and spirit, which would ultimately channelise legal trade. He also requested the MPs to integrate Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry as a member of SAARC chamber.

Mr. Iftikhar Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI said that Afghanistan had been serving as one of the oldest trade routes connecting Central Asia with Persia and South Asia. Both countries have since long been enjoying amicable relations and the Afghanistan affiliation with Saarc chamber would help in economic development of the country.

Another Afghan MP Ms Hella Arshad thanked the business community of Pakistan and the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry for hosting the delegation.

Senator Ghulam Ali, President, FPCCI stressed the need for enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and requested the Kabul government to also involve Pakistani enterprises in reconstruction phase of the country. The bilateral trade between two countries is estimated at \$1.3 billion and the balance is in favour of Pakistan with exports at \$1.2 billion.

The dinner was attended by more than 50 prominent business leaders and the senior government officials.

### »» Pak-India Economic Dialogue; The 5th Round of Commerce Secretary Talks- a ray of hope for greater cooperation, 27-28th April, 2011 – Islamabad, Pakistan

The 5th round of India-Pakistan Commerce Secretary level talk was held on April 27-28 2011 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Private sectors in India and Pakistan in particular and South Asia in general termed the talks as a "welcome initiative" and hoped that the bilateral economic cooperation between two countries shall help foster the process of regional economic integration.



*Honable Makhdoom Muhammad Ameen Faheem, Federal Minister for Commerce, govt of Pakistan shaking hands with Mr. Rahul Khullar, Indian Commerce Secretary at a dinner hosted by Ministry of Commerce (Pakistan). (L-R) The others seen in pictures includes H.E Mr. Sharat Sabharwal, High Commission of India to Pakistan, Senator Ghulam Ali, President-FPCCI, Mr.Tariq Sayeed, Vice President, CACCI and Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI.*

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI and the office bearers regarded these talks as a positive move to bring peace, harmony and promotion of economic cooperation in the region.

In his reaction from India Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr Vice President SAARC CCI termed the 5th Round of Secretary Commerce talks as "welcome initiative," and said that the dialogue was the only way forward to promote bilateral economic cooperation, the present volume of trade was quite low as compared with the potential available.

Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Pakistan) appreciated India's proposal to fulfill energy needs in Pakistan. He said that both Governments should take compatible steps to build the confidence of businessmen.

Hon'ble Makhdoom Muhammad Ameen Faheem, Federal Minister for Commerce, Govt. of Pakistani and Indian High commission hosted the dinner in honour of Mr. Rahul Khullar, Indian Commerce Secretary, which was attended by the Private Sector of Pakistan including the leadership of SAARC CCI (Pakistan Chapter)

H.E. Mr. Sharat Sabharwal, High Commission of India to Pakistan assisted Mr. Rahul Khullar while Mr. Zafar Mehmood, Secretary Commerce, Government of Pakistan was assisted by Mr. Shahid Malik.

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry presented a position paper on harnessing economic cooperation between India and Pakistan and suggested both short and medium terms proposals to bring two nations closer together.

During the talks, both sides were agreed on several issues like trade facilitation measures, removal/reduction in NTBs, infrastructure development, integrated check-post at Wagha-Attari Border, exchange of data for harmonization of Customs procedures, cooperation in energy trade, ICT, opening of banks in each other countries, formation of Joint Working Group for developing a plan for liberal Visa regime particularly for Business Visa, which has been the long-standing demand of FICCI, FPCCI and SAARC CCI.

### »» Besakhi Celebration: Paigam Mohabattan De!, 24th April, 2011 – Delhi, India

The World Punjabi Organization (WPO-India) under the leadership of Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President SAARC CCI & organized Baisakhai Festival under the theme "Paigam Mohabatain De" ( Message of Love) to express love, peace and harmony. The WPO, India warmly welcomed the WPO delegation led by Pakistan Chapter's President Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik who is another Vice President of SAARC CCI (Pakistan).

The mega Baisakhi event was organized on 24th April, 2011 in outskirts of the capital Delhi. The evening enchanted the attendees with its captivating musical performances. As singer Ms. Nooran Laal, Mr. Pram Bhattia belted out soothing music in her blissful voice. The musical evening was followed by a mega dinner.



*Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bader, Vice Chairman, SCYEF, Mr. Hameed Akhter Chadda, GA Member, SAARC CCI and Mr. Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairmain, Media & Protocol-FPCCI.*

Sharing his thoughts Mr. Malik said that we are here ( in India) to spread the message of peace and love and our presence here reflects that despite political differences, social contacts are stronger and have own values and impact to deepen their relationship. He added that this visit was an opportunity to meet old pals in India who have a desire for integration of youth in their centuries old relationships.

Mr. Sahney welcomed all the delegation from Pakistan and stressed that such initiatives should continuously be carried out across the borders. He said that People of both Punjabs - that in India and Pakistan, are even more special as they share a unique bond of common mother tongue Punjabi. The Sufi singer encouraged

the Punjabis to keep their mother tongue alive. Punjabi is such a beautiful language. Unfortunately, our younger generations are moving away from it.

Mr. Zulfikar Bader, Vice Chairman, SAARC Chambers Young Entrepreneurs Forum while conveying the message to the Young Punjabi generation said that mother tongue was the adhesive force, which has its own impact and can not be forgotten as an excuse to become global. He also narrates few phrases from the poem of famous Sufi Poet Waris Shah. He added that the love and hospitality that our Indian brothers confer to us is a source of motivation for sustained relations.

SAARC CCI perceives Baisakhi Festival and such other initiatives as a sub-regional social initiative, and a strong message to the politicians & the Governments of the both countries that improved social contacts and cultural exchanges could give momentum to socio-economic relations and help regional integration in South Asia.

The WPO 40 member delegation from Pakistan was included leading Businessman & artists from Pakistan. The prominent members among delegation included Mr. Jamil Mehboob Magoon, Former Snr. Vice President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bader, Vice Chairman, SYEF (Pakistan), Mrs. Ayesha Zaheer, Vice Chairperson, SCWEC (Pakistan), Mr. Aftab Barlas, Former Vice President-FPCCI, Mr. Hammed Akhter Chadda, Former Vice President-FPCCI, Mr. Sohail Hussain Malik, Chairman, Media & Public Relations-FPCCI, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Mrs. Nooran Laal, Singer, Miss Arina Khan, Artist and Mr. Ghulam Ali, Singer.

### »» Seminar on Economic Freedom & Business Environment, 18th May, 2011 – Dhaka, Bangladesh

A one day seminar on “Economic Freedom & Business Environment” was organized by SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry in collaboration with Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry and Friedrich Naumann Foundation, on May 18th, 2011 at Dhaka. Hon’ble Muhammad Farrukh Khan, Minister of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, was the Chief Guest.



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI welcomes Hon’able Muhammad Farrukh Khan, Minister of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh. (L-R) Mr. A K Azad, President Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI) & Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) also seen.*

The seminar aimed at encouraging individual and institutional liberty in the economic sphere, leading to both human development and economic growth through enhanced economic cooperation amongst the member states of the SAARC. Economic freedom and development go hand in hand to help reduce poverty under a free economic order, which is much needed for the region of South Asia- one of the regions with poor economic freedom index.

The seminar discussed various issues like role of Economic Freedom in Legal Structure, Safeguarding Intellectual Property Rights, Regulation of Credit, Labor, and Business Environment- country perspective.

Hon’ble Muhammad Farrukh Khan, Minister of Commerce in his inaugural address said that political

freedom was a pre requisite for exploiting economic potential of South Asia in true perspective. Further, promotion of economic freedom in the region also required involvement of stake holders in policy making process. He lamented that the politicians had failed to implement liberal policies in their respective countries. In his opinion, regional connectivity was essential for remodeling of policies in line with current Global economic scenario. The efforts for promoting economic freedom in South Asian countries are scarce; he stated and added that results in this regard were visible in terms of higher poverty rate, poor human development index, and more dependence on foreign aid. He firmly believed that SAARC needed inward looking policies to promote intra regional trends. Earlier, Mr. A. K Azad, President FBCCI in his welcome address, urged upon the governments of South Asian countries to remove NBT's and promote regional connectivity through improved infrastructure and visa liberal regime. In this connection, he argued that issuance of only 100 SAARC Visa Stickers (SVES) for approximately 3.0 million medium and large sized businessmen were insignificant. He demanded for increase in SVES to 500 for each member countries.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI in his key note speech also emphasized for increase in SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers and demanded for futuristic policies to improve business environment in the region to unleash the true economic potential. So far as business community is concerned, it requires enabling environment to carry out business activities freely, he said and added that SAFTA was required to be implemented in true letter and spirit. In this regard, any inherent hidden fear, if at all there is any, of losing in competition with other member countries would have to be scrapped.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI, while sharing his remarks said that Governments of South Asian countries needed to take into consideration the changes being taken place around the globe. He identified political mindset as one of the biggest barriers in promoting economic freedom among member states of South Asia. He furnished statistical comparison establishing the fact that sluggish growth in intra regional trade was mainly because of stringent policies of governments of South Asian countries. .

Mr. Subodh Kumar, FNF representative, enlightened the audience about role and functions of FNST in the promotion economic freedom in the world including South Asia under the partnership of SAARC CCI.

The meeting was conducted by Secretary General SAARC CCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, who presented an overview of the activities of SAARC CCI towards promoting intra regional economic cooperation.

Mr. Abul Kashim Ahmed, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) offered vote of thanks. The conference was well attended by representatives of business community from Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and host country Bangladesh.

The inaugural session of the seminar was followed by working session "Evaluating Impact of Economic Freedom on Economic Climate in South Asia" which was chaired by Hon'able former Minister, Mr. Madhukar SJB Rana and presentation were made by Ms. Ashani Abayasekara, Research Assistant, Institute of Policy Study, Sri Lanka, Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI, Dr. Najmul Hossain, Economist, FNF-Bangladesh, Engr. M.A. Jabbar, Chairman FPCCI Standing Committee on WTO and Expert (Pakistan), Mr. A K Azad, President, FBCCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.

### »» SAARC CCI Exclusive Meeting with a team of Bangladeshi Parliamentarians, 18th May, 2011 – Dhaka, Bangladesh

SAARC CCI organized exclusive meeting with a 7-member team of Bangladeshi Parliamentarians: The meeting was organized in collaboration with Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI) and Friedrich Naumann Stiftung on 18th May 2011.

Mr. A.K. Azad, President FBCCI while extending welcome remarks identified issues being faced by South Asia today and called for greater role of the Private Sector to formulate policies in line with requirements of SAFTA and emphasized for adopting inward looking approach to increase level of economic cooperation among member states.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI gave a detailed presentation on SAARC CCI emphasizing that the institution had been actively involved in policy advocacy to the Governments of SAARC member nations on



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI and Mr.A.K. Azad, President FBCCI along with Hon'ble Abul Kashem Chairman Parliamentary Standing Committee for Commerce, Government of Bangladesh & other respected parliamentarian.*

socio-economic issues.

Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI, while sharing his views said that SAARC CCI would soon commence the construction of SAARC CCI Headquarters Building at Islamabad and added that the Government of Pakistan had allocated a sizeable fund for this purpose and called for fiscal cooperation from other member nations of SAARC.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, while sharing his experience as the Immediate Past President SAARC CCI, said that with the changed global scenario, the institution had undergone changes and now its feedback on important issues was more comprehensive than in the past. He said that inclusion of services in SAFTA was the outcome of consistent demand of SAARC CCI and urged for inclusion of Investment in SAFTA.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) enlightened the parliamentarians and participants about the 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave which has been for scheduled for 22nd-24th September, 2011 in Khatmandu, Nepal.

Mr. Kosala Wickramanyake, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka) also shared his experience of 3rd SAARC Business Leaders Conclave which was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2009.

Hon'ble Abul Kashem, Chairman Parliamentary Standing Committee for Commerce, Government of Bangladesh assured the management of SAARC CCI to extend all possible cooperation and applauded the role and functions of SAARC CCI under the leadership of President Annisul Huq. He was of the opinion that NTBs were the major hurdles in the intra-regional trade in SAARC, which under SAFTA rule of origin was only \$ 1. 2 billion and urged for easing visa regime and removal of barriers to increase the current level of trade.

Md. Ghulam Hussain, Commerce Secretary, Government of Bangladesh, said that the role of the Government and its officials were to facilitate the Private Sector and the Government had been taking keen interest to materialize agreements preferably with South Asian countries. Referring to Indian investment in Bangladesh for improving infrastructure, he was of the view that such cooperation amongst other member nations was also desired.

The meeting was moderated by Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI and was well attended by more than 100 participants including representatives of the diplomatic missions, government officials. Besides, private sector from the region also had strong representation. Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan in Dhaka, Mr. Afzal Mehmood and Ambassador of Bhutan also attended the meeting.



### »» Conference on Regional Connectivity in South Asia: Prospects for Cooperation in Transport & Communication, 28th July, 2011 - Colombo, Sri Lanka

The conference was organized by SAARC CCI in collaboration with FCCISL to discuss ways and means for ensuring increased regional connectivity in South Asia with a focus on prospects for cooperation in transport and communication. The need for greater regional cooperation and ability to better implement resolutions emerged as key issues at the conference.



*Group photo of participants with Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI and Chief Guest Hon'ble Prof G L Peiris, Minister of External Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka.*

The conference was chaired by Professor G.L.Peiris, Honorable Minister of External Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka. Mr. Annisul Haq, SAARC CCI President was the keynote speaker. The seminar was also addressed by Mr. Kumar Mallimaratchi, Acting President of FCCISL, and Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI.

The proceedings were moderated by SAARC CCI Secretary General Muhammed Iqbal Tabish who in his opening remarks stressed that due to poor connectivity, the South Asian countries failed to tap into 72% of the trade potential of US\$ 65 billion available in 2011. He emphasized that issues of connectivity in the region should not be confined to the spaces of trade, but need to reach the realms of connectivity through not only railway and road corridors but also through inland waterway transport and aviation, which would not only enhance physical, economic and people to people connectivity, but will also create greater prospects for better regional transport connectivity.

FCCISL Acting President Mr. Kumar Mallimaratchi drew on the importance of implementing policy in his welcome address. He was of the view that for trade and interaction to grow in SAARC countries, the problems confronted in promoting regional connectivity have to be removed. According to him, SAARC and Asia are the economic drivers in future. It is the primary responsibility of the businessmen to ensure more trade within SAARC.

SAARC CCI Vice President Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik brought to attention the important roles that various governments and stakeholders must play across various SAARC regions. Explaining the importance of infrastructure, he stated that Regional connectivity is one of the fundamental aspects of development and Infrastructure is a critical factor for better connectivity. In this regard, while quoting figures from Investment Climate Assessment Survey (2008), Mr. Malik explained that 40% firms in India, 45% in Pakistan, 60% in Bangladesh and 75% in Nepal reported that inadequate-infrastructure was a major obstacle to their business expansion efforts. Mr. Malik also stressed that intraregional trade remains largely unrealized.

Keynote speaker, SAARC CCI President Mr. Annisul Huq expressed that a lack of connectivity had prevented South Asia from coming closer together as a region. Quoting Muchkund Dubey, Mr. Huq stated that despite being an ideal grouping for economic integration, South Asia remains untouched by the first wave of regionalism in the international arena and remains marred by mutual doubts and suspicion. He stressed that the dream of one economy, one agreement, one pride, one voice and one region is what South Asian needs at

the present moment. Reflecting on the success of ASEAN nations, Mr. Huq said that South Asia and SAARC provided a sharp contrast to the ASEAN region. Although South Asian countries are making concerted efforts to improve regional connectivity through infrastructure building, the infrastructure gap in terms of index has been widening in South Asia since 1990, he lamented.

Mr. Huq proposed a 10-item agenda to the Minister of External Affairs, policy makers and business leaders from South Asia. He stressed that within the next seven years, the people of South Asia would need to connect on different points of connectivity, be it social, economic, cultural or spiritual. He further called for the commitment of both governments and business communities to take a big leap in facilitating further connectivity in the SAARC region.

Highlighting the importance of focusing on concrete issues, the Chief Guest Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka. stated that we have to focus on concrete issues to move ahead and that there is great potential here in the South Asia. Hon'ble Minister urged closer collaboration between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) and the private sector, expressing that putting in place a viable strategy for improving commercial progress is vital. Commenting on the importance of developing trade within the region, he was of the view that we need to be serious about developing trade in the SAARC region. In his opinion, connectivity is the most important factor. He further said that the public and the private sectors need to create synergies in areas of mutual interest and their shared vision on food security, energy security and counter terrorism mechanism was required on regional level.

The inaugural session was followed by a working session "Physical Connectivity in South Asia: Challenges and prospects under SAFTA" which were addressed by prominent speaker of the region.

#### »» 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave, 20-22nd September, 2011 - Kathmandu, Nepal

The 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave was organized in Collaboration with Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry and in partnership with Friedrich Naumann foundation in Kathmandu, Nepal from 20 to 22nd September 2011. It was fourth in the series after the great success of the first three conclaves held prior to this the first two in India and the third one in Sri Lanka. The objective was to drive an action plan of the private sector of the region to foster the process of regional integration in South Asia.



*Group Photo taken with Rt. Hon'ble Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal at 4th SAARC Business Conclave.*

SAARC Business Leaders Conclave's was organized under theme "Peace and Prosperity Through Regional Connectivity" focused on topics of immediate concern and priority like Food Security, Energy, Climate change and Water Resources, Regional Economic Integration, Women Empowerment, Trade and Investment, Entrepreneurship and Youth Development.

Dr. Ram Baran Yadav President of Nepal was the chief guest and inaugurated 4th SBLC. In his inaugural address he said South Asian nations have common economic goals and common economic challenges. We can move towards prosperity through stronger emphasis on regional partnership. South Asian nations are the home to one-fifth of the world's population and are equally abundant with resources that have to be exploited through united efforts.

On this occasion, Hon'ble Mr. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, MP and Ex-Prime Minister, Sri Lanka said that the business community with dynamic role of the respective Government in South Asia could bring about revolutionary changes and further foster the pace of regional integration in South Asia.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry in his keynote address lamented that many important policies that are supposed to boost South Asian trade are forwarded but implementation and execution took almost a decade so that the policy effectiveness is lost by the time of its coming in to effect.

He added that the Better connectivity and trust among South Asian nations will make the movement within the region freer," pointed out Mr. Huq and urged upon the political leaders of South Asia to exhibit political will to bring peace and prosperity to the Regional, which homed ¼ of the World population, possess the unlimited potential but stayed least integrated in the world.

Mr. Suraj Vaidya, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) in his address said that the intraregional trade among the SAARC member states is marred by the issues of non-tariff barriers and sensitive list that need to be addressed effectively for rapid expansion of intra regional trade while pointing out intra-regional trade as one of the important measure to alleviate the economic situation of the people of region.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, immediate former President and Mr. Padma Jyoti, former President of SAARC CCI were honoured with gold medal by President Nepal in the recognition of their untiring services for SAARC CCI and business community of South Asia. The incumbent President Mr. Annisul Huq conferred upon his predecessors the certificate of appreciation as well. The inaugural session was followed by a dinner and musical evening performed by Nepali Folk dancers on their traditional music.

### » Ministerial Round: Generating Political will for Regional Economic Integration

The day started with session "Ministerial Round: Generating Political will for Regional Economic Integration" which was chaired by Mr. Tariq Sayeed, immediate Past President, and Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mr. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake was guest of honor in the session.



(L-R) Deshbandhu Macky Hashim, Past President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, President, FNCCI, Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP, Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forest, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mr. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Former Prime Minister, Sri Lanka, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Past President, SAARC CCI, Hon'ble Mr. Sarat Singh Bhandari, Minister of Defense, Nepal, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Former Finance & Foreign Minister of Pakistan and Ms. Ambica Shrestha, Chairman, Dwarika's Hotel.

The session was addressed by incumbent and former Minister's of SAARC countries which includes Hon'ble Mr. Sarat Singh Bhandari, Minister of Defense, Nepal, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Former Finance & Foreign Minister of Pakistan and Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP, Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forest, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh while Deshbandhu Macky Hashim, Past President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry and Ms. Ambica Shrestha, Chairman, Dwarika's Hotel spoke as the panelists.

Speakers of the session regarded Political mindset a big hindrance in achieving the objectives of SAARC. They urged upon the political leaders of South Asia to take bold initiatives and exhibit great political will if they want meaning economic integration of SAARC and foster the regional cooperation mechanism.

The chair of the session Mr. Sayeed, while concluding the session said that the Private sector of the South Asia was already involved in promoting economic cooperation in the region and demands of the Governments to provide business enabling environment to foster the pace of economic cooperation. He termed non-resolution of political issues as the biggest hurdle in the way of integration process.

### »» Water, Energy, Climate Change and Food security

The Session on Water, Energy, Climate Change, moderated by Secretary General Iqbal Tabish was addressed by Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP, Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forest, Bangladesh, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Former Finance and Foreign Minister, Govt of Pakistan, Mr. Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, Chairman-Water, Energy and Environmental Council, FNCCI & SAARC CCI, Mr. Raghuvveer Y. Sharma, Principal Investment Officer, IFC, World Bang Group, and Mr. Balananda Poudel, Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Nepal who urged upon the need for evolving Regional Mechanism to overcome the challenges posed by climate change. They were of the opinion that Food Security can not be ensured until unless the poverty is not addressed adequately, which required access of food for every individual.



*(L-R) Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Mr. Raghuvveer Y. Sharma, Principal Investment Officer, IFC, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Former Finance & Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP, Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forest, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mr. Balananda Poudel, Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Nepal, Mr. Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, Chairman-Water, Energy and Environmental Council of SAARC CCI.*

### »» Women Leadership for Regional Business Opportunities

The session on "Women Leadership for Regional Business Opportunities" at the 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave was chaired by Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, Chairperson, SCWEC and was addressed by Mr. Berthold Hoffman, Senior Project Manager, GIZ, Ms. Bibi Russell, Founder, Bibi Productions, Textile Sector, Bangladesh, Ms. Kinlay Tshering, Chief Horticulture Officer, Ministry of Agriculture & Forests, (Agro Sector), Bhutan, Ms. Ranjana Kumar, Former Chairperson, NBARD, Banking sector- India, Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Former First Lady and Hon'ble Member of Constituent Assembly (Advocacy and Policy maker), Nepal, Ms. Shireen Arshad Khan, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Designer & CEO-Shireen's Designer World, Ms. Manisha Koirala, Nepali-Indian Actress, Entrepreneur and Social Activist- Nepal and Moderated by Mr. Ashutosh Tiwari.





(L-R) Ms. Shireen Arshad Khan, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Designer & CEO-Shireen's Designer World, Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Former First Lady and Hon'ble Member of Constituent Assembly (Advocacy and Policy maker), Nepal, Ms. Shreejana Rana – Vice Chair, SCWEC, Mr. Berthhold Hoffman, Senior Project Manager, GIZ, Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, Chairperson, SCWEC, Ms. Manisha Koirala, Nepali-Indian Actress, Entrepreneur and Social Activist- Nepal, Ms. Kinlay Tshering, Chief Horticulture Officer, Ministry of Agriculture & Forests, (Agro Sector), Bhutan, Ms. Bibi Russell, Founder, Bibi Productions, Textile Sector, Bangladesh, Ms. Ranjana Kumar, Former Chairperson, NBARD, Banking sector- India and Mr. Ashutosh Tiwari.

On conclusion of the session the speakers were of the opinion that empowering women in South Asia has always been a challenging issue. It is time to realize that institutional reforms are necessary for removing legal and cultural barriers for regional business opportunities. The discussions during the session included identification of broad opportunities for businesswomen in the SAARC region and showing the way forward for specific sectors. Ms. Shreejana Rana, Vice Chair, SCWEC (Nepal) delivered vote of thanks.

### »» Business Leaders Session Contemporary Issues & Commercial Connectivity in South Asia

The last session of the day on "Business Leaders Session Contemporary Issues & Commercial Connectivity in South Asia" was chaired by Honorable Mr. Padma Jyoti, Past President, SAARC CCI & FNCCI and Chairman - Jyoti Group of Companies, Nepal and was addressed by Mr. S. M. Muneer, Chairman, Din Group of Industries, Former President FPCCI and President India-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pakistan, Mr.



Mr. Mohamad Daood Moosa, Senior Advisor of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mr. Mahesh K. Saharia, CEO, Saharia Group of Companies, India, Mr. Padma Jyoti, Past President, SAARC CCI & FNCCI and Chairman - Jyoti Group of Companies, Nepal, Mr. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister of Nepal and Professor, South Asian Institute of Management, Kathmandu on Trade Issues, Nepal, Hon'ble Mr. Rajendra Khetan, Industrialist and Member of Constituent Assembly of Nepal, Mr. Shankar Prasad Koirala, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Nepal and Mr. S. M. Muneer, Chairman, Din Group of Industries, Former President FPCCI and President India-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pakistan



Mohamad Daood Moosa, Senior Advisor of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Hon'ble Mr. Rajendra Khetan, Industrialist and Member of Constituent Assembly of Nepal, Mr. Mahesh K. Saharia, CEO, Saharia Group of Companies, India, Mr. Madhukar SJB Rana, Former Finance Minister of Nepal and Professor, South Asian Institute of Management, Kathmandu on Trade Issues, Nepal, Mr. Shankar Prasad Koirala, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Nepal.

The speakers regarded South Asia as least integrated region with lowest commercial bonds than in other regions. They were of the opinion that South Asia has poor connectivity in every sector. South Asia has poor transport network to support trade and commerce when compared to other regions. They urged upon the South Asian governments to oversee political differences to build better trade and investment relationship. Without the honest involvement of all countries intraregional connectivity could not be build.

### »» Trade and Investments in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

On 3rd day of 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave four sessions were held including the valedictory session. The day started with the session "Trade and Investments in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities" and addressed by Mr. Purushottam Ojha, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, Nepal, Dr. Saman Kelegama - Executive Director – IPS, Sri Lanka, Mr. Amer Z. Durrani, Sector Coordinator and Senior Specialist, The World Bank, Mr. Paramita Dasgupta, Senior Private Sector Development Specialist, Mr.



*Dr. Badar Alam Iqbal, Dean and Professor- Department of Commerce- Aligarh Muslim University UP, India, Mr. Amer Z. Durrani, Sector Coordinator and Senior Specialist, The World Bank, Mr. Purushottam Ojha, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, Nepal, Professor Rehman Sobhan, Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh, Mr. Mujeeb Khan, Head WTO Cell and Research & Analysis Directorate, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Mr. Om Rajbhandary, Coordinator, Urban Development Forum, FNCCI and GA member SAARC CCI, Pakistan, Ms. Paramita Dasgupta, Senior Private Sector Development Specialist, IFC, Dr. Saman Kelegama - Executive Director – IPS, Sri Lanka*

Mujeeb Khan, Head WTO Cell and Research & Analysis Directorate, Dr. Badar Alam Iqbal, Professor- Department of Commerce, Mr. Om Rajbhandary, Coordinator, Urban Development Forum, FNCCI and GA member SAARC CCI –Nepal.

The speakers identified poverty services such as telecommunication, banking, energy, transport and software services are among the main drivers of FDI in the region. They were agreed that South Asia has been plagued by over regulation. They urged to eliminate lack of uniformity in training and standards within the countries which are leading to deficiencies and considerable divergence in the quality of services providers.

### »» Youth Development and Leadership Promising prosperous Future of South Asia

The second session of Youth Development and Leadership: Promising prosperous Future of South Asia was chaired by Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Chairman SAARC CCI Young Entrepreneurs Forum and was addressed By Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, VC-SYEF, Nepal, Arif Dowla, Managing Director, Advanced Chemical Industry Ltd., Bangladesh, Hon'ble Mr. Gagan Thapa, Member of Constituent Assembly of Nepal, Mr. Suhas Gopinath, CEO & President, Globals ITeS Pvt.Ltd. India, Mr. Abrar-ul-Haq, Chairman-Youth Parliament of Pakistan, Mr. Anil Shah, CEO Megha Bank, Nepal, Mr. Jawad Ahmad, CEO, One World Entertainment- Pakistan, Ms. Saima Khan, CEO –School of Leadership and Project Manager, Young Leader's Conference, Pakistan and vote of thanks by Mr. Anuj Shrestha, President, NYEF, Nepal.



*Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bader, Vice Chairman, SAARC Chamber Young Entrepreneur Forum, Mr. Anil Shah, CEO Megha Bank, Nepal, Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Chairman SAARC CCI Young Entrepreneurs Forum (SCYEF), Mr. Jawad Ahmad, CEO, One World Entertainment- Pakistan, Mr. Abrar-ul-Haq, Chairman-Youth Parliament of Pakistan, Mr. Surab Jyoti, Mr. Anuj Shrestha, President, NYEF, Nepal, Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, Vice Chairman, SCYEF (Nepal), Dr. Arif Dowla, Managing Director, Advanced Chemical Industry Ltd., Bangladesh, Ms. Saima Khan, CEO –School of Leadership and Project Manager, Young Leader’s Conference, Pakistan, Hon’ble Mr. Gagan Thapa, Member of Constituent Assembly of Nepal, Mr. Suhas Gopinath, CEO & President, Globals ITeS Pvt.Ltd. India, Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, VC-SYEF, Nepal.*

While concluding the session, Mr. Shahrukh Mailk, Chairman, SAARC Chamber Young Entrepreneurs Forum said we all are agreed that region as a whole has tremendous potential, catering to a fifth of world population with over 60% under the age of 30 this region is geared to blossom. Youth of South Asia today has very strong knowledge of today technologies and regional competitive advantage. If youth is given a proper chance under guidance they can play an important role in bringing down cost of goods and services for our export markets.

### »» Connectivity through Tourism, Cultural Exchange and Media

The session was chaired by Mr. Kumar Mallimaratchi, President, Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka and was addressed by Dr. Ganesh Raj Joshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal, Begum Salma Ahmed, ex-parliamentarian, Pakistan, Mr. Nurul Kabir, Editor, New Age "Bangladesh", Mr. Yogendra Shakya, coordinator, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, Ms. Reema Khan, renowned Lollywood



*Mr. Nurul Kabir, Editor, New Age-Bangladesh, Begum Salma Ahmed, ex-parliamentarian-Pakistan, Ms. Poonam Dhillon, Film, TV & Stage Actor & Social Worker – India, Dr. Ganesh Raj Joshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation-Nepal, Mr. Kumar Mallimaratchi, President FCCISL - Sri Lanka, Mr. Yogendra Shakya, coordinator, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, Ms. Manisha Koirala, Nepali-Indian Actress, Social Activist- Nepal, Ms. Reema Khan, renowned Lollywood film Actress, Director, Producer and Social Activist – Pakistan, Ms. Ritu Singh Vaidya, Entrepreneur, Model and former Ms. India, Nepal.*

film Actress, Director, Producer and Social Activist -Pakistan, Ms. Poonam Dhillon, Film, TV & Stage Actor & Social Worker – India, Ms. Ritu Singh Vaidya, Entrepreneur, Model and former Ms. India, Nepal and Ms. Manisha Koirala, Nepali-Indian Actress, Social Activist- Nepal.

The session concluded by the chair with the opinion that there has always existed an implicit assumption that greater regional integration should have been easy to achieve because of our shared history and common cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties. Hence, the challenge today for South Asia is to promote unity and build interdependence, which not only integrates our region but also creates a vested interest in each other's stability and prosperity.

### »» Valedictory Session & Adoption of Kathmandu Declaration:

The SAARC Business Leaders Conclave came to close with Valedictory Session & Adoption of Kathmandu Declaration, which was chaired by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President SAARC CCI and Chairman 4th SBL Steering Committee. The valedictory session was also addressed by Mr. Annisul Huq, SAARC CCI



*(L-R) Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Senior Vice President, SAARC CCI, India, Mr. Annisul Huq, SAARC CCI President, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President SAARC CCI and Chairman 4th SBL Steering Committee, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry.*

President, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Senior Vice President, SAARC CCI, India, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI.

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, secretary General, SAARC CCI presented Kathmandu declaration for adaptation. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal) delivered vote of thanks.

The conclave concluded with adaptation of Kathmandu declaration which was send to SAARC secretariat. The event witnessed the presence of leading politicians, prominent academicians and corporate heads of the enterprises from the region and around the world. The Conclave was attended by more than 500 delegates across South Asia including largest participation 120 from Bangladesh followed by 75 from Pakistan.

### **Kathmandu Declaration**

The fourth SAARC Business Leaders Conclave adopted the following Policy Reform Agenda with a consensus:

1. The Conclave representing the entire private sector through the National Federations of each 8 Countries unanimously adopted to emphasize on the Governments of the Member Countries to engage seriously on regional connectivity to achieve "Peace and Prosperity" in the region and further requested to take appropriate urgent measures to implement the action plan envisioned under the doctrine "2010-2020 as decade of Regional Connectivity".
2. The connectivity encompasses physical connectivity like connectivity through road, rail, air and sea/river, communication, connectivity trough exchange of people, connectivity through cooperation in the area of tourism, health, culture, education, and connectivity through mind and heart.
3. The Conclave deliberated on generating political will for regional economic integration, and recommended resolution of core issues through bold initiatives and exhibiting greater political will to augment socio- economic cooperation in the region;
4. The Conclave urges for full utilization of benefits of geographical proximity, land/sea/river cognitively for massive expansion of trade and intra-investment. The Conclave further emphasized upon implementation of Trade Facilitation Mechanism as urgent necessity to promote intra-regional trade and demands for creation and up gradation of infrastructure of international standard and scale, cooperation in energy and proposes signing/implementation of SAARC Transit Agreement, shipment agreement, Logistics Agreements. ICT Agreement to make SAFTA a workable expeditiously mechanism, leading to Customs Union.
5. Realizing enormous potential in trade and investment in the region, the business community recommends signing of Regional Investment Treaty and up-gradation of SAFTA into a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement for the Region.

6. The Conclave recognized Water, Energy, Climate Change and Food Security as the priority concerns and pledges for adoption of necessary collective measures to address these challenges and urgent implementation of Regional Environment Treaty; activation of SAARC Food Bank and proposed setting up SAARC Disaster Management Institute to minimize the impact of natural calamities and climate changes.
7. To foster socio-cultural ties in South Asia, the Conclave recommends the Governments to take appropriate measures to augment cooperation in Tourism, Media and cultural exchanges;
8. The conclave focused on economic empowerment of the women in South Asia and recommends to the Governments to take proactive initiatives to encourage and promote women entrepreneurs and young business leaders for sustainable economic cooperation.
9. To foster the process of regional cooperation in South Asia, the Conclave urged for immediate and adequate measures for the following:
  - Harmonization of customs procedures and mutual recognition of Standards and Certifications
  - Finalize and expeditiously implement Regional Motor Vehicle Transport Agreement.
  - Truly implement Open Sky policy in the region - linking not only directs flights between capitals but to all other major cities
  - The Conclave strongly recommends a common SAARC Energy policy and identify and implement power production units with definite plan and intension for trans border transmission and trade in energy.
  - The Conclave regretted retrospective step in the matter of issuance of Visa and strongly recommended issuance of SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers (SVES) from 100 to 500 for each member country and to increase the period from one year to two year. The Conclave further recommends relaxation in rules for issuance of Visa Multiple Visa for business purposes to all bona-fide members recommended by national Federations.
  - The Conclave recommends allowing not only broadcasting of TV Channels (Government and Private) of all SAARC Countries in the entire region; allow content sharing and coproduction in entertainment sector but also to encourage joint sector project in ITES sector.
  - The Conclave recommends formation of South Asian Integration and Promotional Agency, protecting/ promoting SAARC common Cultural Heritage In order to deepen this process, it was decided to hold the next SAARC Business Leaders Conclave in 2012.

### » SAARC CCI delegation calls on H.E. Secretary General SAARC

SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) delegation called on H.E. Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, Secretary General SAARC in Kathmandu to exchange views of areas of mutual interest and to enlighten her about the problems faced by the Private Sector of South Asia.

The delegation comprised Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI and Mr. Ratish Basnyat, in charge SAARC CCI Desk at FNCCI.



*(L-R) H.E. Uz.Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, Secretary General, SAARC, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.*



During the meeting they discussed the matters like:

- New SAARC Visa Policy,
- More participation of SAARC CCI in policymaking level
- Establishing close liaison between SAARC Chamber and the SAARC Secretariat

The SAARC chamber will submit a comprehensive report about SAARC Visa exemption stickers scheme to be considered in the upcoming immigration authorities meeting. The SAARC Secretariat also advised the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry for adoption of appropriate mechanism for more representation of the stakeholders of the region.

The SAARC Secretary General invited the attention of SAARC CCI delegation to take up the issue with relevant Government in respect of financial capital and intra-regional long-term investment.

H.E. Secretary General was invited to attend the SAARC CCI convention in Dhaka, which was scheduled on January 7-8, 2012, which she accepted with thanks and expressed her consent to attend the event.

### »» 26th SAARC Charter Day, 9th December, 2011 -Islamabad, Pakistan

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) organized a seminar to celebrate '26th Anniversary of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) under the theme of "Promoting SAARC globally as Destination South Asia", in Collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) on 9th December, 2011 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

SAARC Charter Day was celebrated to express solidarity and spread the mission and vision of the SAARC Charter adopted at the time of the creation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on 8th of December in 1985.



*26th SAARC Charter Day:  
(L-R) Mr. Aamir Atta Bajwa,  
VP, Haji Senator Ghulam Ali,  
President, of FPCCI, Mr.  
Mushahid Hussain Syed,  
Secretary General, PML-Q  
and Chairman Pak-China  
Institute, Senator Haji  
Muhammad Adeel, Mr. Tariq  
Sayeed, Former President,  
SAARC CCI, Mr. Iftikhar Ali  
Malik, VP and Mr. Gopal  
Baglay, Deputy High  
Commissioner, High Commis-  
sion of India.*

Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed, Secretary General, PML-Q and Chairman Pak-China Institute was the chief guest of the seminar. Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI delivered the welcome remarks. While addressing the seminar, Chief Guest Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed said, political consideration has remained one of the biggest hurdles in development of SAARC region which houses 22 per cent of the world population. He said that the growth of the region has been projected to surpass 50 per cent of the world's GDP by 2030 that calls for immediate steps by Pakistan to boost intra-regional trade lest we miss the boat. The contribution of South Asia in the Global GDP is less than 2 pc and its share in exports in only 1.5 pc, which does not reflect our true potential.

The pace of growth in SAARC region has been slower at 5 pc as compared with the other blocs like NAFTA, EU, ASEAN and COMESA, wherein intra-regional trade is estimated at 62 pc, 58pc, 28 pc and 22 pc respec-



tively. Mr. Shahid proposed that for greater Asia we should enhance cooperation with China, Iran, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

While addressing at occasion, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, VP, CACCI and former President SAARC CCI & FPCCI called upon framing new trade rules as existing set of rules are not encouraging businesses. He said that cost of cross border trading in SAARC remained highest in the world while visa difficulties have become a Non-Tariff Barrier.

Mr. Sayeed added that the opening up of trade will not hurt will Pakistan, we should encourage business interests of India. Indian goods can be re-exported from Pakistan which will benefit all stakeholders. Our region has lost momentum but it has ability to bounce back as we have 45 pc of young population, 12 pc of the known global natural resources, and all prerequisites to become developed nations, the national business leader said.

Senator Haji Ghulam Ali, President FPCCI while addressing the session said that free movement of businessmen can transform region into a block like EU where the people of 8-nations will remain in peace like as a family. He added that we have a shared history, shared culture and we deserve to have a shared future.

Mr. Olaf Kellerhoff's while sharing his views said that Trade expansion is the most straight way to ensure regional economic corporation which require collective and collaborative strategies and joint-ventures.

Deputy High Commissioner India Mr. Gopal Bagly speaking on the occasion said that SAARC had achieved many milestones and many still to be achieved by promoting cooperation among the member states. He said many important agreements like connectivity through rail, road and air among the SAARC member states being negotiated were needed to be concluded at the earliest. This would help achieve the desired results for promoting trade and economic cooperation among the member states.

Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh Mr. Mehfooz-ur-Rehman said that Saarc still needed to work collectively for achieving the goals like economic growth and prosperity in the region for wellbeing of generations to come.

Mr. Durga Prasad Bhandari, Deputy High Commissioner of Nepal termed SAARC as success and said that it had helped exchange ideas for regional development.

### **LEAD 2012: Youth in Rising South Asia: Promises and Dreams, 7-8 January, 2012, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

The most enterprising event of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) in collaboration with Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FBCCI) was held in city of Dhaka, Bangladesh on January 7-8, 2012, which marked new history of SAARC CCI and gave tremendous exposure to SAARC CCI as the last event under the Presidency of Mr. Annisul Huq.

The South Asian Youth Convention was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Zillur Rahman President of Bangladesh. Hon'ble Finance Minister Mr. Abul Maal Abdul Muhith and Commerce Minister Mr. Ghulam Mohammed Quader, SAARC Secretary General Ms. Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI, Mr. A.K. Azad, President FBCCI and the former President of SAARC CCI Mr. Salman F Rahman also addressed the inaugural session, which was attended by over 1800 delegates mostly youth from Bangladesh and the South Asian countries.

The President SAARC CCI Mr. Annisul Huq on this occasion said that the youth in South Asia was second to none and capable enough to play significant role in development of South Asia by virtue of its dynamism, innovative approach and skill and their involvement in socio-economic and political domain could miraculously change the fate of the region.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, immediate former President of SAARC CCI from Pakistan and Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, the President SAARC CCI (elect) from India was also present as special guests along with these dignitaries at the inaugural session.

The event was comprised of specific session on young entrepreneurs, women empowerment, media and socio-cultural exchanges wherein leading celebrities, intellectuals, like Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, Mr. Tofael Ahmed, Mr. Ejaj Ahmad, Mr. Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Mr. Suhas Gopinath, Mr. Anand Bagaria, Mr. Korvi Rakshand, Mr. Rajat Sharma, Ms. Rubana Huq, Dr. Dipu Moni, Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, Dr. Maleka Begum, Ms. Vani Kola, Ms. Vandana Luthra, Ms. Zarine Aziz, Ms. Ajeet Caur, Ms. Nasreen Awal Minto, Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, Mr. Mahfuz Anam, Mr. Mark Tully, Mr. Simon Dring, Mr. Anwar Hossain, Dr. Mahfuzur Rahman, Mr. Jawed Naqvi, Mr. Kanak Mani Dixit and Mr. Nurul Kabir shared their success stories with the audience as a motivational tool. All the session were highly successful in terms of participation and quality of the contents shared by speakers.

The celebrities like Ms. Sri Lanka, Ms. Bhutan, Ms. Nepal, and renewed TV artists Ms. Juggan Kazim from Pakistan shared their vision that how socio-cultural bindings can further develop South Asia. The performance of Ms. Runa Laila, Mr. Najam Sheraz, Sri Lanka Dance Troop and fashion show organized by leading fashion designer Ms. Rina Latif were the most interesting parts of the event, the resonance of which could be heard for longer period of time and the audience will never forget it.

The event was highly successful in inviting the attention of the Government and policy makers, realizing them that the region was blessed with enormous potential, which requires a track that could engage them positively and usher on path to development.



SAARC CCI President  
Activities 2010-2011



### »» Call on with H.E. Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General, SAARC, 5th February, 2010 – Kathmandu, Nepal

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI called on H.E. Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General, SAARC on February 5, 2010 at SAARC Secretariat, Katmandu. Mr. Huq was accompanied by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shreshta, Vice President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, immediate past VP-SAARC CCI from Nepal, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Mr. Faridul Hassan, Secretary International Affairs FBCCI, Mr. Manish Mohan, Joint Director, FICCI and Mr. Ratish Basyant, In charge SAARC Desk, Nepal. This was the first ever visit of Mr. Annisul Huq to any country of South Asia in the capacity of President, SAARC CCI. The objective of this



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI (in the middle) called on Hon'ble Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma (4th from right) at SAARC Secretariat on 5th February, 2010. The others seen in the photograph (L-R) are Mr. Ratish Basyant, Incharge SAARC Desk (Nepal), Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra, Director SAARC (India), Mr. Faridul Hassan, Secretary International Affairs, FBCCI, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shreshta, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal) Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Immediate Past Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal), Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Mr. Manish Mohan, Incharge SAARC desk (India)*

call on was to exchange views on important issues and to establish close liaison between SAARC Secretariat and SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

H.E. Secretary General SAARC assisted by Mr. Vinay Kwatra, Director SAARC (Trade and Economic Affairs) welcomed the SAARC CCI delegation and appreciated the performance of SAARC CCI particularly during tenure of Mr. Tariq Sayeed and expressed similar wishes for Mr. Annisul Huq. Mr. Annisul Huq requested H.E. Secretary General, SAARC for inclusion of Private Sector in SAARC Summit, representation of the Private Sector in allied agencies of SAARC, grant of funds for construction of SAARC CCI Headquarters Building at Islamabad, Space for setting up SAARC CCI office in SAARC Secretariat, and increase in number of SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers from 100 to 300 for each member state of SAARC.

H.E. Secretary General SAARC informed that SAARC Secretariat would extend all possible cooperation in the areas under its jurisdiction. He further informed that proposal of increase in SVES was already in the agenda of upcoming meeting of Immigration Authorities and SAARC Secretariat will support it. However, on other issues he said that SAARC Secretariat cannot do by its own and only executes decisions made by all member nations. In this respect, he advised to approach all member nations through Foreign Ministries.

### »» Visit of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, 5th February, 2010 – Kathmandu, Nepal

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI visited FNCCI on the invitation of President Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, on 5th February, 2010 in Katmandu, Nepal. President SAARC CCI was accompanied by Mr. Pradeep Kumar



Shreshtha, Vice President SAARC CCI from Nepal and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.



*Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi Presenting Souvenir to Mr. Annisul Huq, newly elected President of SAARC CCI during his visit to FNCCI on 5th February, 2010.*

Mr. Joshi welcomed Mr. Huq and felicitated him on assuming the office of the President SAARC CCI. Mr. Joshi briefed the President, SAARC CCI about the activities and its networking with international organization including SAARC CCI. Mr. Joshi said that at the moment SAARC is not moving as a region. Things are generally carried on bilateral bases. Therefore the role of SAARC CCI is even more important to move things at a regional level; the focus should be to develop the region as a whole. For that the comparative and competitive advantage of the region needs to be identified and explored. He cited the example of SAARC Car Rally which was held during 2007, which gained people to people linkages and undertook the responsibility to launch another one.

Mr. Huq welcomed the valuable suggestion of President FNCCI and said that he will try his utmost to utilize the SAARC CCI platform to identify the issues between the SAARC member countries and try to resolve them on bilateral as well as regional levels. He was ascertained about the Private Sector representation in forthcoming SAARC Summit. President SAARC CCI while admiring the work done by his predecessor affirmed that during his tenure as a President SAARC CCI he will develop strong relations with SAARC Secretariat.

### »» Regional Consultations on Enhancing Intra Regional Connectivity (2010-2020) Issues & Approaches in South Asia, 14-16th February, 2010 –New Delhi, India

The conference was organized by Mr. Kant K. Bhargava, former Secretary General of SAARC under the aegis of South Asian Centre for Policy Studies and Association of management Development Institution of South Asia on 14-16th Feb, 2010, New Delhi, India.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the valedictory session of said that “Regional connectivity at socio-economic and political level is pre-requisite for making SAFTA a viable mechanism to promote intra-regional economic cooperation”. He regarded people-to-people connectivity as fundamental to regional integration while urging for increase in SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers from 100 to 500 for each member nations of SAARC and also requested to SAARC states to issue 5-years multiple Visa for at least 500 businessmen, exempted from Police reporting and city-restrictions in presence of Dr. Shell Kant Sharma, Secretary General, SAARC, who also addressed the valedictory session of two-day conference. This has been the long-standing demand of SAARC CCI and was effectively voiced by Mr. Tariq Sayeed, the immediate past President of SAARC at various regional forums.

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI in his presentation at session of “Regional connectivity and Business perspectives” accentuated for the need of up gradation of infrastructure in members states, as an imperative measure to provide viable physical connectivity to foster business transactions in the region.

## SAARC CCI President Activities

Secretary General, SAARC CCI, presented a comparative analysis of infrastructure Development between SAARC and South East Asian Countries and said that in terms of infrastructure development, South Asia was amongst the least connected region in the World.



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI and Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President, SAARC CCI (India) addressing the conference .*

Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President, SAARC CCI while addressing emphasized for the need for developing strong links on socio-cultural and communication levels to enhance the business transactions in the region stating that due to poor connectivity and rigid policies of the SAARC nations, the SAARC could not tap 73% potential in 2008 as the intra-regional trade was estimated at \$ 11 billion against the potential of \$ 40 billion.

The other panelists of the session included Dr. Saman Kelegama, Executive Director, Institute of Policy studies, Sri Lanka, Mr. Manish Mohan, Joint Director, FICCI and Mr. Kant Bhargava. The Conference was addressed by eminent Scholar, experts, Government Officials and Private Sector representatives.

### »» Look East Summit, 27th March, 2010 - Kolkata, India

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI addressed at the "Look East Summit" organized by Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, on 27th March, 2010, Kolkata, India. President SAARC CCI gave an excellent account of Regional Integration in East and South East Asia from the perspective of SAARC, during "Special Plenary Session India - ASEAN FTA : Role & Prospects of Trade & Investment". He said, it was perceived that with the



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI, addressing at the conference.*

India-ASEAN FTA in commodities already in place, and the one in services set to be through, the trade & commerce between India and South-East Asia is certain to witness a mammoth leap forward if enabling policies and supporting infrastructure are put in place. With the duties on 4000 products scheduled to be brought down to zero levels by December 2016, the FTA can act as an engine of growth, and contribute significantly to development of East and South East Asia.

Earlier in the inaugural session the Chief Guest of the conference H.E. Gen J. J. Singh, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.), Hon'ble Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in his keynote address, reiterated that enhancing road connectivity should be accorded prime importance in order to transform the North-East as the next generation trade and investment hub. With existence of large number of cultural synergies between the North Eastern states and the border nations of South and South East Asia, enhanced rail and road connectivity will facilitate deepened cultural ties in turn enabling higher growth and development across all the nations. With 98 % of the North Eastern border of India being shared with the Asian neighbours, faster economic integration is of great importance.

The eminent speakers and panelists gracing the occasion included Mr. Ly Bounkham, Ambassador of Lao People's Democratic Republic, Shri K.T. Chacko, Director, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Mr. Nguyen Son Ha, Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Vietnam, Mr. Chandra Embuldeniya, President, BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Dasho Tsering Wangda, Consul General, Royal Government of Bhutan; Mr. Krit Kraichitti, Thai Ambassador to India; Mr. U Kyi Thein, Ambassador of Myanmar to India, Mr. B D Mundhra, CMD, Simplex Infrastructure Limited; Mr. G L Goenka, President, Indo-Myanmar Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Smt. Rohita Jaidka, Executive Director (Marketing) Air India.

Some important recommendations and suggestions that were churned out of the day long summit were as follows:

- India must focus on the relatively lesser developed ASEAN countries — Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam — and Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal from BIMSTEC.
- There are several projects in infrastructure, power and construction projects, including cross-border transportation infrastructure, which Indian companies can undertake.
- To promote India's border trade with Myanmar, Bangladesh and China, necessary infrastructure facilities, including roads network, transshipment facilities, proper customs stations, cold storages and the like, need to be put in place by India on an urgent basis.
- These countries share with India geographical proximity. Myanmar has a 1,600 km land frontier and a long maritime boundary with India. Direct shipping links need to be put in place and sustained by government support till economic viability is ensured. Similarly, road networks need to be developed between North-East India and Myanmar, and beyond.
- In the north-eastern States, agriculture, horticulture and food processing, minerals, oil and gas, paper and wood are sectors with great potential that needs to be tapped and harnessed by promoting greater economic linkages between this region and ASEAN through Myanmar.
- The region surrounding India's north-eastern States has significant hydro-power potential which India can help harness. This can, in turn, be productively used by these States and give an impetus to their development.
- The current situation necessitates appropriate action from government to ensure internal security of this region. Business activities can not prosper if the capital assets remain unprotected.

### »» Call on with Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal, 21st April, 2010 – Kathmandu, Nepal

A delegation of SAARC countries led by Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI calls on Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Madhav Kumar on 21st April 2010 in Nepal. The objective of the call on was to seek Prime Minister Support for inclusion of private sector in upcoming SAARC summit and representation of SAARC CCI

## SAARC CCI President Activities



*SAARC delegation led by Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI with Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal.*

as consultative of the private sector at Ministerial Levels meetings. Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI appraised the Hon'ble Prime Minister with two day Roundtable on SAFTA as a precursor to 16th SAARC Summit and requested him to present key proposals of SAARC CCI, which were worked out from technical sessions of roundtable. Mr. Huq, also appraised the open visa policy of government of Nepal and accentuated for implementation of similar visa policy for every SAARC member countries.

### » Grand Reception, 22nd July, 2010 – Islamabad, Pakistan

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI, joined a grand reception organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry to pay tribute to Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President SAARC CCI and Vice President, Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce & Industry on 22nd July, 2010 in Islamabad, Pakistan.



*Mr. Zahid Maqbool, President ICCI presenting official crest to Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI. Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President and Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI are also seen in picture.*

Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Zahid Maqbool, President ICCI, Mr. Sultan Ahmed Chawla, President, Mr. Mansha Churra, VP, Mr. Mumtaz Ali Sheikh, VP, Mr. Hameed Akhtar Chadda, VP, Haji aftab Ahmad Barlas, Mr. Zakaria Usman, VP, Mr. Muhammad Mansha Churra, VP, Mian Muhammad Adrees, VP, Engr. Daroo Khan, VP, Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, former Vice President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry and many other prominent business leaders of the country attended the reception.

Mr. Zahid Maqbool, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry paid rich tribute to Mr. Sayeed for his wonderful services to the business community. He said Tariq Sayeed has brought many laurels to the country and his election as Vice President, CACCI is a great honor for Pakistan. Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI called Mr. Sayeed a role model for Pakistani and regional business community.

Mr. Annis-ul-Haq, President, SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry while admiring the contribution of Mr. Sayeed to Pakistan Business Community particularly and to region in general, said it was unfortunate that exports of 8 SAARC countries were less than the export of very small individual countries like Finland and Singapore. He said that SAARC region has great business potential as the region is endowed with immense natural resources. However, to exploit these untapped resources, SAARC countries should promote more economic cooperation and regional integration. He greatly lauded the services of Tariq Sayeed for serving the interests of businessmen at different forums including SAARC Chamber.

Mr. Sayeed while thanking to ICCI for holding a unique reception in his honor said Pakistan can never get sound economic progress without giving private sector a sizeable representation in the parliament. He said proper presence of businessmen in the parliament will ensure making of business friendly policies and rapid growth of business and industrial activities in the country. He asked businessmen to nominate their own candidates for parliament that would help in prompt resolution of their problems.

Mr. Sayeed congratulated ICCI for achieving 2nd position in the competition of Big Chambers Award organized by CACCI at Colombo, Sri Lanka. He said getting 2nd slot out of 29 competing countries is a great achievement of ICCI. He termed the ICCI as the premier chamber of the country.

Mr. Sultan Ahmad Chawla, President, FPCCI and Mr. Munawar Mughal, Mr. Kunwar Kutb-ud-din shared some childhood and youth age memories and lauded the role of Tariq Sayeed in promoting country's economic interests at different forums.

### »» President SAARC CCI met Dr. Amit Mitra, Secretary General FICCI, 20th September, 2010 – New Delhi, India

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI during his visit to Delhi met Dr. Amit Mitra, Secretary General FICCI at Headquarters of FICCI on 20th September 2010 at New Delhi to exchange views on areas of mutual cooperation and sought enhanced role of FICCI to further promote SAARC CCI activities in the region.

During course of discussion, President SAARC CCI informed Secretary General FICCI about some important initiatives of SAARC CCI undertaken during his tenure commenced from January 2010 and said that the leadership of SAARC CCI was keen to improve people-to-people interaction in the region. He said that since FICCI had a sound R&D set up, it can help SAARC CCI to initiate R&D based reports to help foster the regional economic cooperation

He requested the management of FICCI to recommend to the Government of India to undertake flexible Visa policy particularly towards Bangladesh and Pakistan in the larger interest of the regional economic cooperation. He said that he was keen to lead a SAARC CCI delegation to call on Ministers for Interior and External Affairs of Government of India and Pakistan to seek their support for increase in SAARC Visa Stickers in the forthcoming SAARC Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Affairs. Dr. Amit Mitra, Secretary General, FICCI assured of all possible cooperation.

### »» Call on with Hon'ble Commerce Minister of Bangladesh, December 22, 2010 – Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General SAARC CCI called on Hon'ble Minister of Bangladesh Lt. Col. (Retd.) Muhammad Faruk Khan, MP on December 22, 2010 to exchange views of areas of mutual interest. On this occasion, Mr. Annisul Huq and Mr. Tabish briefed the Hon'ble Commerce Minister about the role and functions of SAARC CCI towards promotion of economic cooperation in South Asia and sought assistance of the Government of Bangladesh for the 4th



## SAARC CCI President Activities



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI with Hon'ble Minister of Bangladesh Lt. Col. (Retd.) Muhammad Faruk Khan, MP*

SAARC Business Leaders Conclave which was scheduled to take place at Dhaka, Bangladesh in the first week of May 2011. The Commerce Minister ensured all possible cooperation in this regard and hoped the 4th SBLC hosted by FBCCI will help promote further economic cooperation in South Asia and the business community of Bangladesh will get larger benefits from the most prestigious event of SAARC CCI.

During course of discussion Hon'ble Commerce Minister of Bangladesh said that the SAARC could be instrumental to alleviate poverty and bring about peace and prosperity provided India and Pakistan positively change their mindset and make serious efforts for regional integration of South Asia. He was of the opinion that due to political rift between to major players of South Asia, the SAARC was unable to achieve the objectives for which it was created 25 years ago. He regarded hunger and poverty were the real enemies of humanity and asked the leadership of SAARC CCI to use this platform more effectively to defuse political tension through trade diplomacy. He admired the role of SAARC CCI for voice the concerns of the Private Sector under the leadership of Mr. Annisul Huq.

### » SAARC CCI Delegation calls on Hon'ble Minister of Commerce, Bangladesh, 15th January, 2011 – Dhaka, Bangladesh



SAARC CCI delegations' call on Hon'ble Minister of Commerce Mr. Muhammad Faruk Khan (Bangladesh), the delegates include (L-R) Mr. Iqbal Tabish-SG SAARC CCI, Mr. Siegfried Herzog-Regional Director FNF, Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed-VP SAARC CCI, Mr. A.K. Azad-President FBCCI, Mr. Tariq Sayeed- Immediate Past President & Chairman Finance Committee SAARC CCI, , Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney –Snr. VP, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik-VP, Mr. Annisul Huq-President, Mr. Md. Hasen Ali-EC Member, Brig. Gen (rtd) Helal Uddin Ahmed-Director (Research & Coordination) of SAARC CCI and Mr. Manish Mohan-Joint Director & Head-South Asia-FICCI.

A 10 member delegation of SAARC CCI led by Mr. Annisul Huq President SAARC CCI and Mr. A.K. Azad, President FBCCI called on Hon'ble Mr. Muhammad Faruk Khan, Minister of Commerce Government of Bangladesh on 15th January, 2011 in Dhaka. The objective of the call on was to seek support of the Government of Bangladesh particularly for 4th SBLC, which was scheduled to take place in Dhaka in collaboration with FBCCI during 2011.

Delegation briefed the Hon'ble Minister about the significance of SAARC Business Leaders Conclave, which provides an ample opportunity for image building of the host country and plays an important role to provide mutual trade among the member countries, besides addressing several other important issues.

Hon'ble Commerce Minister has assured all possible cooperation to SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry to successfully organize the 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave (SBLC). He appreciated the role of SAARC CCI in promoting regional economic cooperation and urged upon the business community to create strong lobby with the government to voice their concerns and impress upon them to resolve political issues, which was real hurdle to the economic growth of South Asia.

The delegation comprised Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed-VP SAARC CCI, Mr. A.K.Azad-President FBCCI, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney-Snr VP, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik-VP, Mr. Tariq Sayeed-Immediate Past President & Chairman Finance Committee SAARC CCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish-SG SAARC CCI, Mr. Siegfried Herzog-Regional Director FNF, Mr. Md. Hasen Ali-EC Member, Brig. Gen (rtd) Helal Uddin Ahmed-Director (Research & Coordination) of SAARC CCI, Mr. Manish Mohan-Joint Director & Head-South Asia-FICCI and Mr. Subodh Kumar, Executive Programs-FNF.

### » SAARC CCI delegations (Pakistan Chapter) calls on High Commission of Pakistan in Bangladesh, January 2011 - Dhaka, Bangladesh

A four member delegation of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry including Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, Mr. Zubair F. Tufail, Life Member SAARC CCI and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General called on H.E. Ashraf Qureshi, High Commissioner of Pakistan at Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka.



*SAARC CCI delegation (Pakistan Chapter) including Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President and Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President called on H.E. Ashraf Qureshi (2nd from left). Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI and Mr. Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani Counselor and Mr. Zubair F. Tufail, Life Members SAARC CCI are also present.*

The delegation exchanged views on Pak- Bangladesh relations particularly in view of SAFTA. The Delegation briefed the High Commissioner about 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave, which is scheduled to take place in Dhaka in the First week of May, 2011.

H.E. Ashraf Qureshi, High Commissioner of Pakistan said that the Bangladesh was the third largest trade partner of Pakistan in South Asian region, the bilateral trade of which after witnessing more than 20% per annum for last three years has crossed \$500 million in the year 2009-2010.

## SAARC CCI President Activities

He said that there was a need to negotiate Early Harvest Program between Pakistan and Bangladesh and suggested to the Private sector of Pakistan to evolve a comprehensive policy for trade with Bangladesh and urged upon the Government to reduce tariffs on import of such Jute and other products, which are not manufactured in Pakistan.

Pakistan High Commissioner said that the demand of Wheat and Rice in Bangladesh is growing day-by-day and Pakistan has the capacity to meet the demand of these commodities, however, it requires transaction between Governments instead of trade with the Private Sector in Pakistan. "TCP may serve as the guaranteeing body to deal with such transactions to avoid inherited Tender" said Mr. Qureshi and added that the High Commission, despite of its constraints, is fully engaged for the promotion of trade particularly through exchange of business delegation in the events like WETEX and Expo Karachi.

Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik and Mr. Tariq Sayeed said that FPCCI and SAARC CCI were pursuing proactive strategy to further improve bilateral trade relations between two countries, however, they demanded of the Governments to provide trade enabling environment through reduction in Tariff, Para-tariff and Non-Tariff barriers. They sought substantial freight subsidy by air cargo to Pakistan exporters for increase share of Pakistani exports in the potential market of Bangladesh. They endorsed the proposal of High Commissioner for negotiating Early Harvest Program with Bangladesh, which would lead towards signing of FTA between two countries.



## SAARC CCI Council Activities





### » Seminar on Global Warming and Climate Change, 18th January, 2010 - Dhaka, Bangladesh

SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneur Council organized a seminar on "Global Warming and Climate Change" on 18th January, 2010 in association with WEAB, Dhaka. The speaker Dr. Ainun Nishat, a noted conservationist and senior adviser to IUCN, Asia, delivered a brief presentation on climate change and its



effect on Bangladesh. He stressed the need for SAARC countries to be unified before the Mexico summit to be held in November this year. Mrs. Naaz Farhana, Vice Chairperson-SCWEC, Bangladesh also spoke on the above subject and Mrs. Rehana Rahman, President, WEAB delivered the vote of thanks. The seminar was attended by the Women Entrepreneur of the SAARC Countries.

### » Valedictory function of Italian Lace products at Chenchelguda Jail, 11th February, 2010 - Hyderabad, India

Mrs. V.L. Indira Dutt, Chairperson, strongly feels that, SCWEC, in its endeavour to enable women economically and otherwise independent, should not loose sight of the less privileged segment. The entire theme of Empowerment of Women revolves around action to provide skill based training and access to resources and knowledge. It is the firm belief of SCWEC that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental rights that lie at the heart of development.

A holistic approach to the subject should ideally include basic training in some skills suited to individual abilities which will inculcate in them the value of economic independence and empower them to be useful citizens.

It was with this aim that SCWEC in association with NABARD sponsored this 90-day training programme in "Italian Lace making" for the women inmates of Chenchalguda prison in Hyderabad. This is one of the vocations that is of practical value and has the potential for immediate benefits to the trainees. Beyond enriching them with an expertise in a skill that will earn them a livelihood, it will motivate them to lead a normal life.

Primarily, as SCWEC has always emphasised, the need of the hour is to take a step forward in teaching women the positive aspects of dignity and self pride in their ability to stand on their own. It is SCWEC's understanding that every step taken to empower women, wherever they may be placed and whatever their status, leads to progress in this direction and more so in this case, as already said, to endow these inmates with the power to make their lives meaningful and enrich their families and progenies in the way that they would, in turn, lead their own lives.

Mr. Narasimha Reddy, IPS, Addl I.G.-Prisons was the Chief Guest who distributed certificates to the participants. Mr. B. Sunil Kumar, IPS, Mrs. Jayanthi of NABARD, Mrs. Manjula Reddy & Mrs. Padma Rajagopal – Advisory Committee Members of SCWEC Hyderabad also participated in this programme and Mrs. Bilquis Rehana, Superintendent-Central Prison for Women, proposed vote of thanks.



The Organising Committee of Hyderabad region has put in great efforts to make this programme a success, not to speak of the co-operation and assistance of the authorities of this institution. Mrs. Dutt, on behalf of SCWEC, thanked the Jail authorities who made this possible by giving SCWEC the opportunity to be of service to the inmates and the community at large. She also placed on record the complete co-operation from all quarters of the Government of Andhra Pradesh and conveyed her special thanks to all the Officers who enabled SCWEC to put together this Training Programme.

### »» International Women SME's Business Meet: Trade Fair, 8th March, 2010 - Katmandu, Nepal

The 100th International Women's Day Mega event was a four day program focusing on women entrepreneurs from Nepal and the South Asian region. The event was focused on taking significant steps towards women's equity in trade by promoting their market linkages. It also focused on the empowerment of women entrepreneurs through skill development and learning to explore and make use of the opportunities.



*Official Inauguration of the 100th International Women's Day, International Women SMEs Business Meet: Trade Fair by Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal.*

## SAARC CCI Council Activities

The core organizations involved in the event were Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal (FWEAN), Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Women Entrepreneurship Development Committee (FNCCI - WEDC) and Fair Trade Group Nepal (FTG).



*Inauguration of International Women SMEs Business Meet: Trade Fair ; Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal (right side of the PM, Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, President FWEAN), on 8th March.*

The event took place in Bhrikuti Mandap from the 8th to the 11th of March. It started off with the official Inauguration Ceremony of the International Women SME's Business Meet: Trade Fair by Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal who was the chief guest for the event.

The exhibition showcased products using traditional skills, focusing not only on Nepalese craftsmanship but also on South Asian skills for growth and economic empowerment. Products exhibited included textile, handicrafts, agro based products, non timber forest products, and tourism sector.

### »» 100th International Women's Day, 9th March, 2010 - Kathmandu, Nepal

A talk program was organized with Dr. Kiran Bedi as the keynote speaker. She is India's former highest Indian Police Service woman officer and a speaker on social, professional and leadership issues. Dr. Kiran Bedi has been voted as India's most admired woman and fifth amongst all women. The program was anchored by TV



*Ms. Bidya Bhandari Minister of Defence, Nepal and Dr. Kiran Bedi with the SAARC delegates.*



personality Mr. Bhushan Dahal. The talk program had 350 guests with the presence of Ms. Bidya Bhandari, Minister of Defense as the Chief Guest.

### Outcome

- The program's objective was to focus on women's strength and ingenuity from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. With the participants comprising of activists, professionals and entrepreneurs from SAARC member countries, NGOs and thought-leaders across sectors and countries it was an opportunity for women from the SAARC countries to come together and express their solidarity and celebrate past achievements. This event was also a strong platform for regional networking on the occasion of 100th International Women's Day 2010.
- The Program's objective was to build trade linkages between SMEs, women, marginalized entrepreneurs and producers to other actors in supply chain.
- The SMEs Business Meet Trade Fair helped to facilitate opportunities of outsourcing of new/unique raw materials (such as handmade paper, herbs, natural fiber, organic products and hand woven yarns with traditional designs).
- Activities through SCWEC Brand Building for Handicrafts and Agro-products focused on skill promotion of women and marginalized entrepreneurs and producers.

### »» Chance Workshop – SCWEC Brand Building for Handicrafts and Agro-products – Regional Co-operation through exchange of Information and Skills, 9th - 11th March, 2010 – Kathmandu, Nepal



The workshop was organized by SAARC Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC), India, in co-operation with InWent, Germany. Experts from India conducted the workshop to identify brand building in the handicrafts and agro-products sector. It was like a pilot exercise for the Nepali women entrepreneurs to identify their problems in product development and brand building. It focused on brand building, technical know how and development of quality products. It was a three day workshop

### »» 3 months Italian Lace making training program, 24th March, 2010 - Ungutoor village, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh

Italian Lace Making training program was inaugurated on 24 March, 2010 at Ungutoor village, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh for 50 rural women. The workshop designed for agriculture labourers was sponsored by Mr. Vamshi, Trustee of Smt. Vallabani Aruna Memorial Trust, Ungutoor (Village and Mandal), Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh. The training program was for 3 months.

SAARC Women Parliamentarians pay courtesy call to SAARC CCI Secretariat, 25th May, 2010 – Islamabad,

## SAARC CCI Council Activities



*SAARC Women Parliamentarians at SAARC CCI Secretariat in Islamabad. Photograph includes Ms. Fawzia Koofi (Afghanistan), Mrs Thewang Lahmo (Bhutan), Shawket Ara Begum (Bangladesh), Ranee Narah (India), Ms Mohammadi Siddiqi MP/Chairperson Women's Parliamentary Caucus (Nepal), Ms. Beelam Hussain, Tasnim Siddiqui and Shakila Khanum (Pakistan) and Ms. Rosy Senanayake (Sri Lanka), Ms. Ayesha Zaheer, Vice Chairperson, SCWEC Ms. Shireen Khan, Parliamentarian (Pakistan) and Executive Member of SCWEC, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General and Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Former Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI.*

### Pakistan

A 10-member group of SAARC Women Parliamentarians paid a courtesy call to SAARC CCI Secretariat in Islamabad on 25th May 2010. The delegation included Ms. Fawzia Koofi (Afghanistan), Mrs Thewang Lahmo (Bhutan), Shawket Ara Begum (Bangladesh), Ranee Narah (India), Ms Mohammadi Siddiqi MP/Chairperson Women's Parliamentary Caucus (Nepal), Ms. Beelam Hussain, Tasnim Siddiqui and Shakila Khanum (Pakistan) and Ms. Rosy Senanayake (Sri Lanka). The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Ayesha Zaheer, Vice Chairperson, SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC), Pakistan Chapter and Ms. Shireen Khan, Parliamentarian (Pakistan) and Executive Member of SCWEC.

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI welcomed the delegation and briefly enlightened them about scope and nature of activities of SAARC CCI and its role towards promotion of economic liberalization in South Asia. He said that the region had enormous potential of intra-regional trade to the tune of \$ 50 billion in 2009, however, due to non-cooperation; the member nations could tap only 24% of its indicative potential. He urged upon the Women Parliamentarians to play their due role towards promoting economic ties in the region, which was annually bearing loss of \$ 72 billion as the cost of non-cooperation mainly linked to political issues, hampering growth of the region. He further elaborated that women's role in socio-economic activities of SAARC nations is vital as their participation is more than 50% in small businesses and 70% in agricultural activities

Mr. Zubair A. Malik, former Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI regarded political bottlenecks and mindset as the biggest hurdles in smooth functioning of SAFTA, the only document which provides the region an excellent opportunities for regional economic development. He further added that since parliamentarians are directly involved in policy-making process, they can play greater role toward resolution of political issues.

The parliamentarians exchanged views on socio-economic issues and assured all possible cooperation to SAARC CCI to voice the concerns of business community on appropriate fora. They were of the opinion that the socio-political stability and social security was must for regional economic integration of South Asia.

### » Valedictory function of Italian Lace products, 3rd July, 2010 - Ungutoor, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh

SCWEC in association with Smt. Vallabani Aruna Memorial Trust, who totally sponsored this 90-day training programme in "Italian Lace making" for the rural women. The entire theme of Empowerment of Women revolves around action to provide skill based training and access to resources and knowledge. It is the firm belief of SCWEC that gender equality and women's empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development.



A holistic approach to the subject should ideally include basic training in some skills suited to individual abilities which will inculcate in them the value of economic independence and empower them to be useful citizens.



SCWEC has always enjoyed wholesome co-operation from the respective region. Mrs. Indira Dutt thanked Mrs. Pankaja Sree Vamsi for having sponsored this programme and Mrs. Padma Rajagopal, Executive Committee Member of SCWEC who has initiated this Training Programme. The Chief Guest was Hon'ble. Ratna Bindu, Mayor Vijawada Municipal Corporation, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh.

### »» TOT Programme on Food Processing and Eco friendly Handmade paper manufacturing, 23rd July, 2010 – Hyderabad, India

SCWEC has organised a Training of Trainees (TOT) programme, sponsored by Mrs. V.L. Indira Dutt for 15 days from 23rd July 2010, focusing on Food Processing and Eco friendly hand made paper manufacturing and value addition product making at the Association of lady entrepreneurs of Andhra Pradesh (ALEAP), Hyderabad.



The goal of this programme was to foster economic growth and generate employment locally by developing entrepreneurship with special focus on women, for their social and economic empowerment. Women and women entrepreneurs from all SAAV RC countries participated in this programme. The valedictory function of the programme was held on 9th August, 2010.

### »» SCWEC Executive Committee Meeting and Delegation, 6-7th August, 2010 – Jaipur, India

Leading thirty five women entrepreneurs from all seven South-Asian countries named India, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka Conglomerated in Jaipur to attend Executive Committee Meeting and parallel functions.

Ms. V.L. Indira Dutt, Chairperson SCWEC, MD KCP Limited presided the SCWEC Executive Committee

## SAARC CCI Council Activities



*SCWEC delegates with Mayor of Jaipur at Boochra House, Jaipur*

Meeting. The renowned women delegates who participated in the meeting included Ms. Ayesha Zaheer from Pakistan, Ms. Nasreen Fatema Awal from Bangladesh, Ms. Pramila Rijal from Nepal, Ms. Damchae Dem from Bhutan and Ms. Ramya Weerakoon from Sri Lanka. Ms. Namita Gautam Director of Sleepwell, Dr. Kusum Ansal entrepreneur, Mrs. Ghazala Saifi from Pakistan and author Dr. Shehla Javed Akram, President of Central and North Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry also attended the international event.

### » SCWEC organized a one day seminar on Encouraging Innovative Entrepreneurship in India, 7th August, 2010 – Jaipur, India

The Chief Guest of the seminar was Ms. Dipali Goenka, the Executive Director, Welspun India Ltd. (WIL), part of the US\$3 Billion Welspun group.



*(L-R) Neetu Jain , Neeta Boochra , Dipali Goenka , V.L. Indira Dutt & N.K. Chaudhary*

Ms. Goenka while addressing pointed out those women, comprising 60 per cent of the population in the SAARC countries, should produce more “visionary entrepreneurs” with new solutions for creation of wealth for multiplicity of stakeholders.

Ms. V.L. Indra Dutt, Chairperson, SCWEC said while the single window system had not been very successful in different states, there should be special provisions for extra funds for innovative models of development. She also called for establishment of special cells at the district level for protection of consumers' rights.

Mr. N.K. Choudhary, Managing Director of Jaipur Rugs Company enthralled the audience with his presentation from the heart. He stressed for more and more gatherings like this promote mutual understanding as well as cooperation in various fields.

Ms. Goenka concluded her great entrepreneurship concept enlightenment journey by pointing out some very significant determinants of encouraging innovative entrepreneurship for a developing nation. Which were as follow:

- Benefits to business with Minority Enterprises
- Businesses run by Women or differently –abled staff
- Tax holidays for innovative ventures
- Easier and faster patenting process. Mrs. Pramila Rijal, Vice Chairperson SCWEC (Nepal) offered vote of thanks.

### » SAARC Regional Cooperation towards Product Quality Improvement, 16-17th August, 2010 - Chennai, India

SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneur Council organized a programme on Product Quality Management and International Certification for Business Women in Collaboration with InWent Germany on 16th and 17th August, 2010 at Chennai. The objective of the programme was to familiarize the participants on how to move towards UNESCO certification. The participants were the entrepreneurs from the SAARC countries.



*Participants of the workshop*

The participants from Bhutan found it difficult to export their silk products due to high cost and this could be brought down by reducing the weight of silk keeping to their traditional designs. Mrs. V L Indra Dutt, Chairperson, SCWEC suggested that Bhutan could send one or two weavers to India to learn new techniques in Handloom Research Institute at Salem, South India for four months on how to support regional cooperation within SAARC countries.

All the associations who participated in the program felt that SCWEC membership should be opened up for associations of all countries for women entrepreneurs to join hands and move on with zeal and enthusiasm and power. By the Regional Cooperation SAARC countries could empower and network with women entrepreneurs. The participants should exchanged and use their knowledge as resource for development.

SCWEC - CHANCE workshop - Marketing through Internet in collaboration with InWEnt., 2-3rd October, 2010



## SAARC CCI Council Activities

- Dhaka, Bangladesh

"CHANCE workshop- Marketing through Internet" has been successfully completed, in collaboration with InWEnt during the month of October in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The workshop commenced with an introduction and welcome speech. Throughout the project Dr. Kala Gopala krishnan was very constructive and resourceful. Key resource persons were Mr. Srinivas Shenoy and Mr. Ram Bhat. Participants were asked to talk about their expectations from the workshop. They wanted to learn more about Internet, how to use internet for marketing, how to interact with other through internet, new strategies of internet marketing, becoming familiar with internet etc.

Session by session some vital topics such as, 'How internet can be used for the associations and members, Internet communication, Searching the internet for information, dissemination, website, Search engine marketing and email marketing, social networking site, internet security etc.' were covered. It was a two days intensive course.

All participants were provided with a certificate. Before joining the workshop they were nervous about learning new technology. During their departure they were full of confidence to benefit from the knowledge gained. This effort would definitely assist the women entrepreneurs to thrive with their career and to contribute to economic development in the region.

### »» Ms. V.L. Indira Dutt, handed over the Chairpersonship of SCWEC to Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, 12th January, 2011 - Katmandu, Nepal



*Ms. V.L. Indira Dutt, outgoing chairperson of SCWEC is symbolically handing over the Chair of SCWEC to Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, incoming Chairperson of SCWEC, Katmandu, Nepal in presence of Mr. Annisul Huq President SAARC CCI and Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal)*

Mrs. V.L. Indira Dutt, handed over the Chairpersonship of SCWEC to Mrs. Pramila Acharya Rijal, in Katmandu, Nepal. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Hon'ble Sri Sarat Singh Bhandari, Minister for Tourism & Civil Aviation of Nepal. President SAARC CCI Mr. Annisul Huq and Secretary General appreciated the remarkable services of SCWEC under the chair of Ms. Dutt and expressed confidence that the chair under the leadership of Nepal further promote women entrepreneurship in the region. The other participants were Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Secretary General, SAARC, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Officiating President of FNCCI, Nepal, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI, Nepal and other dignitaries from SAARC Countries.

### SCWEC Workshop on Product Quality Improvement, 4-6th June, 2011 – Delhi, India

Workshop on SCWEC Product Quality Improvement- Certifications in the Handicrafts, Textile and Food Sectors was organized on 4th -6th June, 2011 in Delhi (India) by benchmarks for quality. Representatives of



*SCWEC Workshop on Product Quality Improvement*

SCWEC from the handicrafts, textile and food sectors from all the SAARC member states participated in the workshop. SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council in association with CHANCE. The aim of this workshop was to raise the quality of products produced by businesswomen in the SAARC.

### » SCWEC Marketing Outlet & Exposure Visit to Aarong, 4-5th July, 2011 – Dhaka, Bangladesh

SCWEC Marketing Outlets & Exposure Visit to Aarong was organized on 4th & 5th July 2011 in Dhaka by SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council in association with GIZ. The main objective of the workshop was to establish a SCWEC Marketing Outlet in all SAARC member countries. Mr. Annisul Huq - President SAARC CCI, Mr. A. K. Azad - President FBCCI, Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal - Chairperson SCWEC, Mr. Abdul Awal Mintoo - Past President FBCCI, Ms. Nasreen Awal Mintoo - Vice Chairperson SCWEC (Bangladesh), Ms. Kala Gopalakrishnan - Project Manager GIZ (India) and Mr. Ram Bhat – Moderator were present in the event. SCWEC members from all member countries actively participated in the workshop.



*SCWEC Marketing Outlets & Exposure Visit to Aarong*

The Closing ceremony of the workshop was held on 5th July 2011 in Dhaka. In the closing ceremony certificates were distributed among the participants by the Chief Guest Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI.



### »» SCWEC workshop on Strategic Planning and Financial Management for Business Women Associations, 15-17th July, 2011 – Hyderabad, India

Workshop on Strategic Planning and Financial Management for Business Women Associations (BWAs) was organized on 15th-17th July, 2011 in Hyderabad (India) by SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council in association with CHANCE. The welcome address was given by Ms. K Ramadevi- President ALEAP and Dr. Kala Gopalakrishnan-GIZ, India. The Chief Guest of the workshop was Ms. Chandana Khan-Principle Secretary-Government of Andhra Pradesh. The introductory session was followed by technical session.



*SCWEC Workshop on Strategic Planning and Financial Management*

Participants belonged to all member countries. The Closing ceremony of the workshop was held on 17th July 2011 in ALEAP premises. In the closing ceremony certificates were distributed among the participants.

SAARC CCI Meetings  
(EC & GA)



### »» 47th Executive Committee Meeting & 14th GA Meeting of SAARC CCI

The 47th Executive Committee Meeting & 14th GA Meeting of SAARC CCI was held in Dhaka on 17th January, under the Chair of Mr. Tariq Sayeed, President SAARC CCI. Mr. Tariq Sayeed presented before the house an overview of SAARC CCI during his term as President of SAARC CCI. The Private Sector of South Asia, representing all nations of SAARC greatly acknowledged the tremendous contribution rendered by Mr.



*Mr. Tariq Sayeed, chairs last EC & GA meeting as President of SAARC CCI, in Dhaka on 17th Jan 2010. (L-R) Mr. Bap Kinga, Vice President-SAARC CCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General- SAARC CCI, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President-SAARC CCI, Mr. Annisul Huq, incoming President of SAARC CCI and Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President- SAARC CCI (Pakistan) are also present at the occasion.*

Sayeed during his two year term as president of SAARC CCI. Mr. Bap Kinga, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bhutan), Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed, VP-SAARC CCI (Bangladesh), Mr. M.K. Saharia, Mr. B.K. Bajoria, Executive Committee Members of SAARC CCI (India), Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shreshta, VP-SAARC CCI( Nepal), Mr. Wikramaekay, VP-SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka) and EC and General Assembly Members of SAARC CCI from Pakistan Mr. Fazal Elahi, Mr. Mansha Churra, Mr. Mumtaz Sheikh, Mr. Aftab Ahmed Barlas, Engr. Daroo Khan, Mr. Hameed Akhtar Chadda, Vice President, FPCCI and Mirza Abdur Rehman, GA Member, SAARCCCI and other members highly applauded the policy reforms taken by Mr. Tariq Sayeed, which have been instrumental to promoting economic cooperation in the region. The Executive Committee and General Assembly approved the Annual Audit Accounts of SAARC CCI for the year 2009 and also proposed the strategy to raise the funds for the completion of SAARC CCI Headquarters Building at Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Annisul Huq, newly elected President, SAARC CCI for the term 2010-2011.

The Business Community in South Asia highly applauded the dedicated efforts of Mr. Tariq Sayeed and his EC Members for promotion of economic cooperation in South Asia during their term (2008-09) and termed their tenure as the Golden Era of the history of SAARC CCI since its inception in 1993.

### »» 48th Executive Committee Meeting & 15th GA Meeting of SAARC CCI

The 48th Executive Committee Meeting & 15th GA Meeting of SAARC CCI was held in Dhaka on 18th January, 2010 under the Chair of Mr. Annisul Huq, newly elected President of SAARC CCI. Mr. Huq while acknowledging the services of Mr. Sayeed showed a firm commitment to continue the mission of Mr. Tariq Sayeed towards institutional capacity building and promotion of economic relation in South Asia. The 48th EC & 15th GA Meeting were attended by newly Elected Executive Committee and General Assembly Members of SAARC CCI for year 2010-2011. The meeting commenced with welcome remarks from President SAARC CCI. After that the new Executive Committee Members and General Assembly Members introduced themselves with the house. Mr. Annisul Huq, newly elected President, SAARC CCI, presented policy statement based on some of the focused areas, on which SAARC CCI will undertake relevant activities and voice the concerns of the Private Sectors: which are as followings;



*Mr. Annisul Huq (in the middle) while chairing 48th EC & 15th GA presents policy statement for his two year Presidency of SAARC CCI (2010-2011) in presence of outgoing President, Mr. Tariq Sayeed. The others includes (R-L) Mr. Kosala Wikramnayake, Vice President SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka), Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh), Mr. Pradeep Shreshta, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal) & Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General-SAARC CCI at the meeting.*

1. Institutional Capacity-building of SAARC CCI
2. Global outreach Strategy- Striking new partnerships with International Organizations
3. Focus of Private Sector Representation in SAARC Ministerial and Summit Level
4. Adoption of practical business initiatives through B-2-B Meetings
5. Sectoral initiatives Promotion of Joint Ventures in mutually interested areas
6. Encouraging people-to-people interaction through promotion of socio-cultural and business delegations
7. Image building of SAARC CCI as a true consultative body to SAARC on economic issues
8. Transformation of SAARC CCI into R&D Based institution
9. Encouragement and Promotion of Membership (100 from each member countries in addition to present)
10. Strengthening linkage between SAARC CCI and SAARC Secretariat
11. Funds generation for SAARC CCI Building
12. Working for more liberal Visa Regime in South

Mr. Annisul Huq, President of SAARC CCI, also wished to set up a Research & Development Department within SAARC CCI Secretariat so that SAARC CCI could play an effective role as a consultative body to SAARC and provide valued feedback on economic issues. The house welcomed Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI future initiatives on focused areas and assured of their cooperation to achieve the objectives of the policy endeavors. The Executive Committee & General Assembly members approved the SAARC CCI Calendars of events and the Annual Budget for the year 2010.

### »» 49th Executive Committee Meeting of SAARC CCI

The 49th Executive Committee Meeting of SAARC CCI was held under the chair of Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI on 20th April, 2010, Nepal. Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President (India), Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sharestha, Vice President (Nepal) and Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President (Pakistan), Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President and Mr. Padma Jyoti, Past President, of SAARC CCI were also present in the meeting. The major agenda items of the meeting were, establishment of R & D department, Change in Composition of SAARC CCI Building Headquarters trust, date & venue of 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave and proposed amendments in SAARC CCI Constitution. The house unanimously decided to



## SAARC CCI Meetings (EC & GA)



(L-R) Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sharestha, Vice President (Nepal), Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President (Pakistan), Mr. Annisul Huq, President, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President (India), SAARC CCI.

establish permanent Research & Development department in its headquarters in Islamabad, in order to provide credible information and data for the usage by the SAARC member governments to promote intra regional trade. The house also decided to organize 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave in Dhaka by the end of 2010. The technical committee has been given the task to review SAARC CCI constitution and submit their recommendation to further fine tune it before the 50th Executive Committee Meeting. Earlier a dinner was hosted by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sharestha, Vice President (Nepal) in honor of Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI on 19th April 2010.

### »» 50th Executive Committee Meeting of SAARC CCI

The 50th Executive Committee Meeting of SAARC CCI was held in Goa, India on 4th August, 2010 under the chair of Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI. The main agenda item of meeting included amendment in constitution of SAARC CCI, proposal for formation of Advisory Council of SAARC CCI, approval of SAARC CCI response paper to 16th SAARC Summit and update on 4th & 5th SBLC.



(L-R) Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, Mr. Annisul Huq, President, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Snr. Vice President, of SAARC CCI, Mr. Subodh Kumar, Executive Programs and Mr. Siegfried Herzog, Regional Director, FNF.



### 51st Executive Committee & 16th General Assembly Meeting of SAARC CCI

The 51st Executive Committee & 16th General Assembly Meeting of SAARC CCI was held in Dhaka, Bangla-



*Mr. Abul Kashem Ahmed, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh), Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, Mr. A K Azad, President, FBCCI, Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sharestha, vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) and Mr. Rajendra Man Sherchan, GA Member, SAARC CCI.*

desh on May 19, 2011 under the chair of Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI. The meeting was attended by representative from national chambers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Secretary General presented the annual performance of SAARC CCI. The meeting endorsed the proposal put forth and approved the amendment in the constitution, annual accounts, and formation of the Council on Shipping. The house formally confirmed Kathmandu as the venue of 4th SAARC Business Leaders Conclave (SBLC). The fourth SAARC Business Leaders Conclave will be organized in Kathmandu, Nepal on 22-23rd September, 2011. The conclave will be organized in cooperation with Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry in partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF). The house appreciated the wonderful performance of SAARC CCI during last one year. At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Salman F. Rehman, Past President SAARC CCI while appreciating the performance of SAARC CCI said that it is time to move from talk to walk. He urged upon National Member Bodies to enhance their role & interest in SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He also proposed to assist SAARC CCI in obtaining donation from the Government of Bangladesh for construction of SAARC CCI Headquarters Building in Islamabad.

### »» 52nd Executive Committee Meeting of SAARC CCI

The 52nd Executive Committee Meeting of SAARC CCI was held in Kathmandu, Nepal on September 23, 2011 under the chair of Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI. The Meeting was attended by representative from national chambers completing the quorum wherein major decision regarding amendments in the SAARC CCI constitution has been approved. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal) and Chairman 4th SBLC congratulated the house for successful conclusion of the conclave.



*(L-R) Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President (Nepal), Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Vice President (India), Mr. Annisul Huq, President, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, Mr. Macky Hashim, Past President of SAARC CCI and Mr. Siegfried Herzog, Regional Director, FNF.*



## SAARC CCI with Global Partners



### »» 5th China-South Asia Business Forum (CSABF), 5-7th June, 2010 – Kunming, China

The 5th China-South Asia Business Forum (CSABF), with a theme of “China-South Asia Cooperation under the background of global economic recovery”, was held in Kunming, Yunan Province on June 5-7, 2010.



*Welcome Luncheon in honour of delegates at 5th China South Asia Business Forum*

China-South Asia Business Forum is the first forum mechanism established for regional economic cooperation between Chinese and SAARC industrial and commercial circles, in the background of ever-increasing mutual trust in politic affairs and continuous economic cooperation between China and south Asian countries. Mr. Qin Guangrong, Governor of Yunnan Province, China inaugurated 5th China South Asia Business Forum. Mr. Guangrong while sharing remarks at inauguration ceremony said China was willing to establish profound economic relations with South Asian countries, which had great complementarities and potential to penetrate in the world 2nd largest economy.

Mr. Wan Jifei, Chairman of Chinese Council for Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) said CCPIT and Chamber of Commerce and Industry in South Asian countries could play bigger role towards promotion of economic cooperation through shared vision and proactive approach.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI, while addressing to inaugural session of forum said that China was required to play a role of big brother and to assist South Asian countries through technical assistance, transformation of technology, reallocation of labour-intensive industries to South Asian Countries, which would practically helpful for promoting bilateral trade and economic cooperation between China and South Asia. He also emphasized for preferential market access to South Asian countries in vast Chinese Market and regarded Chinese investment as a tool to promote China-SAARC Trade which was only \$66 billion as compared with China's trade of \$250 billion with ASEAN countries.

The inaugural session of the 5th China-South Asia Business Forum was also addressed by Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Aylaqi, Minister of Commerce & Industry Afghanistan, Mr. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister of Plantations, Sri Lanka, Mr. Ali Rasheed Hussain, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Maldives, Mr. Sayed Ashraf Islam, Minister of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperation of Bangladesh.

The inaugural session was followed by two parallel sessions i.e. Government's Stimulating Policies and Finance Cooperation and reciprocal collaboration among Enterprise. The latter was moderated by Mr. Tariq Sayeed, patron-in-chief of Pak-China Business Council, former President of SAARC CCI and FPCCI.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, former President of SAARC CCI in his views while moderating the session said that Chinese and South Asia enterprises to establish joint ventures in the areas of mutual interest. He said that South Asian countries were facing huge trade deficit with China, which can be bridged by inflow of Chinese investment in South Asian countries particularly in Pakistan and India, which shared borders and had great complementarities in trade and services.

### » SAARC CCI Leaders appointed on Advisory Panel of CSABF, June 2010 - Kunming, China

The Secretariat of China South Asia Business Forum has appointed Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI from Bangladesh, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President SAARC CCI from Pakistan and Mr. Macky Hashim, Former President SAARC CCI from Sri Lanka as member of the Advisory Panel. They were conferred upon a certificate of appointment by H.E. Luo Zhengfu, the Deputy Governor, Yunnan, China in a ceremony held on the occasion of 5th China-South Asia Business Forum (CSABF) held in Kunming during June 2010.



*H.E. Luo Zhengfu, the Deputy Governor, Yunnan, China presents certificate of appointment to Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI.*

The formation of Advisory panel aims at formulation of strategic planning, and serve as a think tank to advice China and Government and Private Sector in South Asian Countries to undertake compatible measures to further enhance cooperation between two civilizations. The other members of the advisory board include, Mr. M K Saharia Chairman, Centre for Promotion of India-China Cooperation (India), Mr. Azarakhsh Hafizi, Chairman of Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Afghanistan), Mr. Shabir Ahmed Khan, President Bangladesh Indenting Agents Association, Mr. Topgyal Dorji, Chairman of BCCI (Bhutan), Mr. Rajesh Kazi Shrestha, Chairman of Nepal- China CCI, Mr. Kosala Wickramanayake, President FCCISL (Sri Lanka), and Dr. Anura Ekanayake, Chairman Ceylon CCI.

### » The 24th CACCI Conference, Sri Lanka Economic Summit 2010, 5th - 7th July 2010, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The 24th CACCI Conference has been participated by over 130 participants, representing all members bodies of CACCI, which now is a group of 29 countries of Asia- Pacific including Japan, Australia, New Zealand, ASEAN member nations and five South Asian countries i.e. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI chaired of plenary session "Climate Change: Mitigating its Impact on Business and Economic Development" at 24th CACCI Conference on 6th July 2010, the session was addressed by Mr. Takashi Hongo, Special Advisor and Director General for Environment Finance Engineering Department, Japan Bank for International Co-operation, Mr. Renton de Alwis - Former Chairman, Sri Lanka Tourism Board, Ms Shirani Yasarithne - Head, Regional Business & Biodiversity Programme, International Union for Conserving Nature (IUCN), Bangkok and Dr Mehdi Fakheri - Vice President for International Affairs,





*Group photo of Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI along with session speakers.*

Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries & Mines.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI, addressed to the session on "Facing Global and Local Challenges: the New Dynamics for Economic Development" The other speakers in the session includes Dr W Indralal de Silva - Professor and Head, Department of Demography, University of Colombo, Prof Alfred Chan Cheung Ming - Professor and Director, Asia-Pacific Institute of Aging Studies, Hong Kong, Mr. Jerome Pierce, Programs Director, Helpage Sri Lanka, while Ambassador Benedicto V Yujuico - CACCI Executive Vice President was moderating this session.

In addition to Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI and Mr. Tariq Sayeed, immediate past president, SAARC CCI, the SAARC delegation comprised of Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sharestha, Vice President SAARC CCI from Nepal, Mr. Kosala Wikramnayake, Vice President, SAARC CCI and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.

### »» Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI, appointed as Vice President CACCI, 5th July, 2010 – Colombo, Pakistan

Mr. Tariq Sayeed, the immediate Past President of SAARC CCI and the former President, FPCCI has been honored another position at the biggest trade organization of the Asian region, the Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce & Industry (CACCI).



The meeting of advisory Board of CACCI held under the chair of Mr. Chang Harvey at Colombo on 5th July unanimously elected Mr. Sayeed as the Vice President of CACCI for the term 2010-2011. This is the first ever appointment of any Pakistani businessmen on this platform, which as an apex trade organization, represents 29 countries of Asia and the Western Pacific. The Philippines has taken over the Presidency of CACCI for the same term.

### »» Euro-SAARC Economic Cooperation; SAARC Chambers offers collaborative Partnerships, 15th September, 2010 - Paris

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) has offered Eurochambers and International Chambers of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) for collaborative partnerships in the mutually interested areas to enhance economic cooperation between SAARC and EU nations.



*Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI during Transitional Chambers meeting along other distinguish participants.*

Mr. Annisul Huq, President leading a small delegation of SAARC CCI to France, gave detailed presentation during the World Chambers Federation (WCF) General Council held on 15th September 2010 at ICCI Headquarters, Paris. The other delegates included Mr. Thinly Dorji, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bhutan) and Hadi Salahuddin, Life Member, SAARC CCI (Pakistan)

President SAARC CCI also attended Transnational Chambers Board Meeting and offered partnership opportunities particularly in areas of institutional capacity-building of SAARC CCI, R&D based activities, awareness creation on issues impeding growth of business between EU and SAARC, promotion of ATA Carnet System, formation of EU-SAARC Business Council, B-2-B Meetings, exchange of commercial and business information, economic empowerment of Women and young entrepreneurs etc.

Over 20 representatives attended the meeting, which has been hosted annually by the ICC World Chambers Federation since 2002. The meeting took place at ICC headquarters in Paris and provided a rare opportunity for participants to keep pace with developments on issues pertinent to chambers of commerce and their respective business communities. It was also an occasion to discuss the role of transnational chambers, highlight current collaborations and identify potential opportunities.

Meeting participants included representatives from the Chamber of Commerce of the Russian Federation, Junior Chamber International, Ibero American Association for Chambers of Commerce, Conference Permanente des Chambres Consulaires Africaines and Francophones, South Asian, World Chambers Network, China Chamber of International Commerce, Confederation of Asia Pacific Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of the Gulf Cooperation Council Chambers, and Eurochambres.

SAARC countries have more than 22% trade with EU member states and form great deal of complementarities, which shows the potential for bilateral cooperation between Europe and SAARC nations. SAARC CCI had a permanent seat on Governing Body of ICC, WCF and had been involved in promoting economic cooperation between regions.

The ICC, WCF General Council was attended by 63 representatives from 27 countries of the World in addition to 16 EU nations. Mr. Rona Yicali, chair of WCF delivered remarks of welcome, which was followed by Executive Committee and General Council of WCF.

### » 2nd Sichuan-South Asia Business Promotion Seminar, 25th February, 2011, Chengdu, China

The 2nd Sichuan-South Asia business promotion seminar held in Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan Province, China on 25th February 2011. Mr. Zhang Zou-ha, Vice Governor of Sichuan Graced the occasion with his presence. The seminar was also addressed by Mr. Yu Ping, Vice President of CCPIT of Beijing. Mr.



*Group photo of Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Immediate Past President SAARC CCI and Mr. Iqbal Tabish Secretary General SAARC CCI with delegates of SAARC Member countries.*

Annisul Huq, the President SAARC CCI suggested a nine-point agenda while immediate Past President Mr. Tariq Sayeed presented the idea for inclusion of China into SAARC as a full-fledged member and asserted the need for creation of South Asia-China Youth Forum to further deepen historical relationship between two great civilizations of South Asia.

Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI, while addressing to the conference said that China and South Asia being the two oldest civilizations and neighboring countries had a tremendous potential which need to be harnessed through meaning cooperation in mutually interested areas while stating that China was an economic ocean and South Asia had the potential to become part of the ocean. The nine point agenda proposed by SAARC CCI included convening of Sichuan- South Asia Business Summit as a regular annual feature, formation of advisory panel constituting representatives of CCPIT Sichuan Sub-council and South Asian Chambers, sharing of information about the potential and mutually benefitted areas, undertaking sector-specific studies and pre-feasibility reports on core and potential sector, Exchange of fact-finding missions to explore untapped potential in trade and investment, inflow of investment from China to South Asian countries, Preferential market Access to South Asian nations, removal of NTBs and PTBs, provision of 500 multiple business for at least one year period to all South Asian nations, relocation of labour-intensive industries from China to South Asia, investment in infrastructure building to improve connectivity and foster economic cooperation.

Mr. Tariq Sayeed while providing historical perspective of China and South Asia's role in global economy said that from 15th century to mid of eighteen century, the share of China and South Asia was more than 50% and hoped that the if the current trend of economic growth of China and India remained on high trajectory, their can regain prestige in global economy by 2025 and Asia can resume the role of Global economic leader.

Mr. Mostofa Azad Chowdery Babu, Vice President of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President Nepalese Chamber of Commerce (FNCCI), Senator Ghulam Ali, President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry and representatives of other chambers from South Asian countries give presentations on cooperation with China in perspective of their respective countries.

The others prominent speakers including Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President Nepalese Chamber of Commerce (FNCCI), Senator Ghulam Ali, President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry and representatives of other chambers from South Asian countries, gave presentations on cooperation with China in perspective of their respective countries.

### »» SAARC CCI, FPCCI and PBC to work for closer Cooperation, March 2011, Dubai

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI), the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and Pakistan Business Council (PBC) shall extend cooperation to promote economic cooperation between enterprises in UAE and South Asian countries.

PBC invited SAARC CCI for a meeting to explore business opportunities and to engage South Asian Enterprises for promoting intra-SAARC trade. In absence of Mr. Annisul Huq, President SAARC CCI Mr. Tariq Sayeed presented SAARC CCI and signed MoU on behalf of FPCCI with Tahir Hussain Schon, President PBC in a prestigious gathering organized by PBC in capital Club in Dubai. Secretary General SAARC CCI Iqbal Tabish signed MoU to strengthen liaison between Secretariats of SAARC CCI and PBC.

Under the MoU, PCB has offered FPCCI to establish FPCCI liaison office in Dubai. The both side shall take compatible measures to encourage and promote economic cooperation, exchange information, dispatch business delegates and take proactive measures to facilitate businessmen in Pakistan and Pakistani enterprises in UAE.

While addressing Mr. Sayeed said that Dubai as an important commercial hub has been playing an important role in global trade and economy and serves as a gateway to connect Asia, with Gulf and the World and presence of multinational companies in Dubai offered tremendous opportunities for Pakistani businessmen for Joint ventures and investment in mutually interested areas. He hoped that FPCCI liaison office in Dubai will help promote business relations and safeguard the interests of Pakistani enterprises in UAE and particularly focus on attracting FDI in Pakistan from UAE. He asserted the need for involvement of the business councils from Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh based in UAE.

Secretary General SAARC CCI in his presentation briefed the South Asian business community based in Dubai about role, functions and contribution of SAARC CCI for promoting economic cooperation in South Asia and added that the role of South Asian Business community was vital in terms of their contribution for creating employment opportunities and earning foreign exchange for their respective countries.

Presently trade between South Asian countries and UAE is about \$ 25 billion, the closer cooperation amongst South Asian enterprises in Dubai would help augment the trade volume to manifold.

While presenting the activities of PBC Dubai, President Mr. Tahir H. Schon said that his Council was ready to extend all possible cooperation to facilitate South Asian and particularly Pakistani Enterprises for exploring business opportunities in potential market of UAE.

The meeting was attended by Vice President of PBC Mr. Nasir A. Mehmood, and Executive members including Mr. Tahir A. Lakhani, Mr. Tanvir Khawaja, Mr. Mumthaz Muslim etc and representatives from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh business Councils.

### »» Secretary General SAARC CCI appointed as advisor to Asia Pacific Business Forum, 25th July, 2011 - Bangkok

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) has appointed Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) as a member of Advisory Group for Asia Pacific Business Forum (APBF). A preparatory meeting in this respect has been take place on 28th April, 2011 at United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok, which proposed a plan for organizing APBF Agenda 2011 under the theme "Capturing post crisis Business Opportunities in Asia and Pacific region" which is scheduled on July 25-26, 2011 in Bangkok.



Advisory Group for Asia Pacific Business Forum (APBF) has been organized by UNESCAP in collaboration with Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking of Thailand (JSCCIB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Greater Mekong Sub region Business Forum, International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) and the Global Business Initiative on Human Rights.

### »» The 6th China South Asia Business Forum, 5th June, 2011 - Kunming, China

The 6th China South Asia Business Forum was jointly organized by China Council for Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) in Kunming city of Yunnan Province of the Peoples Republic of China on 5th June, 2011. Hon'ble D.M. Jayarathne, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, was the chief guest. Mr. Bai Enpei, Secretary of the Yunnan CPC Committee, Mr. Wang Jinzhen, Vice Chairman of CCPIT, and Mr. Tariq Sayeed, erstwhile SAARC CCI President, among others, attended the opening ceremony. The Chief Guest, while addressing the forum, said that China and South Asian countries can bring about visible change in the global economy through promotion of cross border trade and mutual trust and seize enormous untapped opportunities. The Sri Lankan premier highlighted the need for increased cooperation with South Asian countries in the fields of science & technology, energy, agro-business, and tourism. He sought Chinese investment in South Asian countries to create better complementarities. On behalf of the business community of South Asia, the immediate past President of SAARC CCI, Mr. Tariq Sayeed addressed the forum and presented a 10-point agenda for augmenting economic cooperation between China and South Asia. In his address, Mr. Wang Jinzhen, Vice Chairman CCPIT, said that the recent years witnessed rapid economic development and social progress in China and the South Asia. With regional integration progressing in a steady fashion, China stands ready to work together with its South Asian counterparts to facilitate trade liberalization, remove trade barriers, deepen business cooperation, and promote regional economic cooperation and integration.

The inaugural session of the forum was also addressed by H.E. Bai Enpei, Secretary of Yunnan CPC, Mr. Tariq Puri, Chief Executive of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Dr. Mohammed Sharif Sariff, Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry of Afghanistan and Mr. I.M. Pandey, Counsel General of India Consulate General in Guangzhou. Over 500 business leaders from China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka attended the Forum. Parallel sessions were also held on the topics of "Expanding Trade, Innovative Business Policies and Creating sound Environment for Wider Cooperation" and "Promoting Investment, Infrastructure Building & Cooperation on Energy, Agriculture, and Tourism".

### »» CCPIT Appointed Mr. Tariq Sayeed, former President SAARC CCI as Rotatory Chairman for the 7th China South Asia Business Forum

The China Council for Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) has appointed Mr. Tariq Sayeed, former President SAARC CCI as Rotatory Chairman for the 7th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF) which will be held in June, 2012 in Kunming city of Yunnan Province of China. His appointment came in a advisory group meeting of CSABF under the chairmanship of Mr. Wang Jinzhen, Vice Chairman of CCPIT.



*Mr. Wang Jinzhen, Vice Chairman of CCPIT, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, Past President of SAARC CCI (Pakistan) and Mr. Macky Hashim, Past President of SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka) expressing solidarity between SAARC CCI and CCPIT.*



# Pictorial



## Pictorial



Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI & Chairman 4th SBLC welcoming Hon'ble Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal at 4th SBLC.



Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI presenting SAARC CCI official crest to Hon'ble Mr. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake Former Prime Minister, Sri Lanka.



Mr. Padma Jyoti, Past President, SAARC CCI honoured with gold medal by Hon'ble Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal in recognition of his services.



(L-R) Mr. Annisul Huq, President, SAARC CCI, Mr. Kosala Wikramanayake, Vice President SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka), Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Former Finance & Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake Former Prime Minister, Sri Lanka, Hon'ble Mr. Sarat Singh Bhandari, Minister of Defense, Nepal, Mr. Mahesh K. Saharia, former EC Member, SAARC CCI (India) & CEO, Saharia Group of Companies, India, Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Former EC Member, SAARC CCI (Pakistan)



Hon'ble Mr. Sarat Singh Bhandari, Minister of Defense, Nepal



Begum Salma Ahmed, ex-parliamentarian, Pakistan presenting a copy of her book "Cutting Trees" to Ms. Manisha Koirala, Nepali-Indian Actress and Ms. Pramila Acharya Rijal, Chairperson, SCWEC.



# Pictorial



Group Photo of SAARC delegates with Ms. Sadichha Shrestha, Miss Nepal, 2010.



(L-R) Ms. Manisha Koirala, Nepali-Indian Actress, Social Activist- Nepal, Ms. Reema Khan, renowned Lollywood film Actress, Pakistan, Ms. Ritu Singh Vaidya, Entrepreneur, Model and former Ms. India, Nepal



(L-R) Mr. Jawad Ahmad, CEO, One World Entertainment- Pakistan, Mr. Abrar-ul-Haq, Chairman-Youth Parliament of Pakistan, Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, VC-SYEF, Nepal, Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Chairman SAARC CCI Young, Mr. Anil Shah, CEO Megha Bank, Nepal, Ms. Salma Khan, CEO - School of Leadership and Project Manager - Young Leader's Conference, Pakistan



Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Sr Vice President, SAARC CCI (India) along with Ms. Poonam Dhillon, Film, TV & Stage Actor & Social Worker - India and Ms. Manisha Koirala, Nepali-Indian Actress, Social ctivist- Nepal Mrs. Ayesha Zaheer, vice chairperson, SCWEC.





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