

# 6<sup>th</sup> SAARC BUSINESS LEADERS CONCLAVE 2018

UNLEASHING SHARED PROSPERITY  
THROUGH ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

KATHMANDU, NEPAL  
MARCH 16-18, 2018

The SAARC Business Leaders Conclave 2018 is set to be three days event that brings together the region's economic and business thinkers, doers and change makers on a common platform to discuss, debate and create solutions and opportunities to take South Asia on the path of shared prosperity through economic integration.

A biennial event of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Conclave will feature interactive discussions and deliberations between torchbearers and influential leaders of the South Asian economy.

## TENTATIVE PROGRAM SCHEDULE

### DAY 1: Friday, March 16, 2018

17:00 – 18:30 INAUGURAL PROGRAM

- Chief Guest: Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal **Mr. KP Sharma Oli**
- Welcome Address: SCCI President **Mr. Suraj Vaidya**
- Address by FNCCI President **Mrs. Bhawani Rana**
- Address by FNF Regional Director **Dr. Ronald Meinardus**
- Address by H.E. SAARC Secretary General **Mr. Amjad B. Sial**
- Address by Hon. Industry, Commerce and Supply Minister of Nepal **Mr. Matrika Prasad Yadav**
- Special Address Chief Guest Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal **Mr. KP Sharma Oli**
- Vote of thanks: SAARC CCI Vice President **Mr. Om Bahadur Rajbhandary**

19:00 Welcome Dinner Hosted by Government of Nepal  
Venue: Hyatt Regency Kathmandu

## DAY 2: Saturday, March 17, 2018

### 8:00-8:50 REGISTRATION

9:00-10:00

#### PLENARY SESSION 1

##### UNLEASHING SOUTH ASIA: A MANTRA FOR SHARED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

South Asia is the fastest growing region in the world, but still there are plenty of challenges including the internal challenges of meeting and overcoming policy, fiscal and financial vulnerabilities. All South Asian countries have liberalized their foreign investment laws and rules and are actively competing for international investment. But there are very few joint ventures involving businessmen from various countries within the region. Emergence of truly South Asian multinationals successful in the global economic space is must for shared prosperity. The panel will discuss models for building better business partnerships and increase the intra-regional capital flows and ways to unlock the potential of regional economic cooperation and integration while building deeper public-private collaborations.

Moderator:

1 **Mr. Nischal Nath Pandey**, Director, Center for South Asian Studies

Panelists:

1 **Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire**, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce (Nepal)

2 **H.E. Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri**, Ambassador, Embassy of India in Kathmandu

3 **Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik**, Former President, FPCCI (Pakistan)

4 **Mr. Macky Hashim**, Former President, SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka)

10:00-11:00

#### PLENARY SESSION 2

##### POLITICAL & ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE FOR GROWTH: THE WAY FORWARD

South Asia needs technological, economic and political innovations to resolve the conflicts and remove barriers for economic and political cooperation in the region. The ability of the South Asian leadership of all walks of life to look beyond the current issues and problems will determine the state of our cooperation and also the future of our people. The session will focus on how the leaders and opinion makers of South Asia can help create commonality of interests and remove the basis for conflicts in the region.

Moderator:

1 **Ms. Sumnima Udas**, CNN International Correspondent

Panelist:

1 **Hon'ble Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal**, Former Prime Minister (Nepal)

2 **Mr. Salman F. Rahman**, PSD Advisor to Prime Minister and President of Bangladesh Awami League (Bangladesh)

### 11:00-11:30 TEA BREAK

**11:30 – 12:30**

**PLENARY SESSION 3**

**SOUTH ASIA: BUILDING PARTNERSHIP IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

South Asia needs to be globally competitive, if it is to ensure shared prosperity to the people. The objective of South Asian integration is not to create a "Fortress South Asia" but to build South Asia which is connected to the Outside world and shows the ways for harmony and prosperity to other regions. This session will focus on building partnership of South Asian operators with businesses, technology and knowledge pool of other regions including the efforts by SCCI in this direction.

Moderator:

**1 Ms. Ayanthi Gurusinghe**, Director, Karpos Consultant

Panelists:

**1 Dr. Chiranjibi Nepal**, Governor, Nepal Rastra Bank (Nepal)

**2 Mr. Aroop Zutshi**, Global President & Managing Partner, Frost & Sullivan

**3 Ms. Sophie Kemkhadze**, Deputy Country Director UNDP (Nepal)

**12:30-13:30**

**PLENARY SESSION 4**

**REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND ENERGY COOPERATION: SUCCESS THROUGH SYNERGY**

The energy sector could play a key role in the region's socio-economic development and be a driver of regional integration. The challenges, increasing demand for energy, sustainable development, low competitiveness, reducing environmental impacts, transfer of knowledge that South Asia countries are experiencing today in this field, call for collective action across the whole region, oriented towards tangible results. Energy policies implemented in the countries of South Asia reflect individual strategies that take little account of the choices made by neighboring countries, despite the proximity of their markets, complementarities that may exist as well as the opportunities for economies of scale. The need for the significant investments required to develop these sectors coupled with the need to organize the associated technology transfers, offer many opportunities to build truly innovative public private partnerships.

Remarks by **H.E. Ms. Alaina B. Teplitz**, US Ambassador to Nepal (US)

Release of SARI/EI Report on Regional Investment Framework and Guidelines

Moderator:

**1 Mr. Anil Chitrakar**, President, Siddharthinc

Presenting Theme Context

**1 Mr. Vijay Kharbanda**, Director, SARI/EI/IRADe

Panelists:

**1 Dasho Sonam P. Wangdi**, Director General, Department of Hydropower and Power System (Bhutan)

**2 Prof. Dr. Mohammad Tamim**, BUET (Bangladesh)

**3 Mr. Deepak Amitabh**, Chairman and Managing Director, PTC India Ltd. (India)

**4 Mr. Michael Satin**, Director, USAID

**13:30-14:30**

**LUNCH**

**PARALLEL SESSION A  
TOURISM PROMOTING AND BRANDING OUR COMMON CULTURAL HERITAGE AND  
FOSTERING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

The travel and tourism sector generates nearly 10% of economic output and supports 1 in 11 jobs in the global economy, making it a critical global industry. With plethora of tourism products, South Asia offers tremendous opportunities in the tourism and hospitality sector. To facilitate South Asia as an integrated tourism hub, it is critical that air, sea and road access be expanded and enhanced and artificial barriers are addressed for visitors to the region and for each of the countries in the SAARC alliance. This panel will explore South Asia tourism branding strategy, aviation networks and investment opportunities, emerging trends and best practices, reinforcing people to people contact to create South Asia as a premier destination in the global market.

Chair by:

SAARC CCI VP **Mr. Mohammad Yonass Mohmand** (Afghanistan)

Moderator:

1 **Mr. Suman Shakya**, Co-Founder, Nepal Entrepreneurs' Hub

Panelists:

1 **Aum Chimmy Pem**, Director, Tourism Council (Bhutan)

2 **Mr. Deepak Raj Joshi**, CEO, Nepal Tourism Board (Nepal)

3 **Mr. Wouter Schalken**, Sr. Tourism Specialist, The World Bank Group (Singapore)

4 **Ms. Minha Faiz**, President, Women in Management (Maldives)

**PARALLEL SESSION B  
AGRIBUSINESS: TARGET - DOUBLING AGRIBUSINESS BY 2030**

The prosperity of the overwhelming portion of the South Asians is not possible without transformation of agriculture as it employs a very large segment of the population. South Asia is probably the one region where humanity started agriculture as mainstay of occupation and subsistence. So, we have a culture of innovation and sustainability of Agriculture. The South Asian region has the potential to use its mountains, plains, oceans and water bodies in the interest of humanity. This session will be devoted to sharing the experiences of South Asian countries in accelerated transformation of the agricultural sector and turning it into a high value, high growth endeavor.

Chair by:

SAARC CCI VP **Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik** (Pakistan)

Moderator:

1 **Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik**, Former President, FPCCI

Panelists:

1 **Ms. Zahra Mirzaie**, President, Qalam Foundation (Afghanistan)

2 **Dr. Posh Raj Pandey**, Executive Chairman, SAWTEE (Nepal)

3 **Ms. Susan Mathew**, CUTS International (India)

**PARALLEL SESSION C**  
**DIGITAL ECONOMY: A FUTURE FOR SOUTH ASIA**

South Asia made a name and fame in providing solutions to the digital economy of the world. South Asia surely needs to integrate itself to the growing global digital economy. The region has unique competitive advantage being well positioned to benefit from the new wave of jobs of the digital economy because of the region's skilled and young workforce, especially in computer science computer engineering, and relative low labor costs.

Chair by:

SAARC CCI VP **Mr Karma Dorjee** (Bhutan)

Moderator:

1 **Mr. Ashutosh Tiwari**, Managing Director, SAFAL Partners

Panelists:

1 **Mr. Dulith Herath**, Chairman and Founder, Kapruka (Sri Lanka)

2 **Mr. Hem Raj Dhakal**, MD, Global IME Technologies (Nepal)

3 **Mr. Michael Foley**, CEO, Grameen Phone Ltd. (Bangladesh)

19:00

**THREADS OF HOPE- FASHION EVENT**

The love for fashion, fabrics and colors is an important part of human culture and identity. Fashion is a global business conservatively estimated to be worth over US\$1.3 trillion or approximately 2% of the value of the world economy. The South Asian bridal fashion market including jewelry is alone estimated to be worth approx. \$100 billion. South Asia is renowned for its weaving and exquisite craftsmanship. For the region, the fashion business could be a life changing economic development opportunity. South Asia is today already home to some of the finest artisans, designers and creative and business people in the global space.

At the SAARC Business Summit 2018, Threads of Hope fashion event will bring a collaborative collection that draws from the region's collective history, the contemporary influences and the culture of humanity. The garments are interpretations of exploring hope and a medium of expression in the wider world of the fashion business. In the discourse of humanity, ultimately fashion is a conversation about who we are... fashion is a beautiful thing.

## DAY 3: Sunday, March 18, 2018

9:00-10:00

### PLENARY SESSION 5

#### TURNING SETBACKS INTO COMBACKS: ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTORS

The governments through international agreements and national policy changes may be providing the framework for increased regional integration, but integration will happen only when the business operators start to operate for the entire regional market and do not confine themselves in basing their operations on the resources available in their national markets. In other words, they should feel that increased regional integration widens their market and resource base. They can be a big supporting voice for increased cooperation. The national chambers and federations as organization of businesses from a country have a large role to play in the process of integration. They are not only a voice of the community, they also can act as change agent in preparing the community to take benefits from the integration. No integration effort will be successful if there is no strong backing from the business community for the process. This session will specially deal on the role to be played by the national chambers and federation in the process. The chamber leaders and activists will be the main stakeholders in the session.

Welcome and moderated by:

1 **Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe**, President, FCCISL

Panelists:

1 **Ms. Shobana Kamineni**, President, CII (India)

2 **Mr. Phub Tshering**, **Secretary General, BCCI**, (Bhutan)

3 **Mr. Shekhar Golchha**, Sr. Vice President, FNCCI (Nepal)

4. **Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik**, Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI (Pakistan)

10:00-11:00

### PLENARY SESSION 6

#### INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE: ENSURING BETTER SOUTH ASIAN CONNECTIVITY

Economic growth and integration needs efficient infrastructure within the country and connectivity among countries within the region. Connectivity has been the weakest link of South Asia. As per the World Bank, South Asia needs 2.5 trillion US dollar worth of investment to bridge the infrastructure gap. Infrastructure especially those infrastructures which connects markets and producers from across national borders, provides the biggest opportunity for partnership. This session will look into developing cooperation in infrastructure development and connecting the South Asia surface-road, rail, water and air transportation to ease movement of goods and people within the region.

Opening Remarks by Hon'ble **Dr. Yubraj Khatiwada**, Minister of Finance, Government of Nepal

Moderator:

1 **Mr. Macky Hashim**, **Former President, SAARC CCI**

Panelists:

1 **Mr. Amir Ramin**, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Afghanistan)

2 **Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji**, Vice Chairman, Singye Group of Companies and Former (Bhutan)

3 **Mr. Sebastian Saez**, Lead Economist-GTRI South Asia, The World Bank

4 **Mr. Shaban Khalid**, CEO, Ittehid SAARC CCI

11:00-11:30

TEA BREAK

**11:30-12:45**

**PLENARY SESSION 7**

**STRENGTHENING CONNECTIVITY AND TRADE IN SOUTH ASIA: THE CASE FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE LOGISTICS**

It is well known that South Asia is one of the least integrated sub-regions in the world, limiting trade and economic cooperation opportunities for both producers and consumers. It is perhaps less well known that women's share of formal trade in South Asia is also extremely low when compared to other Asian sub regions. It is important to address these two challenges simultaneously and cooperatively. We know from the World Development Report (2012) that public policy aimed at closing existing gender gaps in endowments and access to trade and economic opportunities is necessary for countries to fully capitalize on the 'potential of globalization and international trade as a force for economic development and greater gender equality.' Gender-based inequality not only limits the ability of women to contribute to the economy but has an overall dampening effect on productivity and growth with significant measurable cost to the economies of South Asia. This session will analyse what is meant by gender-responsive logistics and trade facilitation. We will hear from successful business women and leading trade entrepreneurs from 4 South Asian countries about the particular challenges facing women traders. While some of the barriers to connectivity face both men and women equally, others are particularly unique and difficult for women to surmount, for example as a result of border points often hostile to women traders, lack of access to trade finance mechanisms or as a result of discriminatory customs or freight forwarding practices. Facilitated by the World Bank, in this session we will explore together not only the challenges but also collaborative ways forward for faster and more equitable trade led economic growth across South Asia.

**Opening Remarks:** H.E. Mr. Peter Budd, Australia's Ambassador to Nepal

**Moderator:** Ms. Mandakini Kaul, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, World Bank

**Panelists:**

- 1 **Ms. Selima Ahmad**, President and Founder of Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Vice Chairperson of Nitol-Niloy Group (Bangladesh)
- 2 **Ms. Bhairavi Jani**, Director, SCA Group of Companies (India)
- 3 **Ms. Chandni Joshi**, Chair of Think Tank, Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare, (Nepal)
- 4 **Ms. Dhashma Karunaratne**, Chairperson, Women in Logistics & Transport (Sri Lanka)

**13:00 -14:00 LUNCH**

**14:00 - 15:00**

**PLENARY SESSION 8**

**WOMEN EMPOWERING SOUTH ASIA**

The economic growth and transformation is well co-related with the active involvement of Women in the economy. South Asia has a long history of women involvement in economy and public life. The first executive head of any nation in the world was a South Asian. Women have assumed the position of executive chief of government in four largest economies South Asia. The businesses headed by women have been most innovative and contributing to the welfare of the people. This session will specially focus on the contribution of women in upcoming the South Asian growth story.

**Moderator:**

- 1 **Ms. Sumnima Udas**, CNN International Correspondent

**Panelists:**

- 1 **Ms. Sushila Karki**, Former Chief Justice, Supreme Court (Nepal)
- 2 **Ms. Luna Shamsuddoha**, Chairman, Dohtech New Media (Bangladesh)
- 3 **Dr. Mariyam Shakeela**, Chair, SIMDI Group (Maldives)
- 4 **Mrs. Shabana Khan**, President, LMKR (Pakistan)

**15:00-16:00**

**PLENARY SESSION 9**

**MINISTERIAL ROUND: SHARED PROSPERITY- UNLEASHING INVESTMENT IN SOUTH ASIA**

South Asia is one of the most dynamic regions in the world, with population of 1.67 billion people and economic growth of 7.1 percent over the last decade. However, it is also one of the least integrated regions. Intra-regional trade accounts for only 5 percent of South Asia's total trade, compared to 25 percent in ASEAN. Intra-regional investment is smaller than 7.1 percent of overall investment. The panel will discuss ways to integrate the economies by enhancing mutual trade and investment in South Asia.

Introduction and welcome by **Mr. Padma Jyoti**, Former President, SAARC CCI

Panelists:

- 1 **Hon'ble Mr. Humyoon Rasaw**, Minister of Commerce and Industries (Afghanistan)
- 2 **Hon'ble Lyonpo Lekey Dorji**, Minister of Economic Affairs (Bhutan)
- 3 Hon'ble Mr. Suresh P. Prabhu, Minister of Industry and Commerce (India)
- 4 **Hon'ble Mr. Matrika Prasad Yadav**, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Supply (Nepal)
- 5 **Hon'ble Mr. Rana M. Afzal Khan**, Minister of State for Finance & Economic Affairs (Pakistan)

Moderator:

- 1 **Mr. Kunda Dixit**, Editor, Nepali Times

Closing Remark:

- 1 **Mr. Suraj Vaidya**, President, SAARC CCI

19:00 CLOSING RECEPTION

On all days there will be SAARC BAZAAR taking place at the hotel venue where different producer groups from the eight countries have the opportunity to display and sell their products in a live marketplace environment which will also promote food, arts, culture and music.