



SAARC

South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation

SAARC is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of countries in South Asia.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Regional Economic Integration refers to an agreement between countries in a geographical region to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to free flow of goods, services and factors of production between each other.

There are various regional economic integration in Asia, America, Africa, Europe, Australia and Pacific Island Countries. SAARC is the regional economic integration in Asia. The others being APEC, ASEAN etc.



SOME BASIC FACTS



Established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985.



The Secretariat of the Association was set up in Kathmandu, Nepal on 17 January 1987.



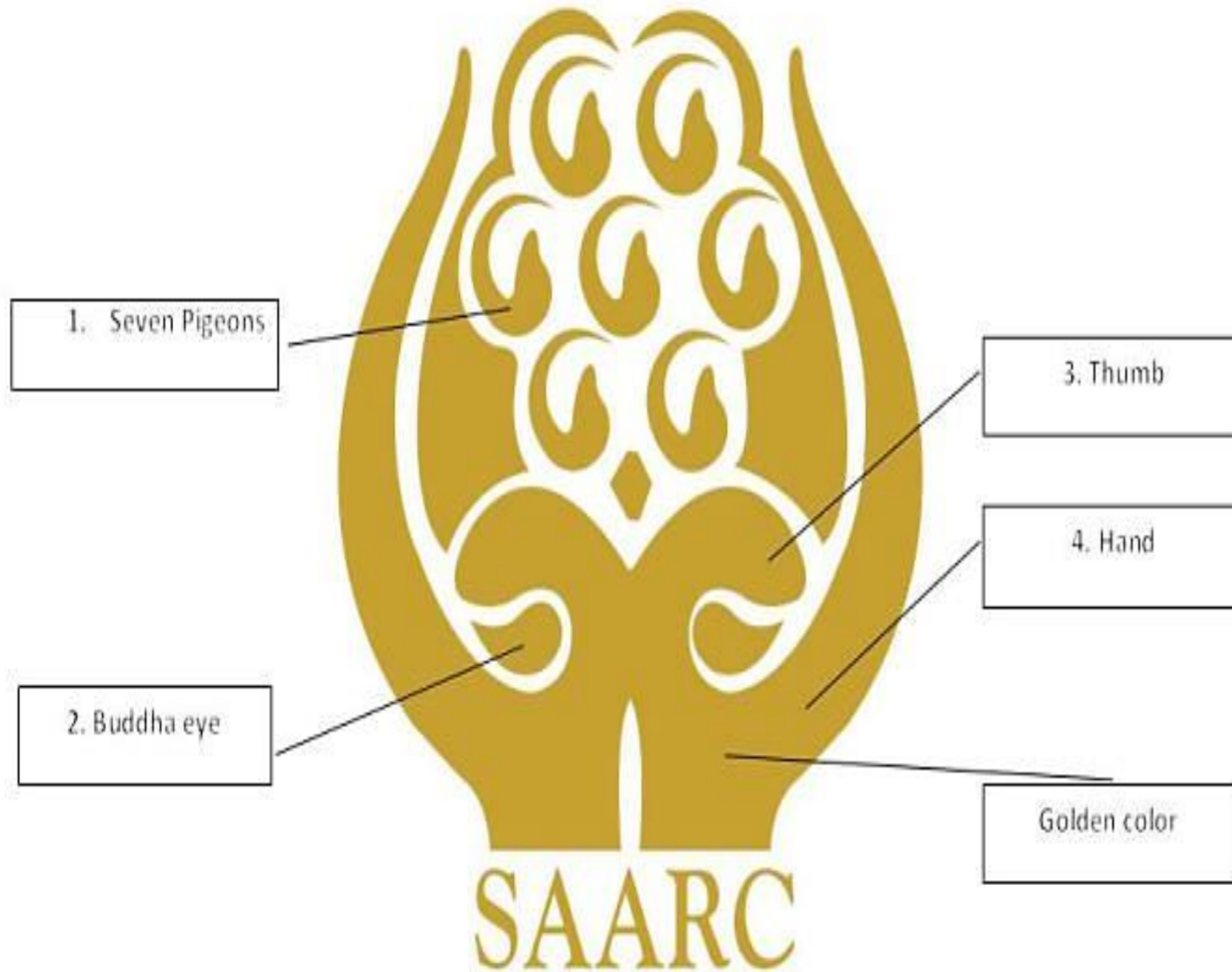
Pakistan's Diplomat Amjad Hussain B. Sial is the **current Secretary-General**, having assumed charge on 1 March 2017.



Covering a population of more than 1.7 billion, SAARC is the largest regional organization in the world.



SAARC comprises of 8 Member Countries. The last summit (19th Summit) was held in Islamabad in 2016.



THE LOGO

This logo was designed by one of the famous artist from Nepal, **Shailendra Kumar Maharjan**.

Deep Propositions

- Seven pigeons represent the seven member countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka seeking peace. The pigeons symbolize peace and freedom.
- Two eyes of Buddha, who is the symbol of peace.
- Two thumbs symbolize – member countries of the SAARC vow to unite and support one another in the time of need.
- Two hands together symbolize friendship and goodwill that all seven countries in the region, which are all dedicated to helping one another.

MEMBER COUNTRIES

1. AFGHANISTAN  (joined in 2007)
2. BANGLADESH 
3. BHUTAN 
4. INDIA 
5. MALDIVES 
6. NEPAL 
7. PAKISTAN 
8. SRI LANKA 

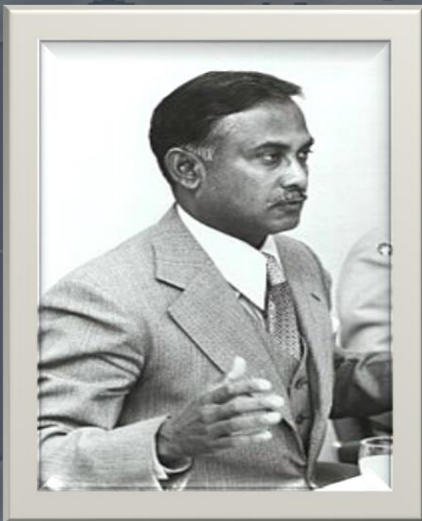
OBSERVER COUNTRIES

1. AUSTRALIA 
2. CHINA 
3. EUROPEAN UNION 
4. JAPAN 
5. IRAN 
6. MAURITIUS 
7. MYANMAR 
8. SOUTH KOREA 
9. UNITED STATES 

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Association as outlined in the SAARC Charter are:

- ❖ To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia
- ❖ To improve their quality of life
- ❖ To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region
- ❖ To provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials
- ❖ To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia
- ❖ To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems; to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields
- ❖ To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries
- ❖ To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests
- ❖ To cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.



EVOLUTION

Idea mooted by Ziaur Rehman in May 1980.

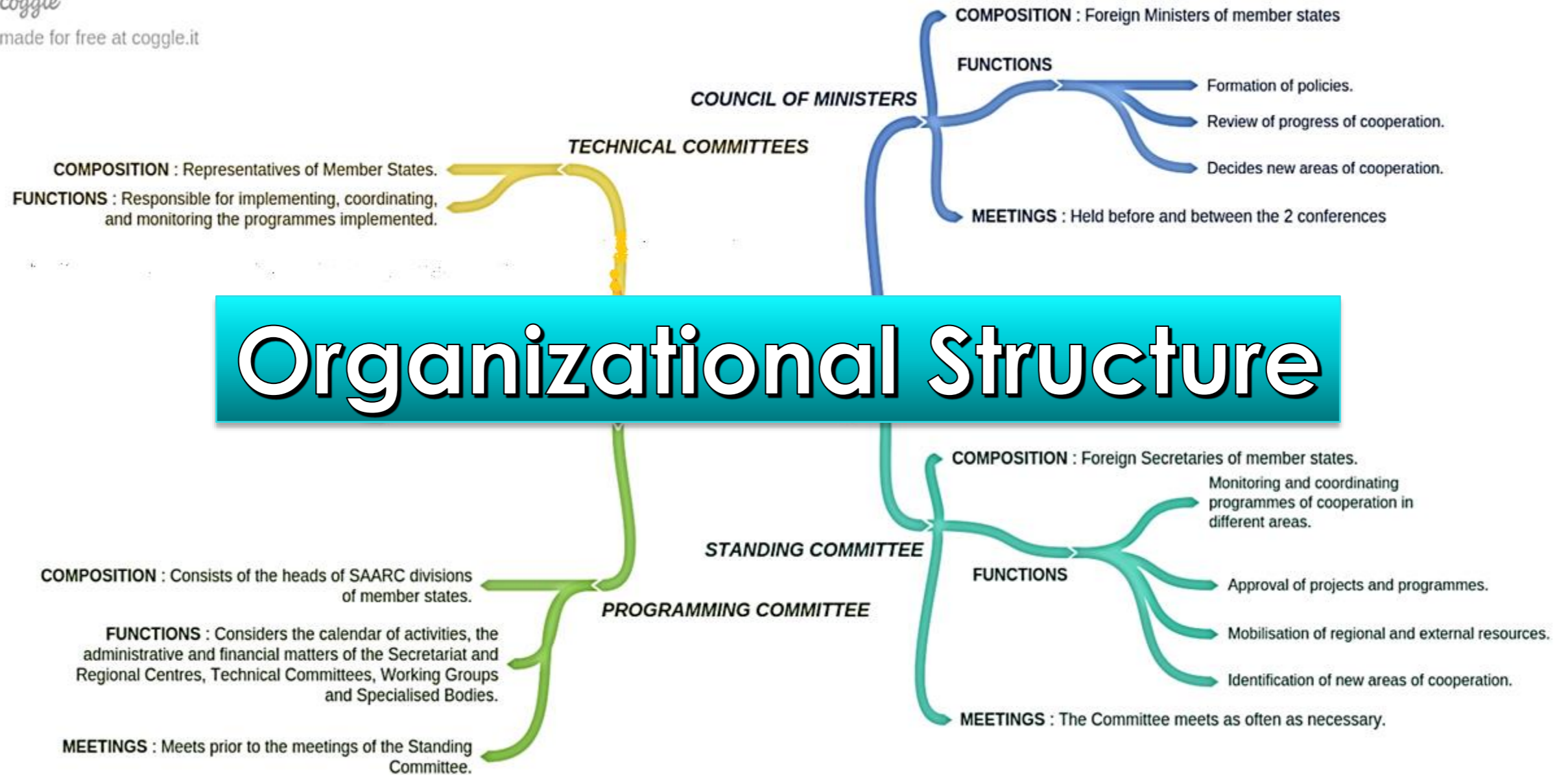
Addressing a letter to the Heads of Government of the South Asian Countries.

First meeting of Foreign Secretaries of the 7 countries in Colombo in April 1981.

Series of meetings held in:
Nepal (1981)
Pakistan (1982)
Bangladesh, India (1983)

Adopting the Declaration on South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC)

Formal establishment of SAARC in December 1985 in Dhaka.



SAARC SECRETARIAT



The SAARC Secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. It coordinates and monitors implementation of activities, prepares for and services meetings, and serves as a channel of communication between the Association and its Member States as well as other regional organizations. The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General, who is appointed by the Council of Ministers from Member States in alphabetical order for a three year term. H.E. Mr. Amjad Hussain B.Sial from Pakistan is the current Secretary General. The Secretary General is assisted by eight Directors on deputation from the Member States. The SAARC Secretariat and Member States observe 8 December as the SAARC Charter Day.



PRINCIPLES

The background of the slide features the SAARC logo, which is a circular emblem. It contains a map of South Asia in the center, with the acronym 'SAARC' written in a large, stylized font below the map. The logo is set against a backdrop of a blue sky with white clouds and a green landscape.

- Respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, political equality and independence of all member states.
- Non- interference in the internal matters.
- Cooperation for mutual benefit.
- All decisions to be taken unanimously and need a quorum for all 8 members.
- All bilateral issues to be kept aside and only multilateral issues to be discussed without being prejudiced by bilateral issues.

BENEFITS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❑ Establishment of SAPTA (SAARC Preferential Trade Agreement).
- ❑ Setting up of Technical Committees.
- ❑ Establishment of a 3 tier mechanism for exchanging information on poverty reduction programs.
- ❑ Management by the SAARC Food Security Reserve Board.
- ❑ Establishment of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI).
- ❑ Formation of SAIC (SAARC Agricultural Information Centre).
- ❑ To help the SAARC countries socially, economically and financially.
- ❑ Formation of SAGQ (South Asian Growth Quadrangle).

THE 3 TIER MECHANISM

Secretaries to the Government

Finance/Planning Secretaries

Finance/Planning Ministers

CONTRIBUTION TO THE SAARC FOOD BANK

| Country | Initial food reserve (1000 tons) | Doubled food reserve (1000 tons) | Contribution (%) |
|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Afghanistan | 1.42 | 2.84 | 0.58 |
| Bangladesh | 40.00 | 80.00 | 16.47 |
| Bhutan | 0.18 | 0.36 | 0.07 |
| India | 153.20 | 306.00 | 63.01 |
| Maldives | 0.20 | 0.40 | 0.08 |
| Nepal | 4.00 | 8.00 | 1.65 |
| Pakistan | 40.00 | 80.00 | 16.47 |
| Sri Lanka | 4.00 | 8.00 | 1.65 |
| Total | 243.00 | 485.60 | 100.00 |



THIMPU, BHUTAN

EU-STYLE DRIVING NOW COMES CLOSER HOME

Entry and exit points

- > Banglabandha (Bangladesh) – Phulbari (India) – Panitanki (India) – Kakarvitta (Nepal)
- > Burimari (Bangladesh) – Changrabandha (India) – Phuntsholing (Bhutan)
- > Petrapole (India) – Benapole (Bangladesh)
- > Tamabil (Bangladesh) – Dawki (India)
- > Akhaura (Bangladesh) – Jaynagar (India)
- > More entry and exit points will be designated over the next few years



SAARC GROWTH QUADRANGLE

LIMITATIONS

- ❑ Gives access only to a certain goods.
- ❑ Illegal trade in goods has increased.
- ❑ Dominance of India.
- ❑ Political consideration and geographical disadvantages for some countries, which were responsible for affecting intra regional trading.

This is one of the biggest reasons why SAARC has failed to achieve most of its objectives.



Policy of non-interference Article II clearly states, “Cooperation within the framework of the Association shall be based on... non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutual benefit.” It strictly limits the member nation’s ability to push an agenda if there is any opposition . This led to an incident of security violation, the biggest example of the which was Kargil War (1999).

SAARC could have taken a decisive step to resolve the dispute. But it did not. Despite several promises to resolve the political differences among the member states, those especially between India and Pakistan continue and have stalled progress on many projects including the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). If operative, it would allow the free movement of people, goods, services and ideas.

According to an article dated **Jan 13, 2020** by **Rajkumar Singh** states:
“SAARC is falling short of gaining a similar significance as is attached to the economic and diplomatic achievements of ASEAN. If we compare various regional groupings in a ranking order, the European community, on account of its high degree of integration as well as economic and political cooperation, would be on the top. At the present stage, SAARC would only be placed at the bottom; but there is also an optimistic approach. If we take into account the central problem of South Asian politics along with India’s relationship with its neighbors and the resulting contentious issues, SAARC has offered an opportunity for introducing confidence-building measures on a higher level and has succeeded in reducing regional tension. In spite of the many obstacles caused by the regional power and economic structure, the anemic infant SAARC not only survived but even grew slowly, broadening its scope, especially in the sphere of trade, building an institutional framework and generating a climate for regional cooperation.”