Participation and the Role played by the member States in the Summit Conferences.

The creation of Bangladesh has changed the geopolitical, strategic, military and economical ratio among the states of South Asia Region. Creation of Bangladesh has changed India's status in the community of states. Bangladesh, which was and is thankful to India for its birth, started changing its attitude towards India. All the peripheral states of India suffered with the psychosis of 'Indophobia'. Bangladesh proposed the creation of South Asia Cooperation among the states of South Asia to protect their sovereignty from the powerful South Asian neighbour state i.e. India. The idea behind the proposal of the creation of the SAARC was to create an umbrella for the South Asian States.

The proposal of Bangladesh for the creation of the SAARC was placed before the member states of South Asia Region in May, 1980. India along with some of the South Asian States was very cautious about the proposal of Zia-ur-Rahman, but later on India took initiative and played dominant role in its establishment. During May, 1980 to December 1985 to convert the proposal of Zia-ur-Rahman into reality led to the talks between the representatives, foreign secretaries and foreign minister's of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The deliberation in these meetings removed the differences of the opinion among the member states, the work of the standing Committee, Technical Committee, Integrated

1. E. Sudhakar: SAARC, Origin, Growth, and Future, P.P. 122
programme of Action Committee and the conferences of the foreign ministers of the Asian major countries paved the way to conduct First Summit Conference.

i) First Summit Conference:

The standing Committee of the Foreign Secretaries of the Seven South Asian Countries meeting at Dhaka 1985 finalised the declaration embodying the objectives and rational for the establishment of the South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which was considered by the foreign Ministers on 5 December, 1985. This meeting of Foreign ministers was a preparatory meeting for the First Summit of the Heads of State/Government.

The first ever summit level meeting of the SAARC countries was held at Dhaka, the capital Bangladesh on 7 and 8 December, 1985. All the seven Heads of State/Government of the countries involved attended the summit. They were Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Pakistani President Zia-ul Haq, Sri Lankan President Junius R. Jayewardene, Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, Nepal's King Birendra, Bir Bikram Shah Dev, King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuk and Bangladesh President Hussain Muhammad Ershad.

In the Charter of SAARC adopted at the summit level, the Heads of State or Government expressed their desire to promote "peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the UN Charter and "Nonalignment". Particular stress was laid on the "Respect for the principles of Sovereign, Equality, territorial integrity, national independence, non-use of force and non-

1. Op-Cit, P.P. 123
2. Lok Sabha Secretariat : SAARC P.P. 10
interference in the internal affairs of the other states and peaceful settlement of disputes."

The summit participants felt that the objectives of peace, freedom, social justice and economic prosperity were best achieved in the South Asian Region by fostering mutual understanding, good neighbourly relations and meaningful co-operation among the member States. The Heads of State/Government expressed their conviction that regional co-operation was mutually beneficial, desirable and necessary for promoting the welfare and improving the quality of life of the people of the region. They also felt that economic, social and technical cooperation among the countries of South Asia would contribute significantly to national and collective self-reliance.

The Head of State or Government Signed Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation on the 8th of December, 1985. They also adopted the Dhaka Declaration.

They approved that the standing committee should set up a study Group to examine the problem of terrorism as it affects the security and stability of Member states of SAARC. They further directed the council of ministers to consider the report of the study Group and submit recommendations to them as the how best the member states could cooperate among themselves to solve this.

They also approved that a similar exercise be carried out with regard to the problem of drug trafficking and abuse.

1. Op-Cit. P.P. 10
They decided that the member Governments should concert their views on the ongoing discussions on New International Economic Order and the improvement of the World Trading System through GATT taking particularly into account the interest of the least developed among the developing countries for this purpose it was decided to convene a ministerial level meeting. The standing Committee should convene a meeting to prepare for it. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the president of Pakistan to host both these meetings.  

The Heads of State or Government emphasized that women should increasingly participate in activities at the regional level within the frame work of SAARC and that programmes and projects should be devised to ensure their active participation in the development process. They therefore directed the standing Committee to convince a ministerial Level Conference on the subject to identify the areas of activities and plan a programme of Action. They gratefully accepted the offer of the Prime Minister of India to host such a conference.

The Heads of State or Government who have decided that the Association shall have a secretariat directed the foreign ministers to consider details regarding its location, structure, functions and financing and submit those for the consideration of Heads of state or Government.

The Heads of State or Government decided to hold their next meeting in November, 1986. They gratefully accepted the offer of the Prime Minister of India to host that meeting. They also gratefully accepted the offer of the king of Bhutan to host the Annual SAARC Summit of 1987.

1. SAARC Secretariat: Dhaka and Bangalore Summits Declarations and Joint Press Releases, P.P. 7
2. SAARC Secretariat: Declarations of SAARC Summits (1985-1995), P.P. 8
The Heads of State or Government unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Fourth Meeting of Foreign Minister on the emblem of SAARC.¹

ii) Second Summit Conference:

The Second SAARC Summit was held in Bangalore, India on 16-17 November, 1986. The following Heads of State/Government participated in this Summit meeting- the President of Bangladesh, H.M. Ershad, the King of Bhutan J.S. Wangchuk, the Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi, the President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom, the King of Nepal Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Khan Junejo and the President of Sri Lanka J.R. Jayewardene.

After the summit meeting the participants jointly declared that the Summit was a success. They have issued a Joint Press release on 17 November, 1986, which contents following points -

They issued the Bangalore Declaration. A memorandum of understanding on the Establishment of the SAARC secretariat was signed by the foreign ministers of the SAARC countries in their presence.² The following foreign ministers signed this document on 17th November 1986, at Bangalore, India;

Humayun Rasheed Choudhary, Bangladesh,
Dawa Tsereng, Bhutan;
Narayan Datt Tiwari, India;
Fathulla Jameel, Maldives;

¹. Op-Cit, P.P. 9
². Ibid, P.P. 20
Shailendra Kumar Upadhyya, Nepal; Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, Pakistan and A.C. Shahul Hameed, Sri Lanka.

They welcomed the announcement by His Majesty's Government of Nepal that the secretariat would be inaugurated in Kathmandu on 16 January, 1987. They decided that the first Secretary General of the SAARC Secretariat, His Excellency Mr. Abul Ahsan would assume charge of this office from that date.

They also considered several new ideas for expanding and strengthening the co-operative programmes under SAARC. While approving the following ideas in principle they directed that these be elaborated and concretized through expert level examination to be completed by March 1987, so that the reports thereon could be considered at the next Meeting of the Council of Ministers;

(a) A south Asian Broadcasting Programme covering both radio and television should be launched.

(b) In keeping with the emphasis that the Heads of State or Government have laid on people-to-people contacts concrete steps should be taken to facilitate tourism in the region, including facilities for limited convertibility of national currencies for tourists from SAARC countries.

(c) The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance they attach to students, scholars and researchers in their countries having ready access to

1. SAARC Secretariat: Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Secretariat, P.P. 11
2. SAARC Secretariat: Dhaka and Bangalore Summits Declarations and joint Press releases, P.P. 17
reliable and up-to date information on technical, Scientific and developmental matters. This need could be best met by a SAARC Documentation Centre as the repository of such information.

(d) The Heads of State, or Government considered that it was essential to promote increasing cross-fertilization of ideas through greater interaction among students, scholars and academics in the SAARC countries. They, therefore, directed that a concerted programme of exchange of scholars be formulated and action taken for an early institution of SAARC scholarships, SAARC fellowships and SAARC Chairs.

(e) The Heads of State or Government stressed that the idealism of youth must be harnessed for regional co-operative programmes. Nothing would be more conducive to the resurgence of South Asian Consciousness than the involvement of the youth of each country with the development programmes of the other. An Organized Volunteers Programme should be established in SAARC under which volunteers from one country would be able to work in other countries in the fields of agriculture and forestry extension work.

The Heads of State or Government recalled that the planners of the SAARC countries had met in 1983. This had provided useful opportunity for an exchange of ideas and experience in the formulation of development strategies and methods of plan implementation. They directed that another meeting of the planners of the SAARC member countries be convened at the earliest.

1. Op-Cit, P.P. 19
The Heads of State or Government took note of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on the financing of the institutional costs of regional institutions. They decided that for regional institutions where all the Member States are directly involved and benefit, the formula proposed by the Standing Committee should be used. However, in the case of projects which affect only a certain number of Member States, the formula should be used as an indicative one which could be suitably modified on the basis of consultations among the Member States.

The Heads of State or Government also decided that the next Meeting of the Council of Ministers would be held in India in May 1987. They directed that this Meeting should undertake a detailed review of the proposals for the establishment of regional institutions. The member countries which have undertaken to prepare concept papers, pre-feasibility or feasibility studies on these proposals, should complete them well before the convening of the Meeting. The SAARC Secretariat should establish and submit to the Ministers, an order of priority among these proposals having regard to their costs, benefits, readiness for implementation, and other relevant factors.

The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the King of Nepal to host the third SAARC Summit in 1987.

They also accepted with gratitude the offer of the President of Sri Lanka to host the fourth SAARC Summit in Sri Lanka in 1988.

iii) Third Summit Conference:

Third Summit meeting of the SAARC was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 2-4 November 1987. The President of Bangladesh H.M. Ershad, the King of

1. Op-Cit, P.P 19
2. SAARC Secretariat Declarations of SAARC Summits (1985-1995), P.P. 23
Bhutan J.S. Wangchuk, the Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi, the President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom, the King of Nepal Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, the Prime Minister of Pakistan M. Khan Junejo and the President of Sri Lanka J.R. Jayewardene attended it. They arrived at the following decision in this Summit and confirmed it through Joint Press Release issued on 4 November 1987.

They issued the Kathmandu Declaration providing a renewal thrust and direction to the future course of regional cooperation in south Asia.¹

They considered several issues of common concern, both regional and international, and assessed the overall progress in the context of SAARC objectives.

They expressed their happiness at the signing of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and the Agreement establishing South Asian Food Reserve by the foreign Ministers of the SAARC member stated in their presence. They firmly believed that the convention and the Agreement constituted landmarks in their collective endeavours to eradicate terrorism and hunger from the region.

They declared their intention to initiate the process of dealing with the causes and consequences of natural disasters and decided to commission a study on natural disasters and the protection and preservation of the environment in a well planned and comprehensive framework. They entrusted the secretary - General with this task.

¹. SAARC Secretariat : Kathmandu Summit, Doc. and Press release, P.P. 11
They expressed their satisfaction with the progress achieved in the implementation of the Integrated Programme Action in the eleven agreed areas of cooperation and also with the concrete programmes related to the Five New Ideas identified at the last Summit for expanding and strengthening cooperative programmes under SAARC.

They also reaffirmed their view that measures for expanding regional cooperation should be progressively carried out within a broad framework of a long-term perspective and stressed, in particular, the need for further consolidation and rationalization of the on-going activities pursued within SAARC framework.

The Heads of State or Government emphasized the need for strengthening intergovernmental efforts with increased people-to-people cooperation and called for greater participation of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS), including professional bodies in the private sector, in the process of promoting socioeconomic and cultural development of South Asia as envisaged in the SAARC charter, under the auspices of the SAARC secretariat.

They further welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu as well as the assumption of office by the SAARC Secretary General with effect from 16 January, 1987, and considered these as important events in strengthening the institutional framework of regional cooperation in South Asia. They expressed their appreciation to His Majesty’s Government of Nepal at the cooperation and assistance extended and facilities provided to the SAARC Secretariat.

1. Op-Cit, P.P. 12
The Heads of State or Government look note of the Report submitted by the Council of Ministers relating, inter alia, to administrative structuring and financing of regional institutions and directed that for economy and efficiency all sectoral programmes should justify the establishment of such regional institutions.

They instructed that in its examination of the question of the admission of new members and the grant of observer/guest status in Association, the Standing Committee should also include the aspect of the establishment of relations with similar organisations.

They gratefully accepted the offer of the President of Sri Lanka to host Fourth SAARC Summit in 1988 in Sri Lanka.

They also gratefully accepted the offer of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the Fifth SAARC Summit in Pakistan in 1989.

The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh; Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were deeply appreciative of the exemplary manner in which His Majesty the King of Nepal discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by His Majesty's Government and the people of Nepal and for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting.¹

¹ Op-Cit, 13
Fourth Summit Conference:

The Fourth SAARC Summit meeting was attended by the President of Bangladesh H.M. Ershad, the King of Bhutan J.S. Wangchuk, the Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi, the President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom, the King of Nepal Bir Bikram Shah Shah Dev, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mrs. Benzir Bhutto and the President of Sri Lanka J. R. Jayewardene at Islamabad, Pakistan on 29-31 December, 1988.

In this meeting, terrorism in the SAARC region was a focal point for discussion. All the participants arrived at a common decision to find the problem of terrorism and subside or eradicate it from this region with the help of each other. This and other decisions arrived at in this Summit Meeting was released to the press on 31st December 1988 after the conclusion of Summit at Islamabad.

The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of the Association enshrined in the SAARC Charter and renewed their determination to work collectively towards the attainment of these objectives. They issued the Islamabad Declaration. ¹

The Heads of State or Government were deeply shocked at the armed attack on the Republic of Maldives on 3rd November, 1988 aimed at destabilising the Government and taking over the country. They strongly condemned these acts of violence which disrupted the peace and security of a member state. They expressed full solidarity with the Government of Maldives.

¹. Op-Cit, P.P. 50
The Heads of State or Government expressed concern at the high incidence of drug production trafficking and abuse. They decided to declare 1989 as the "SAARC year Against Drug Abuse" in order to focus attention on drug-related problems facing the region. They called upon members states to prepare and implement national programmes in this regard.

They welcomed the launching of SAARC chair, fellowship and scholarship schemes and the Youth Volunteers programme. They recognised that 'Education' was one of the principal areas requiring urgent attention in the region and decided to include education among the agreed areas of cooperation. For this purpose they decided to set up a Technical Committee and accepted the offer of Bangladesh to chair the Committee.

The Heads of State or Government agreed to launch "SAARC - 2000": A Basic Need Perspective" which calls for a perspective regional plan with specific targets to be met by the end of the century in areas of core interest such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection. In this context they welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host a Centre for Human Resource Development and directed: The Secretary-General to convene an Expert Group Meeting of Member countries to work out modalities for the realization of "SAARC -2000" : A Basic Needs Perspective".

The Heads of State or Government welcomed idea of holding South Asian Festivals from time to time and accepted the offer of India to host the first such festival.

1. Op-Cit, P.P. 51
The Heads of State or Government directed the Standing Committee to examine the desirability of establishing a regional body to promote cultural links among member states.

They welcomed the coming into force of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. They stressed the importance of the adoption of enabling measures at the national level that would be necessary in order to fully implement the provisions of the Convention.

They welcomed the Agreement regarding the establishment of a South Asian Food Security Reserve in August this year, which marked a major breakthrough in the common endeavours of the Government of member countries of SAARC to assist each other in food emergency situations.

The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction at the progress achieved in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA). They recognised the need of focusing attention on more concrete and result oriented activities within the SAARC framework.

They welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Agriculture Information Centre (SAIC) at Dhaka and were of the view that proposals for the setting up of regional institutions, focusing on problems of common concern in the region, should be given priority.¹

¹ Op-Cit, 52
They reiterated their earlier commitment to accord priority to the needs of children in national development plans. They decided to declare 1990 as the “SAARC Year of the Girl child” and directed that specific programmes and activities be undertaken to increase public awareness of the problems of the Girl Child.

They expressed satisfaction at the progress in the studies underway regarding the feasibility of cooperation in the areas of trade, manufacturers and service. In the meanwhile they directed the Secretary-General to convene a special meeting of the Group of Coordinators to identify any specific areas where cooperation may be feasible immediately. They directed that the report of the Group should be presented to the next session of the Standing Committee and the Council of Ministers.

The Heads of State or Government expressed profound sorrow at the natural disasters suffered by Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan in 1988 and urged that the study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and Protection and Preservation of the environment be completed in the shortest period of time so as to provide a rational basis for identifying areas keeping in view the potentials and possibilities of involving a regional plan of action, particularly to strengthen disaster management capabilities and to protect and preserve the environment.

They expressed satisfaction at the concrete steps being taken for the implementation of the SAARC Audio Visual Exchange (SAVE) Programme. They directed that social, economic and technical themes should be given emphasis by the SAVE Programme.

Recalling the usefulness of the earlier Ministerial meeting on Women in Development held in India in 1986, The Heads of State or Government called
for the holding of a Second Ministerial Level Meeting and welcomed the offer of the Government of Pakistan to host the meeting.

They expressed satisfaction that pursuant to the direction given by the Kathmandu Declaration for enhancing people-to-people contact, concrete steps had been taken by including regional NCO's and professional bodies in SAARC Activities.

They decided that any country in the region subscribing to the objectives and principles of the charter may be admitted as a member of the Association by a unanimous decision of The Heads of State or Government.

The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the effective functioning of the SAARC Secretariat and its role in coordinating SAARC activities. They appreciated the work of the SAARC Secretary General in the discharge of his responsibilities and thanked His Majesty's Government of Nepal for the assistance and cooperation extended to the Secretariat.

The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the government of Sri Lanka to host the fifth SAARC summit in Colombo in 1989.

The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep appreciation for the outstanding manner in which the Prime Minister of Pakistan had conducted the meetings as the Chairperson of the Fourth SAARC Summit. They also expressed profound gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference.
v) **Fifth Summit Conference:**

Fifth Summit Conference held in Male in between 21-23 November 1990. This summit was to be held in Colombo in 1989 but the belligerent and intransigent postures adopted by Sri Lanka over issue of Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) made the situation which laid to the cancellation of this SAARC Summit Conference.

The President of Bangladesh H. M. Ershad, the King of Bhutan J. S. Wangchuk, the Prime Minister of India Chandrashekhar, the President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Dingiri Banda Wijetunga met at Male, Maldives, in the warm, cordial and friendly atmosphere and at last agreed upon the following points which was released to press on 23rd November 1990.

The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of SAARC and reiterated their resolve to intensity cooperation under its aegis. They issued the Male Declaration.

They welcomed the signing of the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances by the Ministers at Male and undertook to take early measures to ratify the Convention.

The Heads of State or Government decided to launch the Special SAARC Travel Document which would exempt its holders from visas for travel within the region. They decided that Supreme Court Judges, Members of the National Parliaments,
Heads of national academic institutions, their spouses and dependent children would be entitled to this Document. 1

The Heads of State or Government endorsed the decision of the Council of Ministers to launch the Scheme for the Promotion of Organised Tourism during the first half of 1991. They also welcomed the proposal for institutionalised cooperation among the tourist industries of the Member States with a view to attracting more tourists from outside the region.

They noted with satisfaction that all Member States had completed their national studies on Trade, Manufacturers and Services. They underlined the need for completing the Regional Study within stipulated time frame.

They decided that measures for establishing joint ventures in the field of cottage industries and handicrafts should be taken up forthwith to set a stage for promoting collective self-reliance in the region. They directed the Secretary-General to appoint a group of 2-3 Experts selected from within the region, to prepare a paper suggesting the modalities for the setting up of joint ventures, sources of funding and other necessary details for consideration at the next meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The Heads of State or Government noted the proposal for the establishment of a SAARC regional Fund and directed the Standing Committee to submit its recommendations on the proposal for consideration at the next session of the Council of Ministers. 2

1. SAARC Secretariat: Declaration of SAARC Summits, P.P. 67
2. Ibid, P.P. 68
The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of cooperation among the SAARC Member States in field of mass media and directed the Secretary-General to facilitate, under the auspices of SAARC, increased interaction among federation/associations of journalists, new agencies and mass media of the region.

The Heads of State or Government welcomed the decision authorising the Secretariat to share information and exchange reports, studies and publications with the European Community (EC) and the Association Of South East Asian Nations (Asian) to begin with, in the identified areas of cooperation.

The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the work was well under way for the setting up of a nucleus Centre for Human Resource Development in Pakistan. They were of the view that the Centre would contribute towards optimizing regional cooperation in this vital field.

They called for early completion of a regional plan “SAARC-2000: A Basic Needs Perspective” to facilitate activities within a broad framework of a long term perspective. They directed that the theme of Poverty Alleviation Strategies be discussed in depth by planners for formulating suitable recommendations.

The Heads of State or Government decided that in order to maintain focus on the problems of the Girl Child the Years 1991-2000 AD would be observed as the “SAARC Decade of the Girl Child”. They were deeply moved by the SAARC Girl Child’s appeal for love and care for them and their right to childhood. They

1. Op-Cit, P.P. 68
reiterated their resolve that the welfare of the child in general and the girl child in particular, would figure at the top of their list of priorities.

The Heads of State or Government emphasized the importance of regular exchange of views among the representatives of the SAARC Member Countries at international economic fora with a view to concerting positions, as far as possible, to concerting positions, as far as possible, on matters of common concern. They decided to hold the Second Ministerial Meeting on International Economic Issues in India in 1991.

The Heads of State or Government underlined the imperative need for providing a better habitat to the people of South Asia and decided that in order to focus attention on the problems of the Homeless, the Year 1991 be observed as the "SAARC year of shelter". They decided that each country would organise a series of events on this theme and share their experiences in order that the people of the region could derive practical benefit from the "SAARC Year of shelter".

They directed that the Regional Study on the Causes and Consequences of Natural Disasters and the protection and preservation of the Environment and the Study on the "Greenhouse Effect" and its impact on the region be finalized before the next Summit. They stressed that, pending the completion of the studies, Member States should take necessary steps at national levels in this vital field. They decided to observe 1992 as the "SAARC Year of the Environment".

The Heads of State or Government stressed that immediate action was required to reduce the sufferings of the millions of disabled people who lived in the SAARC region. In order to focus attention on their problems and to improve their quality of life, they decided to observe 1993 as the "SAARC Year of Disabled Persons"
They decided that appropriate programmes should be worked out for observing the SAARC YEAR of the Shelter 1991, the SAARC Year of the Environment 1992, and the SAARC Year of Disabled persons 1993. In order to derive the maximum benefit and to sensitize the peoples in the region in the above vital fields, they noted that Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan respectively will circulate the recommended Plans of Action for implementation at national level.

The Heads of State or Government noted that SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) was already functioning at Dhaka. They decided that the SAARC Tuberculosis Centre and the SAARC Documentation Centre would be set up in Nepal and India respectively. They directed that necessary steps to establish the two centres should be taken up urgently.

The Heads of State or Government stressed the need for adopting a more business-like and functional approach in the conduct of meetings held under the aegis of SAARC. They requested the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC summit and the President of Bangladesh to initiate consultations with the Member States in this regard.

The Heads of State or Government directed the Chairman of Council Ministers to prepare recommendations on rationalizing SAARC activities with a view to promoting effective functioning of the Association.

The Heads of State or Government expressed appreciation for the pioneering work done by Ambassador Abul Ahsan, the first Secretary-General during

1. SAARC Secretariat: Declarations of SAARC Summits, P.P. 70
the formative years of the secretariat. They welcomed his successor, Ambassador Kant Kishore Bhargava, and appreciated his valuable contribution to the ongoing activities of SAARC.

They expressed profound happiness that the Fifth SAARC Summit coincided with the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Independence of the Maldives which provided them with an opportunity to express personally their solidarity with the people and the Government of the Maldives.

The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Sixth SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1991.

The Heads of State or Government highly appreciated the exemplary manner in which the President of the Republic of Maldives conducted the meetings of the Association as the Chairman of the Fifth SAARC Summit. They also expressed their sincere gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Republic of Maldives and for the excellent arrangement made for the Conference.¹

vi) Sixth Summit Conference:

The Sixth Summit Conference of the SAARC was postponed by one day because of the inability of the King of Bhutan to attend it on 20th December 1991 due to some internal problem.

¹ Op-Cit, P.P. 71
The meeting was held on 21st December 1991 at Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Khalida Zia, the King of Bhutan J.S. Wangchuk, Prime Minister of India Narsimha Rao, The President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom the Prime Minister of Nepal G.P. Koirala, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif and the President of Sri Lanka R. Premadasa met on 21st December 1991, at Colombo and agreed upon following points unanimously:

The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the charter of SAARC. They resolved to promote regional cooperation for the benefit of their people, in a spirit of mutual accommodation, with full respect for the principles of sovereign, equality, independence and territorial integrity of all States and in strict adherence to the principles of non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. They also reiterated their commitment to the principles of the United Nation Charter and the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Head of State or Government emphasised the vital importance of assessing the nature and extent of international economic interdependence and of the need for reviving the North/South dialogue. The Heads of State or Government emphasised the need for vigorously promoting South South economic cooperation to offset the negative consequences of international economic developments.

1. Indian Express, 22nd Dec. 1991
2. Ibid
They identified, for the further development of their economies, the importance of securing less restrictive trading and marketing opportunities for their products, more extensive technology and resource transfers to South Asia, debt relief and access on favourable and on more concessional terms to resources from multilateral financial institutions.¹

They noted the changing power structures in international relations and the reduction of confrontations and tensions, particularly among the Super Powers. These have contributed to the receding of the threat of nuclear confrontation and to agreements on disarmament measures.

They also had discussion on Palestine question, Apartheid, Human Rights, Democracy, Rule of law, strengthening international co-operation etc.

The Head of State or Government of the SAARC Member States proposed to heighten the effectiveness of the Integrated Programme of Action. Under the alleviation of poverty programme " Daal - Bhaat " programme was discussed. Primary education was also discussed along with the co-operation in trades, transportation and services. The problem of environment was also dealt. 1991 was observed as SAARC year of " Shelter for all by the year 2000 ".

The Heads of State or Government welcomed the recommendation on the establishment of a shelter information network to be called "SHELTERNET". They also welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host a Conference on Children in South Asia in 1992 to consider implementation of the regional plan of Action.

¹ SAARC Secretariat: Declarations of SAARC Summits, P.P. 74
The Heads of State or Government welcomed the adoption of the plan of Action for 1991 - 2000 A.D. as the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child.

They recognised that cooperation among SAARC States was vital if terrorism was to be prevented and eliminated from the region. In this regard they urged member - states to take all necessary measures to give full effect to their obligations under the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism.¹

They agreed that small states may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs and that they merit special measures of support in safeguarding their sovereign independence, territorial integrity and the welfare of their people.²

SAARC member States recognised the need for the greater co-operation to fight drugs and trafficking.

They welcomed the programme of People - To - People contact, set up a SAARC Fund for Regional Projects, proposed a study committee to assess whether South Asian Development Fund could be raised, whether visa exemption scheme can be implemented and they proposed for the establishment of network arrangement to develop the cooperation in the field of science and technology among the SAARC Member States.

1. Op.Cit, P.P. 84
2. Ibid, P.P. 85
The Heads of state or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Bangladesh to host the Seventh SAARC Summit in 1992.

The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indian, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the president of Sri Lanka had discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of Sri Lanka and for the excellent arrangement made for the Meeting. ¹

vii) Seventh Summit Conference:

The difference between the Indian Prime minister Narsimha Rao and his Pakistani counter part Nawab Sharif had strained relationship during December 1992 and January 1993, were the mains causes for the twice postponement of the Dhaka SAARC Summit Conference. This Summit was held on 10 - 11 April, 1993 at Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum KHALIDA Zia, the King of Bhutan J.S. Wangchuck, the Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao, the President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal Girija Prasad Koirala, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammed Nawab Sharif and the President of Sri Lanka Ranasinghe Premadasa attended the Seventh SAARC Summit in Dhaka. The following decisions were taken at the meeting:

¹ Op-Cit, P.P. 87
They felt that time was now opportune for SAARC to provide a further dynamic impetus to activities in the core areas of economic, social and cultural cooperation in the SAARC region.

The Heads of state or Government approved the recommendations of the Eleventh Session of the Council of Ministers for adopting a more business-like and functional approach in the conduct of Summit meetings. They also noted with satisfaction the guidelines and procedures approved by the Eleventh Session of the Council in the respect relating to other SAARC meetings. They decided to meet informally whenever necessary between Summits.

A strategy of social mobilization involving the building of organizations of the poor and their empowerment through appropriate national support mechanism, with the assistance of respective Governments.

A policy of decentralized agricultural development and sharply focused household level food security through universal provision of ' Daal - Bhaat ' or basic nutritional needs;

A policy of decentralized small Scale labour intensive industrialization, with the choice of efficient and cost-effective technology;

A policy of human development including the enhancement of the social role and status of poor women, the provision of universal primary health care, shelter for the poor and protection of children;
A policy to support the above initiatives with adequate financial resources.

The Heads of state or Government Stressed that within the overall conceptual approach of 'Daal - Bhaat', the right to work and the right to primary education should receive priority.

The Heads of state or Government further underlined the critical importance of urgently promoting intra-regional cooperation, particularly in the area of manufactures in order to enhance the productive capacity of the Member Countries, and to promote sustained growth and development to prevent the marginalization of South Asia's trade interest in the larger global context.

The Heads of state or Government recognized that the completion of the Regional Study on the "Green house Effect and its Impact on the Region" was a significant step forward in promoting regional cooperation in this vital area. They also stressed the importance of continuing the ongoing SAARC activities in the field of environment.

The leaders urged Governments of developed countries, as well as all concerned international and regional organizations, to strengthen their financial and technical support in the areas of health and education as part of their strategy of assistance to developing countries in their development efforts.

1. SAARC Secretariat: Declarations SAARC Summits, P.P. 92
The Heads of State or Government endorsed the “Colombo Resolution on Children” adopted by the Second SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children held at Colombo in September 1992 and urged Member States to implement programme as appropriate in their respective national contexts, to achieve the illustrative goals embodied in the Resolution, and the goals of the SAARC plan of Action on Children.

The Leaders noted that the youth of South Asia faced number of serious problems requiring urgent attention and remedial measures. They welcomed the offer of the Maldives to host a Ministerial Conference on Youth in South Asia in 1994 to address the problems of the Youth and focus on the broad theme of Youth and development. They also agreed to designate 1994 as the “SAARC Year of Youth”.

The Heads of State or Government while recalling their decision at the Male’s Summit to observe 1993 as the “SAARC Year of Disabled Persons” adopted the Regional Plan of Action for the Disabled Persons.1

They called for further intensification of efforts by Member States in this important area, particularly to facilitate research and exchange of information through networking arrangements in the field of bio-technology, genetic engineering energy modelling techniques and other identified areas of cooperation.

The Leaders reiterated the need to give high priority to the enactment of enabling legislation at the national level to give effect to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, while urging the Member States

1. Op-Cit, 97
which had not yet done so, to make every effort to finalize this matter before the Eighth SAARC Summit.

The Heads of State or Government welcomed the initiative of the Speakers of Parliaments of SAARC Countries in forming an "Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians". They were of the view that the establishment of this Association would add another important dimension to the process of regional cooperation.

The Heads of State or Government endorsed the recommendation of the Council of Ministers for the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Group (IGG) on South Asia Development Fund (SADF) on ad-hoc basis. They directed that the IGG define in clear terms the size, structure, resources and operational modalities of the proposed Fund. They also directed the IGG to examine the complementarities between the SAARC Fund for Regional Projects (SFRP) and SADF, and their relationship, including the possibility of their merger. They welcomed the offer of the Maldives to host the meeting of IGG.

They also had talk on International politics, economic and social problems.

The Heads of State or Government expressed their deep satisfaction over the positive outcome of the Seventh SAARC Summit and expressed their conviction that this Summit would greatly contribute towards Strengthening the policies and cooperative action of the Member States in response to the challenges of

the 1990's and beyond in areas where SAARC has a distinct contribution to make. They also reiterated once again their determination to strengthen and enrich SAARC as an instrument - endowing it with a clear set of forward looking goals and objectives as well as all the requisite institutional capacities - so that it can continue to work to enrich not only the lives of its own members but also promote peace, progress and stability in South Asia in a larger context.

The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of India to host the Eighth SAARC Summit in 1994.

The Heads of State or Government of Bhutan, India the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their Sincere appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the Prime Minister of Bangladesh had conducted the Meeting and guided its proceedings in her capacity as chairperson. They expressed their deep gratitude for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them by the Government and people of Bangladesh and for the excellent arrangement made for the Meeting.¹

viii) Eighth Summit Conference:

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khalida Zia, the King of Bhutan J.S. Wangchuk, the Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao, the President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal Manmohan Adhikari, the President of Pakistan Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and the President of Sri Lanka Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumartunga met at the Eight Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at New Delhi, India on 2-4 May 1995.²

1. *Op-Cit*, P.P. 109
2. *Ibid*, P.P. 111
The Heads of State or Government expressed their satisfaction on the achievements of the First Decade of SAARC and resolved to celebrate its completion of the First Decade both in the individual Member States and collectively. They endorsed the proposal of the Council of Ministers to convene a Commemorative Session of the Council on the theme “SAARC - Vision for the Second Decade” to identify the areas on which SAARC should focus in its Second Decade.

They recalled their conviction that in an increasingly interdependent world, regional cooperation was a dynamic instrument for promoting economic prosperity, mutual understanding and good neighbourly relations to achieve the objectives of peace and stability in South Asia. In the context a climate of peace and stability would contribute to the economic growth.

The Leaders endorsed the recommendations of the Financial/Planning Ministers' meeting held in Dhaka in July 1994 which recommended that a mechanism should be set up which would act as a forum for exchange of information on poverty eradication programmes, in the context of the policies and strategies adopted, particularly exchange of information on technologies that are relevant to efforts at poverty eradication.

In this context, they decided to declare 1995 as the “SAARC year of Poverty Eradication”.

The Heads of State or Government committed themselves to addressing the fundamental causes of poverty and to provide for the basic needs of all.
The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to provide expanded opportunities to the poor to enhance their overall capacities and improve living conditions and to adequate economic and social protection during unemployment, disability and old age.

The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction that subsequent to the signing of the Framework Agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAARC) during their Seventh Summit in Dhaka in April 1993, the first round of trade negotiations to exchange trade concessions among Member States has been completed. They directed that all necessary steps should be taken to facilitate ratification by all member States and operationalise SAPTA by the end of 1995 as mandated.

The Leaders welcomed the establishment of the SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) in New Delhi in May 1994 and the SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC) at Dhaka in January this year.

The Leaders enclosed the "Kathmandu Resolution on Women and Family Health", adopted by the Ministerial Conference on woman and Family Health in Kathmandu in November 1993 and expressed satisfaction that appropriate programmes were being undertaken to implement the Resolution at the national level by the Member States.

The Leaders noted the progress in the implementation of the plan of Action to mark 1991 - 2000 as the 'SAARC Decade of the Girl - Child' and requested

1. SAARC Secretariat Declarations SAARC Summits, P.P. 116
the Council of Ministers to conduct a comprehensive mid-decade review for presentation to the Ninth SAARC Summit.

The Leaders welcomed that all Member States have become party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They felt that the recently held Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in September 1994 and the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development in March 1995 had imparted fresh impetus to the ongoing efforts for the survival, protection and development of children in South Asia.

They noted with satisfaction that the SAARC Youth Resolution had been adopted and the SAARC Youth Awards Scheme has been established.

The Leaders expressed satisfaction on the implementation of the plan of Action to mark 1994 as the SAARC Year of the Youth in Member States and resolved to continue the momentum generated in Member States.

The Heads of states or Government noted with satisfaction that the Ministerial Conference on Disabled Persons was held in Islamabad in December 1993. They endorsed the Islamabad Resolution on Disabled Persons and the recommendations of the Conference and noted that the conference had further increased awareness among the peoples of south Asia regarding the needs and problems of the disabled persons. They welcomed the activities and programmes launched by the Member States in pursuance of the Resolution for the protection and promotion of persons with disability.
The Heads of State or Government, recognising that housing was a basic right for all people and that, in addition to governmental efforts, private initiatives of the people and non-governmental agencies should be supported, reaffirmed their commitment to work towards the global objective of "Shelter for All by the Year 2000."

The Heads of State or Government noted that illiteracy is one of the major causes of poverty backwardness and social injustices and called on the Member States to initiate more concrete programmes aimed at eradicating illiteracy in the region preferably by the year 2000 A.D. They decided to observe 1996 as the "SAARC year of Literacy."

They recognised that international cooperation is vital for building up national capabilities, transfer of appropriate technology and promotion of multilateral projects and research efforts in natural disaster reduction.

They expressed their commitment to implementing at all levels - national, bilateral, regional and global programmes for the protection and preservation of the environment and prevention of its degradation. The Heads of State or Government stressed the importance of continuing the on-going SAARC activities in the field of environment.

They further directed the Technical Committee on Environment to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the two Studies, and submit a report to the Ninth Summit through the Council of Ministers.
The Heads of State or Government also noted that the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have both come into force and the first meetings of the Conferences of Parties to each Convention have been held. Welcoming these developments they urged that developing countries should be assisted in meeting their commitments under the Conventions. The establishment of the restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a beginning in this direction however, the Heads of State or Government urged that funds of a much larger order would be necessary if the needs of the Convention are to be met.

They underlined that cooperation among SAARC Member States was vital if the scourge of terrorism was to be eliminated from the region.

The Heads of State or Government recognised that drug abuse and drug trafficking with its linkages with organised crime, illicit arms trade and terrorism continues to pose serious threat to the sovereignty and stability in the region.

The Leaders welcomed the ratification of the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances by all Member States and entry into force of the Convention in September 1993. They urged all Member States to take necessary follow-up action for effective implementation of the Convention.

Noting that some progress had been made towards establishment of networking arrangements, inter-alia, in the fields of Bio-Technology, Genetic Engineering, Energy Modelling Techniques and Low Cost Housing and Building Technologies, the Leaders called for further acceleration of this process.

148
The Leaders noted that SAARC LAW (an association for persons of the legal communities of SAARC Countries) had been accorded recognition by SAARC. The Leaders hoped that SAARC LAW would play an effective role in fostering closer cooperation among the legal communities in the region.

The Leaders noted with satisfaction that the SAARC Chamber of commerce and Industry (SCCI) has been functioning satisfactorily. They expressed hope that the SAARC Chamber and its constituent units in the Member States will do their utmost to promote trade and economic cooperation in the SAARC region. The Leaders commanded the SAARC Chamber for disseminating information on the scope, content and potentials of SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) among the business community in the region.¹

The Heads of State or Government expressed satisfaction that the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme is being implemented smoothly and has enhanced the scope of people to people contacts.

The Heads of State or Government endorsed the establishment of a three window South Asian Development Fund with the merger of SAARC Fund for Regional Projects and the SAARC Regional Fund and a third window for social development and infrastructure development.

They noted with satisfaction that pursuant to the decision at the seventh SAARC Summit, collective positions were formulated by member States which were presented at the world Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the world

¹ SAARC Secretariat: Declarations of SAARC Summits P.P. 125
Summit for Social Development. The Leaders also noted with satisfaction that a SAARC Collective position will also be presented at the Fourth World Conference on Woman in Beijing in September 1995. The Heads of State or Government reaffirming their commitment to universally accepted principles and norms relating to the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all states, recognised that small states, because of their particular problems, required special measures of support for safeguarding their independence and territorial integrity. The disappearance of the confrontation between the two power blocs presented an opportunity towards building a genuine consensus for a new international order.

Appreciating the role of some SAARC Member States in the UN Peace Keeping Operations in various parts of the world the Heads of state or Government belt that such participation had contributed towards maintenance of peace and security in the world.

They expressed their deep conviction that the movement’s innate strength equipped it to continue to play a most constructive role in laying the foundations of a new world order based on the rule of low, non-discrimination, equity and cooperation.

Reiterating that the utmost priority was to be given to nuclear disarmament, given the danger posed by nuclear weapons, they urged the conference on Disarmament to negotiate an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of

1. Op-Cit, P.P. 126
use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances and undertake negotiations for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time bound framework.

The Heads of State or Government expressed their strong commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. They agreed to take all necessary steps to achieve this objective.

They also welcomed the coming into existence of the WTO and expressed the hope that it would help to expand international trade, particularly that of the developing countries. They reaffirmed the immediate need to elaborate policies to enable developing countries, to take advantage of expanded international trading opportunities in the context of the full implementation of the Round. They called on all countries to refrain from any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and enlightened regionalism and globalism that creates obstacles to trade relations among states and thereby impedes the full realisation of social and economic development.1

The Heads of state or Government reaffirmed their commitment to safeguard the basic interest of workers. They called upon countries to refrain from erecting trade barriers in the guise of promotion and protection of workers rights.

They deplored the tendency to impose any conditionalities on international trade, whether as a "Social clause" or as the "environmental clause" while reiterating their commitment to ensuring workers' rights as well as protection of the environment.

1. SAARC Secretariat: Declarations of SAARC Summits, P.P. 1 to 9
The Heads of state or Government noted with deep concern that economic growth in the Least Developed Countries and Land-Locked Countries is not satisfactory and emphasised the need to take special measures for accelerating the process of development. They reiterated the need to fulfil the internationally agreed aid targets for the developing countries and the Least Developed Countries. They emphasised on the need for exceptional finance to facilitate implementation of economic reform programmes in SAARC Countries. The Heads of State or Government gratefully accepted the offer of the Government of Maldives to host the Ninth SAARC Summit.¹

The Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the Prime Minister of India had discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Meeting. They expressed their profound gratitude for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Republic of India and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.²

IX) Ninth Summit Conference:

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, the King of Bhutan J. S. Wangchuck, the Prime Minister of India Inder Kumar Gujral, the President of Maldives M.A. Gayoom, the Prime Minister of Nepal Lokendra Bahadur Chand, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawab Sharif and the President of Sri Lanka Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumartunga met at the Ninth Summit of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at Male, Maldives on 12-14 May 1997.³

1. Doc. Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, P.P. 808
2. Ibid, P.P. 808
3. SAARC Secretariat: Declaration of the Ninth SAARC Summit, Male, P.P. 1
They reaffirmed their commitment to the principles enshrined in the SAARC Charter and then they had discussions on various points and came at the decision which is Commemorative Session of the Council of Ministers in New Delhi in December 1995 to mark the First Decade, on the theme "SAARC - Vision for the Second Decade". They observed that over the past decade SAARC has matured as an institution and the scope and volume of cooperative activities have expanded. They expressed satisfaction that in addition to continued cooperation in agreed areas, SAARC has now moved into the core areas of economic cooperation.

They further decided that the Group may develop a long-range vision and formulate a perspective plan of action including a SAARC Agenda for 2000 and Beyond which will spell out the target that can and must be achieved by the year 2020. The Group may report to the Heads of State or Government at the Tenth SAARC Summit.

With a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the role and functioning of the Secretariat, the Heads of State or Government agreed to amend Article V (1) of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Secretariat and decided that the tenure of the Secretary-General, with immediate effect, shall be for a non-renewable term of three years.¹

The Heads of State or Government recalled their commitment to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding and, recognising that the aims of promoting peace, stability and amity and accelerated socio-economic cooperation may best be achieved by fostering good neighbourly relations, relieving tensions and building

¹ Op-Cit, P.P. 3
confidence, agreed that a process of informal political consultations would prove useful in this regard.

In considering the Report of the Ministers of Finance / Planning, the Heads of State or Government agreed that effective implementation of poverty eradication programmes required a focus on greater participation of target groups in the formulation and implementation of such programmes through Social mobilization. They, therefore decided to designate 1997 as the "SAARC Year of Participatory Governance".

The Heads of State or Government welcomed the successful holding of the Micro-credit Summit in Washington, D.C. in February 1997 and its Declaration of support to launch a global campaign to reach 100 million of the world’s poorest families, especially women, with credit for self-employment and other financial and business services, by the year 2005 A.D.

The Heads of State or Government noted with satisfaction the entry into force of the Agreement on SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) on 7 December 1995. They recognised the importance of achieving a free trade area by the year 2001 A.D. and reiterated that steps towards trade liberalisation must take into account the special needs of the smaller and the Least Developed Countries and that benefits must accrue equitably.

While expressing satisfaction at the conclusion of the two rounds of trade negotiations under SAPTA, the Heads of State or Government welcomed the decision to launch the Third Round of Trade Negotiations shortly.

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1. The Times of India, 8th Dec. 1995.
The Heads of State or Government emphasised the need to make the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) more effective through the selection of target oriented and time bound activities within an overall framework of enhanced cooperation among Member States. In this context they noted that the Secretary General had been authorised by the Council of Ministers to constitute a Group of Experts to review the IPA.

They welcomed the decision of the Council of Ministers to establish a Human Resource Development Centre in Pakistan.

Taking note of the mid-decade review of the SAARC Plan of Action on the Girl - Child, the Heads of State or Government expressed their determination to accelerate efforts at reduction of malnutrition and mortality rates, raising education and literacy rates, reduction of the proportion of early marriage among girls, and the postponement of the age of first pregnancy, thereby contributing to the increased welfare of the girl child and reduction of population growth rates.

They also decided that feasibility of establishing a Regional Convention on combating the Crime of Trafficking in Women and children for Prostitution be examined by the relevant Technical Committee.

They stressed that sustained efforts should be made by Member States to consolidate the gains in these areas. In this regard, they welcomed the decision to designate 7th December, 1997 and Eighteenth January, 1998 as "SAARC Polio Immunisation Days".
They expressed the need to formulate a convention on Regional Arrangement on the Promotion of Child welfare in South Asia in launching the SAARC Decade of the Rights of the child, from the year 2001 A.D. to 2010 A.D.¹

The participants had discussion on the decision taken by the various agencies of the SAARC and the confirmation given to it by the earlier Summit Meetings were reviewed and the achievement in nutrition, Youth, South Asia development points, security of small states, persons with disability, shelter, Literacy, environment, people-to-people contact, terrorism and drug trafficking were applauded.

Noting that cooperation in the field of Science and Technology was imperative in ensuring the acceleration of the process of development in the region and recognising the progress made in this field, the Heads of State or Government emphasised the need to continue cooperation in this area, especially in facilitating research and exchange of information in the fields of bio-technology, genetic engineering, energy modelling techniques and low-cost housing and building technologies.

The Heads of State or Government noted that organised tourism in South Asia has not yet achieved its full potential, and recommended that appropriate measures to promote tourism be given priority and in this regard welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Colombo in 1997.

The Heads of State or Government had wide ranging discussion on current international issues, particularly those that affect South Asia. In this context,

¹ SAARC Secretariat: Declaration of the Ninth Summit, Male, P.P. 71
reiterating their deep commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the Heads of State or Government recalled that the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations in October 1995 had highlighted the need to strengthen, revitalizes and reform the organization.¹

The Heads of State or Government reiterated their firm commitment to the principles and objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and under scored the continued validity and relevance of these principles and objectives in the contemporary world.

They also called for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people including the right of self determination and the establishment of a sovereign State under the leadership of PLO their sole legitimate representative, which could co-exist with its neighbours in peace and harmony.

The Heads of State /Government called on the developed countries to assist the developing countries through the creation of a favourable and supportive global economic environment, in particular, through domestic action in their countries for purposes of accelerating investment flows to developing countries thereby generating a positive impact on the developmental efforts of developing countries as well as assisting their integration into the multilateral trading system. They also called on the developed countries to substantially reduce tariff and non- tariff barriers and desist from restrictive trade practices, which would negatively affect the access of developing countries to global markets.²

¹ Op-Cit, P.P. 21
² Ibid, P.P. 24
The Heads of State or Government emphasised the need for priority action on various international development commitment such as the Paris Declaration and the Programme of Action for LDC's for the 1990s.

The Heads of State or Government accepted with deep appreciation the offer of the Government of Sri Lanka to host the Tenth SAARC Summit. They further decided that the Eleventh and Twelfth Summits will be held in Nepal and Pakistan, respectively.

The Heads of States or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka expressed their sincere appreciation for the exemplary manner in which the President of the Republic of the Maldives had conducted the meeting and guided its proceedings in his capacity as chairman. They expressed their deep gratitude for the warm and generous hospitality extended to them by the Government and the people of the Maldives and for the excellent arrangement made for the meeting. 1

As per the Charter of the SAARC Summit Conference were the ultimate decision taking body to decide policies and programmes to develop SAARC region in different areas of existence. The decisions taken in First to Ninth Summit Conferences highlight the work done during this period of time by the various agencies created for undertaking respective responsibilities. Special agencies were created by the Summit Conferences to look into the areas for further cooperation. Even though the Summit Conferences expected that the SAARC would have done much more than what it has achieved so far. The achievement is an indication of the successful implementation of Action Plan in the disturbed areas of South Asian Region and successful implementation has increased the hope of the member States in the overall development of the region through the cooperation.

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1. Op-Cit, P.P. 26