Establishment of the SAARC and India

In the post cold war period internal and external security of state was given top priority by every government. Security was the first objective in farming NATO, SEATO or WARSA PACT. In the course of time and with the end of ‘Bi-Polarity’ new concepts came into existence for the establishment of regional organization. Today we have following three types of regional systems in operation:

i) regional systems which are essentially subordinates of the international system especially from the strategic, military and security point of view;

ii) regional groups that have come together, for fulfilling some limited (economic) objectives;

iii) comprehensive regional organizations with the objectives of achieving political harmony and economic and social development.

South Asian states had to choose one out of these three options for establishing their own regional system; and they rightly chose the third system.

Breecher has defined Southern Asia as consisting of fourteen states extending from Pakistan to Indonesia and including Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma(Myanmar), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam, South Vietnam,

1. E. Sudhakar: SAARC, Origin, Growth and Future, P.P. 16-17

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Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia, and he even attempted to make a case for inclusion of China in the South Asian Subordinate system.¹

Michael Brecher’s Southern Asia is vast and is related to different types of Governments and conflicting political and social ideologies and therefore the ongoing negotiation to bring about greater South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC) had delimited the region as comprising of seven states India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives Islands and Bhutan.²

South Asia is one of the region in which no Regional Organization was established till 9th decade of 20th Century. When one searches the reason for it he realizes that;

i) all the South Asian States have British legacy in the form of bitter feelings and distrust between the neighbour states;

ii) South Asian States are developing states at various levels of progress; and hence there was no quick means of communication or transportation among them.

iii) different states adhered different ideologies and values. This has created an obstacle among the states to have close contact to understand each other.

iv) different states of the region adopted different political systems, hence there could not be mutual understanding among them.

v) differences between the military capability, size and area of the states, population, scientific, advancement, industrialisation etc. created suspicion about

¹ Ed. Bhabani Sen Gupta: Regional Co-operation and development in South Asia, P.P. 32
² Ibid, P.P. 33
each other and this feeling became one among the most important hindrance in creating regional cooperation in South Asia.

Some of the South Asian States were interested in joining the outside regional organizations i.e. Sri Lanka tried hard to acquire the membership of ASEAN but ASEAN countries rejected the SriLankan proposal and made it clear that ASEAN countries do not wish to enroll outside country of the region as its member.

Pakistan, since birth, tried to create an Association of Muslim States, but when it failed in it, Pakistan's main objective was to get akin to Arab World. Pakistan wanted to establish close link with west Asian countries on the basis of religion, culture, language etc. But West Asian Countries never gave recognition to Pakistan as a West Asian or Middle East Country. In the eyes of the Arabs Pakistan is nothing but bi-furcated India and it is dealt accordingly i.e. whenever Pakistan fought was with India, Pakistan called 'Jihad', how many Arab countries responded to the call of 'Jihad' is a matter of historical records.

i) Initiative by the Bangladesh:

Scientific and technological advancement has brought states nearer to each other and gave them feeling that if they have to develop, they will have to rely on their neighbours. Their unity with their neighbours will safe-guard them from the exploitation as well as securing them from converting into an economic colony of the economical super power.
Super powers tried to exploit the situation of South Asia in their benefit but could not succeed. The successful functioning of ASEAN and other Regional Organizations has encouraged the states of this region to think in terms of having their own organization. Positive as well as negative thinking was carried out. Lastly, president Zia-ur-Rahman of Bangladesh took initiative in this regard and invited India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives to Bangladesh to discuss the formal proposals for the setting up of regional organization in South Asia in 1980. The emphasis of the Bangladesh President Zia-ur-Rahman was on creation of an atmosphere of mutual confidence and political understanding among the South Asian States and to remove the disparities and to adopt a gradual approach to the development of a regional cooperation.

South Asian Regional Cooperation was formally inaugurated in April 1981. President of Bangladesh Zia-Ur-Rahman has proposed that the leaders of the South Asian Countries should meet at the Summit level to explore a framework for required cooperation. A meeting at the Summit level would be the most appropriate forum for such a major intention in Embarking on a new and challenging venture envisaged in the proposal.

ii) Meetings of the Representatives of the States in the Indian Sub Continent

Zia-ur-Rahman, President of Bangladesh, has proposed that the leaders of the South Asian Countries should meet at the summit level to the explore a framework for required cooperation. The lead taken by Zia-ur-Rahaman was followed by India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives in the establishment of South

Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC). The foreign ministers seven countries deliberated upon the proposal of the United Nations Head Quarters, New York during its Assembly Session in August-September 1980. In this deliberation Bangladesh was entrusted with the responsibility to formulate the draft of working paper which will be placed for discussion at the first, meeting of foreign Secretaries. The 'Draft paper' was prepared and was circulated among the seven South Asian States in November, 1980.¹

a) Meetings at Secretary level

The first meeting of the Seven South Asian Foreign Secretaries was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 21st to 28th April, 1981. India cautioned other members for their hurried approach in dealing with the Bangladeshi proposal.

Second Meeting of the Secretaries was held in November 1981 at Kathmandu, Nepal. Secretaries discussed the Colombo plan in detail and its various aspects in particular.

Third Secretary level meeting of the South Asian States was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in August 1982. A Committee of the whole under Sri Lanka's Chairmanship had also been established at the Islamabad Foreign Secretaries meeting in 1982, with the responsibility of preparing, on the basis of the reports of the working groups, on Integrated Programme of Action.²

Foreign Secretaries meeting was held in March, 1983, at Dhaka, Bangladesh. In this fourth meeting of secretaries many decisions were taken and were

¹. Doc. SAARC : Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, P.P. 3
implemented immediately. Decision regarding expeditious implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action and holding of Ministerial meeting in New Delhi in the month of August 1983 were taken.

Fifth Secretary level meeting was held in July 1983 at New Delhi, India. The work done in this meeting was related to the preparation of Foreign Ministers Meeting in New Delhi in the month of Aug. 1983. In discussions Pakistan opposed India’s proposal for setting up a council of Ministers for the proposed SARC. Sixth Secretary level meeting was held in the month of February 1985 at Malé, Maldives. In this meeting all the participants co-ordinated with each other and many awaiting decisions were taken e.g. Pakistan accepted India’s July 1983 proposal for establishing a Council of Ministers for the SAARC.

b) Ministerial Level

First meeting of Foreign Ministers of Seven South Asian Countries was held on 2nd August 1983 at New Delhi, India. Seven Foreign Ministers endorsed and put a Seal of political authority on the work done by the Foreign Secretaries since 1981. In this meeting Foreign Ministers adopted a “Declaration on South-Asian Regional Co-operation” and described it as beneficial, desirable and necessary for socio-economic development and collective self-reliance.

The three sections of the Declaration respectively defined the Objectives and Principles, Institutional Arrangements and Financial Arrangements. The Objectives containing eight points envisaged:-
i) to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and improve their quality of life;

ii) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realise their full potential;

iii) to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of the region;

iv) to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems;

v) to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social cultural, technical and scientific fields;

vi) to strengthen co-operation with other developing countries;

vii) to strengthen co-operation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests, and

viii) to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

The co-operation among SARC countries was based upon the five principles of "sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs of other states and mutual benefit." The SARC was envisaged as being complementary to, and not a substitute for bilateral and multilateral co-operation.

This meeting ratified the decisions arrived at Foreign Secretaries meeting in Dhaka in March 1983.
The composition and terms of reference of a Technical Committee, Action Committee and standing Committee were defined in this meeting.

In their Joint the Communiqué Foreign Ministers decided to launch an Integrated programme of Action. The IPA included the activities, amenable to short-term and long-term co-operation in the areas of Agriculture, Rural Development, Meteorology Telecommunications, Scientific & Technological co-operation, Health & Population Activities, Transport, Postal Services and Sports, Arts and culture.¹

Second meeting of foreign ministers, Male, July, 1984:

As per the decision taken at their first meeting held in New Delhi, the Seven SARC(Foreign Ministers again met in Male, Maldives on July 10-11, 1984 to review their work and plan for the future.

The Ministers considered and endorsed the recommendations of the first and second meeting s of the standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries held in new Delhi (27-29 Feb. 1984) and Male(7-8 July, 1984), respectively.

Noting with appreciation the increased contributions announced by the member countries for SARC activities in 1984-85, the Ministers called for necessary follow-up action to utilise the offers of external assistance that had been made.

In pursuance of the decision taken by them at their first meeting in New Delhi in August, 1983, the Ministers agreed to recommend to their Heads of State

¹ Doc. SAARC: Lok Sabha Secretariat, P.P. 6
or Government the convening of the first Summit Meeting of South Asian Countries in Dhaka in the last quarter of 1985.

The Ministers agreed that the next meeting of Foreign Ministers would be held at Thimpu in the First half of May, 1985 and that it would serve as the preparatory meeting for the Summit. Third Meeting of Foreign Ministers, Thimpu, May, 1985.

Third meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the South Asian region was held in Thimpu, Bhutan on 13-14 May, 1985:

Sri Lanka's intention to boycott the meeting as a protest against the Indian Policy towards the ethnic problem. Indian P.M. Rajiv Gandhi and Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq persuaded Sri Lanka Govt. to participate in the Meeting. Sri Lanka appointed Wickramsinghe, President's senior advisor to represent Sri Lanka in the meeting but he could not reach Thimpu in the due to bad weather.

The two day meeting of the Foreign Ministers unanimously adopted a Charter on the future institutional set-up for the seven-nation South Asian Regional Cooperation to be launched at the first ever summit at Dhaka on 8th Dec. 1985. There was also general agreement that SARC should be enriched as the South Asian Association for Regional cooperation (SAARC).
Fourth Meeting of foreign Minister was held at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 5th Dec. 1985:

Fourth Meeting of foreign Ministers was held at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 5th Dec. 1985, was a preparatory meeting for the Summit of the Heads of State/Government and therefor it dealt various topic's i.e. combating terrorism and drug-trafficking, setting up a Programming Committee, endorsing the SAARC charter, its emblem and the draft declaration.

The meeting also discussed the establishment of SAARC secretariat which was to be taken up at Summit.

C) Heads of the State

All the seven Heads of State or Government of the South Asian Countries attended the first 'Summit' of the SAARC in 1985, at Dhaka. They were Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Pakistani President Zia-Ul-Haq, Sri Lankan President Jayawardene, Maldives President Mayoom Abdul Gayoom, Nepal's King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, King of Bhutan Jigme Sigme Wangchuk and Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammed Irshad.


1. Doc. SAARC : Lok Sabha Secretariat, P.P. 10
The Summit participants felt that the objectives of peace, freedom, social justice and economic prosperity were best achieved in the South Asian Region by fastening mutual understanding, good neighborly relations and meaningful cooperation among the member states. The Heads of state or Government expressed their conviction that regional cooperation 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. ¹

iii) Founding and Final Document-Charter of the SAARC:

The domestic political, economic and social systems in the countries of South Asia are characterized by large scale conflicts and instabilities. At the same time the region maintains a distinct unity because of common religions and languages. Poverty, population, unemployment and slow economic growth rates are the common problems of South Asia. Nearly on billion population of these seven countries accounts for 20% of World, population, living on 3.3% of earth surface area. India the core country in South Asia has 72% of the region’s area and 77 of its population and generates 78% of GNP. ²

Indian subcontinent is notorious for destruct fear and suspicion among and between the countries of this region generally. India and Pakistan in particular have taken a number of steps to reduce fear and suspicion between each other. Important amongst these steps are (a) the Karachi Agreement (1949) (b) The

¹. Annexure III, Charter of SAARC
². Arora V.K. : SAARC - Prospectus of Co-operation, P.P. 651
Tashkant Agreement (1966); (c) the Simla Accord (1972); and the No-Attack Accord on Nuclear Installations (1985).

Likewise India has established Cordial relation with Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and reduced the somewhat prevailing tension some of the area among their relationship. This has ease the leaders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to prepare ground for launching of SAARC.

The Meeting of Heads of these States on 8th December 1985 paved a way for making Charter for SAARC. These meeting also adopted a declaration called the Dhaka Declaration, committing their countries to the concept of regional cooperations. This meeting also reaffirmed the SAARC commitment to the Charter of UNO as well as continuing validity and relevance of the objectives of NAM as an important force in international relations.

The meeting of the Secretaries, Foreign Ministers and the Heads of the seven states finalised the contents of the Charter step by step very consciously giving stress on all the perspective of the association.

The following are the objectives, Principles and Institutionals and Financial arrangement for SAARC.

Objectives

1. To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
2. To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realise their full potentials;

3. To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia.

4. To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another’s problems.

5. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural technical and scientific/fields.

6. To strengthen Co-operation with other developing countries.

7. To strengthen Co-operation among themselves in international forum on matters of common interest and

8. To Co-operate with international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes

Principles

1. Co-operation within the framework of the Association shall be based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs of other states and mutual benefit.

2. Such Co-operation shall not be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral cooperation but shall complete them. Such cooperation shall not be inconsistent with bilateral and multilateral obligation.

Under articles III to VIII the Institutional arrangements of SAARC have been delineated. The Dhaka Declaration recognized that periodic meetings at the

1. Pib. SAARC Secretariat: CHARTER of the SAARC, P.P. 4
2. Ibid, P.P. 5
3. Ibid, P.P. 5
Summit Level were central to the promotion of mutual trust, confidence and co-operation among the SAARC countries. It has, accordingly been provided in the Charter that the Heads of State or Government will meet once a year.

The council of ministers, consisting of the Foreign Ministers of the region, will meet twice a year to formulate policies, review progress, decide new areas of cooperation, establish additional mechanisms under the Association as deemed necessary and decide on other matters of general interest of the Association.

The next level of Institutional Arrangement in the standing Committee comprising the Foreign Secretaries which will meet as often as deemed necessary. Monitoring and Co-ordination of programme of Co-operation, determination of inter-Sectoral priorities, identification of new area of Co-operation, etc. are among the functions assigned to the Standing Committee. It is to submit periodic reports to the Council of Ministers and obtain necessary decision on policy matters.

Following this level are the Technical Committees Comprising representatives of members states which will be responsible within their terms of reference for implementation, co-operation and monitoring of the programmes in their respective areas.1

The Heads of State of Government welcomed the progress already made in the implementation of the integrated programme of action in the nine mutually agreed areas. They expressed their desire to consolidate and further expand

1. Doc. SAARC: Lok Sabha Secretariat, P.P. 11
Co-operative efforts within an appropriate institutional framework in a spirit of partnership and equality.

The Heads of the state or Government expressed deep concern at the continuing crisis in the global economy. They underscored that deteriorating economic and social conditions had seriously retarded development prospect in South Asia and other developing countries sharply falling commodity prices, deterioration in the terms of trade intensification of protectionist measures, spiraling debt burden and a decline in the flow of external resources, especially concessional of the developing countries. These had been compounded by natural disasters and precarious world food security situation affecting developing countries. They also expressed concern over the diminishing capacity of international financial and technical institutions to respond effectively to the needs of the disadvantage and poorer country and regretted that the spirit of multilateral co-operation has begun to falter and weaker. This was particularly disturbing in the face of increased interdependence of developed and developing countries and the fact that economic revival of North was closely linked to economic progress in South. They believed that developments during the past decades had clearly demonstrated the structural imbalance and inequalities inherent in the existing international economic system and its inadequacy to deal with problems of development.

They strongly urged that determined efforts should be made by the international community towards realization of the goals and targets of the International Development Strategy as well as the substantial New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. They called for urgent resumption of the North-South dialogue and early convening of an international Conference on Money and Finance for Development with universal participation.
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.

iv) Declaration and Inauguration of the SAARC.

An initiative of Bangladesh for establishment of SAARC was responded favourably by the States of the South Asia Region. The Meetings of the representatives of the states in Indian Subcontinent were held and thus successfully conducted the exchange of thought of the States of the Asian Region to pave the path for the meetings, Secretary level to determined for point to discuss elaborately of the meeting of the Ministerial level. The Foreign Minister of the seven Nation States who decided to form South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation prepared draft for the First Summit meeting of the heads of the States of the South Asian States on 7-8 December 1985 at Dhaka, Bangladesh. As per the Scheduled Programme first SAARC Summit was held. First Summit meeting finalised the charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and declared on 8 December 1985 that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has come into existence.

The declaration made clear the Principles on which SAARC is created. These principles are sovereign equality, territorial integrity political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of the states, and mutual understanding. SAARC, will not act as a substitute for bilateral or multilateral
cooperation, but will be used as the agency to develop cooperation among the member states.

The objectives of the SAARC shall be -

a) To promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;

b) To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realise their full potentials;

c) To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South-Asia;

d) To contribute to mutual trust understanding and appreciation of one another problems.

e) To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;

f) To strengthen cooperation with other developing countries.

g) To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests and

h) To co-operate with international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes.

First Summit also adopted the Dhaka Declaration and, the following decisions were also taken.

1. SAARC shall have a Secretariat. The Heads of State and Government directed the foreign Minister to consider details regarding it location, structure, functions
and financing and submit those for the consideration of Heads of State or Government.

2. 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

The Heads of the State or Government unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Fourth Meeting of the Foreign Ministers on the emblem of SAARC.²

v) Negotiations for the Establishment of the Head Quarter:

The Heads of States or Government of the SAARC participants States have decided that the Association shall have a Secretariat. They directed the Foreign Ministers to consider details regarding its location, structure, functions, financing and submit those for consideration of Heads of State or Government.

The SAARC Charter chalked out a four tier institutional set set up which is as follows

The Thimpu Foreign Ministers Meeting in May 1985 finalised the draft Charter in which it was recommended to hold the Summit of the Heads of the State of Government in once in two year but the Charter that has finally approved at Dhaka

¹. Declaration of SAARC Summit, 1985, P.P. 8
². Ibid, P.P. 9
went a step ahead and recommended to hold it once a year. This arrangement is made at the apex level.

The Second tier of the institutional structure, the Council of Ministers, consisting of foreign ministers of the member States, is the most important organ of the SAARC from the functional point of view. It is endowed with a wide range of policy and decision making powers.

Standing Committee is a third tier of the SAARC and foreign Secretaries of the member states. They are entrusted with the responsibilities of the overall monitoring and coordination, approval of projects and programmes, mobilization of resources and identification of new areas of cooperation etc.

At the bottom of the structure is Technical Committee. The Technical Committees are constituted with the representatives of all member States. They are made responsible for the implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of the programmes in their respective areas of cooperation. The Technical Committees are ground level institution of the SAARC.

Apart from this institutional frame work, the SAARC Charter provided for a secretariat to be set up an appropriate time. The appropriate time came in Nov. 1986 at the Banglore Summit of the Heads of the States.¹

¹ E. Sudhakar : SAARC Origin, Growth and Future, P.P. 32.
vi) Establishment of the Head Quarter at Kathmandu

The Second Summit of the SAARC was held in Nov. 1986 at Banglore, India.

The Heads of State or Government hailed the signing of the Memorandum of understanding on Establishment of the SAARC Secretariat by the Council of the ministers and their decision to locate the Secretariat at Kathmandu in Nepal and appoint Ambassador Abul Ahsan of Bangladesh as the first Secretary-General of the SAARC. They were convinced that the establishment of the Secretariat would assist in the co-ordination of the SAARC activities, in implementation of its projects and programmes. English shall be the main working languages of the Secretariat.¹ All the communication by the Secretariat. All the communication by the Secretariat will be made in English only, no other language will be entertained by the Secretariat.¹

The King of Nepal Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev has offered the Land for the establishment of the Head Quarter of the SAARC in Kathmandu. All the arrangements which were needed to start the working the SAARC Head Quarter were made in time. Thus, after the appointment of all staff the inauguration of the Secretariat took place on 10th February 1987. In the format Secretary - General is an in-charge of the Secretariat and is responsible for the total functioning of the Secretariat. The Secretary General is appointed by the Council of the Ministers for a non-renewable tenure of two years. Mr. Abul Ahsan from Bangladesh was the first Secretary - General

¹ Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Secretariat, P.P. 7
Chart No. 2

ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF SAARC

SUMMIT

Adhoc Ministerial Meetings on specific issues

Council of Ministers

Standing Committee

Meetings of Chairpersons of Technical Committees (MTC)

Programming Committee of Senior Officials

Integrated Programme of Action (IPA)

Technical Committees - once a year

1. Agriculture
2. Communications
3. Education, Culture & Sports
4. Environment and Meteorology

6. Prevention of Drug Trafficking & Drug Abuse
7. Rural Development
8. Science and Technology
9. Tourism
10. Transport
11. Women in Development

SAARC Secretariat
Secretary-General
Directors

Coordinations, Monitoring, Servicing, Meeting, Channel of Communication & Linkages with other International Organisations

Regional institutions
SAIC
SMRC
STC
SDC

People-to-People Contact

SAARC Food Security Reserve
SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism
SAARC Convention Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances
SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA)
MOU's and Agreements with Intl Organisations

Regional Conventions and Agreements

Poverty Eradication Three-tier mechanism
The format of the functioning of the Secretariat is given in the following chart No. 2.

Non-existence of any regional Organisation in the South Asia has led Bangladesh President Zia-ur-Rahman to propose before the Nation of this region to come together and form the regional co-operation to overcome short-comings and draw-backs of the region through mutual help.

Indian Sub-Continent is taken as one geo-political region and the States in the Indian sub-continent along with Sri Lanka and Maldives, came together to discuss the matter at Secretarial, Ministerial and Heads of the States level to form regional Organisation. In the crude form the SAARC was brought into existence and later on modified and brought into the shape of South Asian Association for regional Cooperation i.e. SAARC.

The First Summit meeting finalized the Charter proposed by the Foreign Ministers of the Seven States. The Charter was unanimously accepted and brought into force on the day of acceptance itself i.e. 8th December, 1985. During negotiation for the establishment of the Head Quarter, the proposal of the King of Nepal was accepted and the SAARC came into being at Kathmandu on 16th Feb. 1987. The Head Quarter started working under the Secretary Generalship of Adul Ahsan of Bangladesh.

1. Pub. SAARC Secretariat: SAARC at a Glance; P.P. 4
2. Pub. SAARC Secretariat: SAARC in Brief; P.P. 70