

Dear Participants,

You are invited to the following Policy Dialogue.

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Organizers



South Asia Centre for  
Policy Studies (SACEPS)



RIS  
Research and Information System  
for Developing Countries  
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली

**Policy Dialogue**  
on  
**Unlocking the Potential of Regional Cooperation in South Asia for  
achieving Sustainable Development Goals:  
The Way Forward**

**New Delhi, 6 October 2018**

Silver Oak, India Habitat Centre, Lodi Road, New Delhi-110003

**Tentative Programme**

09:00-09.30	Registration
09.30-10.30	<b>Inaugural Session</b> <i>Opening remarks</i> <b>Dr. Nagesh Kumar</b> , Head, United Nations ESCAP South and South-West Asia Office (UNESCAP-SSWA) <b>Amb (Dr.) Mohan Kumar</b> , Chairman, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) <b>Prof. Deepak Nayyar</b> , Co-chair, South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS) <i>Special Address: H.E. Dr. Puspa Raj Kadel</i> , Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission, Nepal <i>Inaugural Address: H.E. Dr. Suresh Prabhu</i> , Minister of Commerce and Industry, India <i>Vote of Thanks: Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi</i> , Director-General, RIS
10.30-11.00	<b>Group Photo and Coffee break</b>
11.00-12.15	<b>Session 1: Potential and challenges for regional economic cooperation in South Asia against the backdrop of emerging global trends</b> <i>Regional economic cooperation can support achievement of SDGs by facilitating job creation and poverty reduction through fostering regional value chains. Rising protectionist tendencies, emerging technological developments, mega-trade agreements and volatility in exchange rate markets are creating new challenges for the policy makers. This session will take stock of emerging challenges faced by South Asian countries and explore solutions which enhanced regional economic cooperation can offer. Focus areas of the session will be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of the existing economic cooperation and trade arrangements at the bilateral, regional and subregional levels, their potential, limitations and challenges</li><li>• South Asia's participation in the fourth industrial revolution, regional production networks, value-chains, 'servicification', etc.</li><li>• Opportunities of technological, investment and financial cooperation</li><li>• Assessment of preparedness of South Asia in extending the scope of regional cooperation and participation in the emerging mega-trade blocs</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Challenges related to LDC graduation</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Moderator: Mr. Rajiv Kher, Distinguished Fellow, RIS and former Commerce Secretary</i></p> <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <p><b>Dr. Selim Raihan</b>, Executive Director, SANEM, Dhaka</p> <p><b>Dr. Abid Suleri</b>, Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad, and Member of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC), Government of Pakistan</p> <p><b>Dr. Posh Raj Pandey</b>, Executive Chairman, SAWTEE, Kathmandu</p> <p><b>Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja</b>, Executive Director, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Colombo</p> <p><b>Dr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna</b>, Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP-SSWA</p> <p><b>Dr. Ram Upendra Das</b>, Head, Centre for Regional Trade, New Delhi</p> <p><b>Mr. Chanchal Sarkar</b>, Director (ETF), SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu</p> <p><b>Mr. S.M. Nazmul Hasan</b>, Director, Trade &amp; Investment, BIMSTEC Secretariat, Dhaka</p> <p><b>Open discussion</b></p>
12.15-13.30	<p><b>Session 2: Potential and Challenges of Transport and Energy Connectivity</b></p> <p><i>Connectivity is quintessential to ensure success of any regional economic cooperation initiatives. Connectivity in the context of South Asia must reach beyond transport and include other dimensions such as energy linkages, ICT and people-to-people connectivity. This session will discuss the connectivity requirements of South Asia in terms of various dimensions of connectivity, with special emphasis on transport and energy connectivity. The Session will also discuss special challenges of connectivity faced by the Landlocked Least Developed Countries (LLDCs) of the subregion. Points for discussions are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Synergising regional transport connectivity initiatives led by SAARC, BIMSTEC and UNESCAP among others</i></li> <li>• <i>Identification of priority corridors and innovative means of investment mobilisation for speedy operationalisation</i></li> <li>• <i>Achieving concerted trade and transport facilitation through better coordination and collaboration between all stakeholders</i></li> <li>• <i>Fast-track digitisation of trade and transport procedures and implementation of single window systems and paperless trade</i></li> <li>• <i>Potential solutions to address the specific connectivity needs of LLDCs</i></li> <li>• <i>Prospects of South Asian cooperation in energy connectivity</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Moderator: Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Head, UNESCAP-SSWA</i></p> <p><i>Presentation: Mr. Anil Gupta, former CMD, CONCOR Ltd and Consultant, UNESCAP</i></p> <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <p><b>Amb. Gyan Chandra Acharya</b>, former Under Secretary General, United Nations OHRLLS and Chairman SAWTEE SDG Centre, Kathmandu</p> <p><b>Mr. Sonam P. Wangdi</b>, Secretary of National Environment Commission, Bhutan</p> <p><b>Mr. Nazir Kabiri</b>, Senior Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Finance, Afghanistan</p> <p><b>Mr. A.D. James</b>, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, India</p> <p><b>Dr. Prabir De</b>, Professor, RIS</p> <p><b>Ms. Saroj Ayush</b>, Senior Transport Specialist, World Bank</p> <p><b>Open discussion</b></p>
13:30–14:30	Lunch
14.30-15:30	<p><b>Session 3: Regional Cooperation in Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition</b></p> <p><i>Moderator: Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI and Member, Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council, Pakistan</i></p>

	<p><i>Presentation:</i> <b>Dr. R.V. Bhavani</b>, Programme Manager, Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia (LANSA), M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai</p> <p><i>Panelists</i></p> <p><b>Prof. Mustafizur Rahman</b>, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka</p> <p><b>Dr. Srivalli Krishnan</b>, Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation, New Delhi</p> <p><b>Dr. P.K. Anand</b>, Visiting Fellow, RIS</p> <p><b>Mr. Joseph George</b>, Senior Research Associate, UNESCAP-SSWA</p> <p><b>Open discussion</b></p>
15:30–15.45	Tea/Coffee Break
15.45–16.45	<p><b>Session 4: Round-table on Think-tanks Cooperation for Achievement of SDGs in South Asia</b></p> <p><i>Successful achievement of SDGs in South Asia will not only result from governmental actions. The civil society and think-tanks of the region have to play an important supportive role by providing evidence-base and advocacy for transformative policy changes. A networking of think-tanks from across the region could facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas, sharing of good practices and building capacity for accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Formation of a forum focusing on development policy issues that are specific to the subregion would be particularly helpful. This session will discuss the role of a subregional network of think-tanks in bridging knowledge gaps through collaborative research and outreach with the aim of assisting policy makers in achieving the SDGs. The objective of the session will be to discuss the rationale and modalities of such a network. Sub-topics of discussion are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mapping of areas of contributions that subregional think-tanks and various stakeholder groups can make to the achievement of SDGs and regional economic cooperation process in South Asia</i></li> <li>• <i>Modalities of collaboration between think-tanks from various countries of the subregion</i></li> <li>• <i>Potential of establishing an open-ended network, and outlines of institutional arrangements, mandate, and activities of the network</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Moderator:</i> <b>Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi</b>, Director-General, RIS</p> <p><i>Panelists</i></p> <p><b>Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya</b>, Distinguished Fellow, CPD, Dhaka</p> <p><b>Dr. Abid Suleri</b>, Executive Director, SDPI, Islamabad</p> <p><b>Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja</b>, Executive Director, Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Colombo</p> <p><b>Mr. Nazir Kabiri</b>, Senior Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Finance, Afghanistan</p> <p><b>Open discussion</b></p>
16.45-17.15	<p><b>Wrap up and Closing session</b></p> <p><b>Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi</b>, Director-General, RIS</p> <p><b>Dr. Nagesh Kumar</b>, Head, UNESCAP-SSWA</p>