INAUGURAL CEREMONY

(09 SEPTEMBER 2019)

SAARC HANDICRAFT EXHIBITION & WORKSHOP 2019 – NEPAL,

KATHMANDU, 09-12 SEPTEMBER 2019

STATEMENT BY H. E. MR. AMJAD HUSSAIN B. SIAL, SECRETARY GENERAL OF SAARC

Chief Guest Hon. Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation,

Mayor of Lalitpur,

Distinguished Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation,

Dignitaries,

Excellency Ambassador of Sri Lanka,

Participants from SAARC region,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour for me to address the Inaugural Ceremony of the SAARC Handicraft Exhibition & Workshop in this historic venue of Patan in Lalitpur.

On this occasion, I wish to congratulate the people of Lalitpur over Patan being chosen as the venue for this important SAARC event. I also wish to felicitate the people of Lalitpur for their enormous contribution in protecting and preserving their rich culture.

I wish to sincerely thank the Hon. Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, for gracing this Ceremony with his august presence as the Chief Guest.

We gratefully acknowledge the valued presence of distinguished officials from the Government of Nepal and guests from the SAARC region.

We wish to thank the esteemed Government of Nepal for hosting this event in collaboration with the SAARC Cultural Centre, which is one of the Centres of Excellence of SAARC. The arrangements made for this event are excellent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, South Asia, while reflecting a rich and plurality of cultural values and traditions, has shared civilization, constituting a historical basis for sustaining harmonious relations among the peoples of the region. The emergence of SAARC, therefore, contributes to further strengthening of cordial and fraternal ties among the Member States.

Moreover, in recognition of the fact that the SAARC process could draw more deeply from the vitality and strength of South Asia's cultural heritage, our leaders identified the promotion of cultural cooperation and development in the region as one of the Charter objectives of SAARC.

In pursuance of this objective, during their Fourteenth SAARC Summit in New Delhi in April 2007, our leaders adopted the SAARC Agenda for Culture, which identifies several facets for collaboration in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of our region.

I wish to acknowledge active role being played by the SAARC Cultural Centre in efficiently and successfully implementing the SAARC Agenda for Culture. This Exhibition and Workshop is one such important event in pursuance of the SAARC Agenda for Culture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The countries in the SAARC region have diverse handicraft traditions. These handicrafts are not mere decorations but serve useful purposes in our everyday life. Just looking around this city, you can see many handicraft traditions which are still in use. Traditional and modern handicrafts are still alive in the SAARC region which continues to remind us that we are the proud owners of a rich culture.

This event brings together the practitioners of handicraft traditions from across the region for sharing their knowledge and skills. I hope that your interactions will lead to a better understanding about how you can further promote the traditional knowledge about our handicrafts to a wider audience domestically as well as internationally and to promote better understanding and harmony among the SAARC fraternity.

Before I conclude, I wish to convey sincere appreciation to the officials of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal and the SAARC Cultural Centre for their diligence and commitment in organizing this important event. Your efforts have indeed been very fruitful.

I wish this Exhibition and Workshop tremendous success.

I thank you.

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