

TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SAARC BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF
HOME-BASED WORKERS (SABAH)
KATHMANDU, 31 OCTOBER 2018

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

Distinguished Chief Patron of SABAH, Madam Chandni Joshi,
Distinguished Chairperson, Sristi Joshi Malla, and Office Bearers of SABAH,
Esteemed Representatives from UN Women, UN and Homenet South Asia,
Guests from Bhutan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to address the Inaugural Session of the Tenth Annual General Meeting of SABAH Nepal. I wish to thank the Chairperson of SABAH Nepal for inviting me.

I wish to warmly felicitate office bearers and members of SABAH Nepal on this occasion. This is a testimony to SABAH's successful journey over the past one decade. Let us give a big hand to SABAH on its commendable achievement.

I also wish to thank SABAH's partners and donors in helping SABAH in its endeavours. Indeed, SABAH's success owes much to the support and contribution of its partners and donors, especially the SAARC Development Fund.

Distinguished Participants,

Since its inception in December 1985, SAARC has accorded priority to the wellbeing of women. During SAARC Summits, our leaders have underscored the need to improve the social and economic status of women. The resolve of our leaders to empower women is manifest in SAARC's Social and Economic Agenda aimed at promoting their economic and financial emancipation.

The SAARC Social Charter is one of the major initiatives taken by SAARC, which incorporates a broad range of targets to be achieved across the region for empowering women. Another such important initiative is the SAARC Gender Policy Advocacy Group (GPAG) that aims at promoting gender equality and empowering women.

Economic empowerment of women falling below the poverty line has to be our primary objective, if we were to achieve gender equality and accelerated economic growth in South Asia. As we are aware, women who are working in the informal sector are the ones who are facing hardships and challenges, while their contribution is not recognized formally. Against this backdrop, the establishment of SABAH is a positive step in creating opportunities for home-based women workers in the region.

Distinguished Participants,

As you are aware, SABAH is the first pilot project funded by the SAARC Development Fund under its Social Window. The project that lasted for six years from 2009 to 2015 was intended to

empower home-based workers through economic self-sufficiency by harnessing their indigenous skills for producing market-oriented products.

It is very heartening to note that SABAH today has been able to establish itself as an important entity in South Asia. In essence, SABAH is contributing to the promotion of the spirit of SAARC at the grassroots level in South Asia.

SABAH doesn't just give training to its members but links their products to the mainstream market, and mentors its members to become economically independent. SABAH shows us that women at the grassroots level can generate income for themselves and their families, if they are given an opportunity. SABAH has actually developed a model for poverty alleviation. It is in this context that I wish to encourage development partners to collaborate with SABAH in reaching the unreached with a view to alleviating rural poverty at a faster pace.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to say that empowerment of women is empowerment of our nations. I wish to once again congratulate the Chairperson, office bearers and members of SABAH Nepal on its Tenth Annual General Meeting. I also wish you all a fruitful outcome of your Meeting. I wish SABAH Nepal every success in realizing its vision of a society where home-based workers live a life of economic self-sufficiency and dignity.

I thank you.
