

Introduction

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, or SAARC, is an economic and geopolitical organization that was established to promote socio-economic development, stability, and welfare economics, and collective self-reliance within its member nations. Founded during a summit in 1985, SAARC's initial members include Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Due to rapid expansion within the region, Afghanistan received full-member status and countries are considered observers. SAARC respects the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, and national independence as it strives to attain sustainable economic growth.

Number of member countries: 8

Region(s): Asia

Headquarters: Kathmandu, Nepal

Composition: Plurilateral

Coverage: Goods & Services

Signed: December 8, 1985

Entry into force: December 8, 1985

Web Site: <http://www.saarc-sec.org/>

Member Countries

Afghanistan	Maldives
Bangladesh	Nepal
Bhutan	Pakistan
India	Sri Lanka

History

June 3, 1905 - Foreign ministry officials of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka meet for the first time in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1983 - At an international conference held in New Delhi, India the foreign ministers of the seven countries adopt the Declaration on South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and formally launched the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA).

1985 - SAARC is established when its charter is formally approved. First Summit is held in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

2004 - The agreement on the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) is signed.

2007 - Afghanistan becomes a member of SAARC during the 14th SAARC Summit.

2009 - Australia, China, the EU, Iran, Japan, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Korea, and the United States become observers of SAARC.

