

Preparing for Peoples SAARC - A Brief Report

Tuesday 3 June 2008, by [TARIO Farooq](#) (Date first published: 1 June 2008).

A two days meeting in Colombo discussed the various themes and organizational aspects for a three days People SAARC. The South Asian Alliance for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) heads of states will meet in Colombo on July 2008. A three days counter event with people's perspective will be held on 18-20 July in Colombo.

Representatives of various labour and social movements met here on 31 May and 1 June to chart out the plan of action for the three days and to discuss the future strategies. In future, a call for South Asian Union would be the future philosophy of all the social and labour movements in the region.

A campaign against militarization, food shortages, price hike and neo liberal agenda will be priority of the three days People's SAARC. Radical politicians and individuals will be invited to speak at the event. At the end of the event, "A peace for Sri Lanka rally" will be go through the center of Colombo.

Activists from all the 9 countries of South Asia will participate to protest against the policies of the rulers of the region. Their policies have resulted in absolute poverty among the majority of the people of the region, almost one fifth of the whole world. The rulers have pushed the whole region in a consistance state of war and massive amounts are spent on militarization of the region. The region has become the largest buyers of the arms in the whole world yet it is most poor region of the world as well.

A draft paper circulated and accepted with some changes in the light of the discussion held at the meeting as a background paper on the subject "Structurally Adjusted Destruction of Human Lives and Democracy in South Asia". The paper states

"The rulers of these countries have endeavored to keep their people isolated by erecting walls of suspicions, encouraging hostility and intolerance, feeding disinformation and prohibiting interaction amongst the people of the region in order to maintain their control in the land. This has resulted in fraudulent legitimization of the system of oppression and exploitation. Such system also creates conducive conditions for the proliferation of paranoia, war hysteria, militarization, nuclear weapon and authoritarian domination of the security forces by adhering to an ultranationalist ideology that self-righteously curbs debates, discussions and disagreements in many vital issues".

"All countries have altered their economic policies, political arrangements, and foreign policy stances to suit the interests of the dominant industrialized nations led by the US - often under direct or indirect dictates of the multilateral financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF, the World Trade Organization, and at times the US administration".

"The effects have been deleterious for the toiling masses of these countries. They experience deterioration in living standards, economic insecurity, and erosion of livelihood opportunities".

"According to FAO the magnitude and sweep of the crises will push an additional 100 millions

people into hunger along with the existing hundreds of millions”.

“South Asia is among world’s most conflict prone region due to the legacy of the colonial past and subsequent war on terror”.

“There is a substantial erosion of democratic processes. Legislatures hardly exist, emergencies alternate with army rule and monarchs lie in wait. Armies administer in the name of civilian rule, incarceration without trial, torture and rape, killing and molestation in the name of fighting terrorism and extremism. And to top it all judicial abstentionism in place of judicial activism or worse still a judiciary committed to the neo-liberal dogma – these entire put together have already reversed the course of our democratic journey”.

“What the countries of the South Asia are in need today is new radical imagination and dreams that can shape the creation of a new South Asian Union”.

Those who attended the two days meeting include Asgar Ali Sabri Action Aid Bhangladesh, Rokeya Kabir, Babu Mathew, Meena Menan, Varsha Rajan Berry, Jatin Desai ,Focus on Global South, Ajit Muricken VAK, Anil K Singh SANSAD , Mohamed Latheef Maldivian Democratic Party, Dr. Sarba Khadka, Dr. Arjun Karki SAAPE, Karamath Ali, Anushae Alam, Fareeha Sultan PILER, Ashok Chudruy, Channaia, Jaya, Mahuruf, Nimalka, Vasudeva, Christine, Kumar and several other activists from the region.

A call for action is been sent out to the social, political and labour movements in the region. [1]

Note

See: [Call for People’s SAARC 2008!](#)