



SAU

connect

An Update from South Asian University

Volume 2, July 2009

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

We bring to you yet another edition of CONNECT covering the activities related to the South Asian University in the second quarter of 2009.

Government of NCT Delhi has been very generous in its support to the South Asian University project. We convey our heartfelt gratitude to HE Mr. Tejinder Khanna, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, for his continued support and encouragement and message of good wishes for SAU.

We would like to express our gratitude to Prof.S.V.D.Gamini Samarnayake, Chairman UGC of Sri Lanka and Dr. Hassan Hameed, Rector, Maldives College of Higher Education for graciously agreeing to become Honorary Editors of CONNECT.

Beginning this issue we are commencing a series titled **Igniting Minds for Progress** to introduce higher education in SAARC Member States. In this issue we focus on Afghanistan.

Association with SAU and with CONNECT has been rewarding and satisfying experience for me. I hope that CONNECT will continue to receive continued support and patronage from its readers in various SAARC Member States.

I wish SAU and CONNECT success in their noble endeavour to connect the hearts and minds of the people of South Asia.

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Lieutenant Governor
Delhi

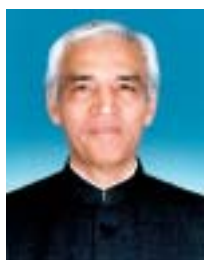


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Message



The establishment of South Asian University in the National Capital Territory of Delhi is a notable milestone in the development of South Asian cooperation under the auspices of SAARC.

Over many centuries past, Delhi has been a hub for national, regional and global exchanges in the fields of knowledge and culture. Openness of mind and a spirit of unbiased enquiry have been defining characteristics of our country. Tolerance, pluralism, a feeling of universal brotherhood, seeking the well being of all and giving respect and space to people of different religious persuasions and ways of life are facets of our existence which have enriched us in the past and will, no doubt, continue to do so in the future as well.

It is my sincere hope that the South Asian University will pursue the various academic curricula with the help of faculty and students drawn from all the member countries of SAARC, who will collectively contribute to strengthening our underlying bonds of fraternity and shared goodwill. As the University succeeds in producing enlightened scholars who discern the underlying unity of mankind as a whole and more specifically of the people of South Asia, our region will become a more potent force for the promotion and sustenance of regional and global peace and progress.

Tejinder Khanna

Tejinder Khanna

Rehabilitating and Rebuilding – Afghanistan Forges Ahead

Years of turmoil and conflict have had a deleterious impact on the education system in Afghanistan. University campuses turned into war zones, shattering the infrastructure and forcing faculty members into exile or intellectual isolation.

Afghan society has a rich and diverse history of education which was influenced by a steady stream of travellers who came to Afghanistan as merchants, religious preachers, invaders, etc. Buddhism (500 BC), e.g., brought its own curriculum and methods of teaching whereas Islam brought its own tradition of masjid schools. Higher educational organizations flourished in Afghanistan during the 15th Century, particularly in Herat. In early 20th Century, modern western education was introduced under Amir Habibullah Khan (1901-1919).

The origin of foreign assistance to Afghan education goes to the end of the 19th century. Turkey and India were among the first donors. 57 students went to Bombay to learn automobile technology in 1909. They were probably the first Afghans to study abroad. Later, the United States, France, Germany, England, Japan, and Egypt contributed to education and assisted in the establishment of the Kabul University which opened in 1946. It had faculties of Medicine (1932), Law (1938), Sciences (1942), Letters (1944), Theology (1951), Engineering (1956), Agriculture (1956), Economics (1957), Education

SAU – Hope in the making!

Considering the history of the education system in Afghanistan, and looking at the challenges it is facing to provide quality education to its youth, the setting up of a University like SAU has brought hope to the young Afghans to get access to world-class academic environment. Afghanistan can now look forward to participate in an education programme that is going to be at par with the best Universities of the World. The students can now dream of being a part of the advanced course and syllabi that will be selected for the students of SAU.

(1962), Pharmacy (1959), Veterinary (1961), Home Economics, and Polytechnic Institute (1967), and the Institute of Education (1954). Today, the Kabul University has the largest enrolment with over 8,000 students, of which about 24 per cent are women.

Education is once again enjoying prime attention and is being seen as the essential key to change from a culture of war to a culture of peace, democracy and positive growth. Article 43 of the 1382 Constitution states, "Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall

be offered up to BA level in the State educational institutes free of charge by the State." Furthermore Education Law of 1387 (2008) guarantees equal rights to education for all children.

Nation is working towards rebuilding and re-opening its universities and colleges, and has tens of thousands of students hoping to qualify for admission to higher education. The capacities of current institutions are limited and cannot begin to meet the overwhelming hopes and demands of students.

Recognizing the enormous challenges facing Afghanistan, the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan (MoHE) has developed a Strategic Reforming Plan for the next decade, targeted at improving management, facilitating access to education, and augmenting financial support, as well as enhancing quality in higher education through faculty development, curriculum reform and quality assurance. It has a realistic vision that focuses optimistically on the opportunities and possibilities for a better future. The vision is for a public and private post-secondary education system, to be reconstructed with international quality and national accessibility, to meet the strategic needs of the nation within the next decade. It is characterized by the following principles:

- Broad access and improved quality in student admission, without any discrimination by gender, religion, ethnicity, race, class, or geography.
- Honouring culture, religion and tradition while incorporating modern scientific knowledge and methods.
- Educational quality and institutional management meeting international standards.

Other initiatives taken by the Ministry for developing higher education at par with international standards include establishment of a national university credit system and contact with international universities through the internet. Through coordination and co-operation with the international community, good progress has been achieved in: reconstruction and refurbishing of destroyed and damaged buildings; increasing the number of students from 10,000 to 40,000 of which 25 per cent are women; reform of administration departments; establishing the computer systems in the MoHE, universities and institutes of higher education; arranging scholarships and



Students take an outdoor exam at Kabul University because of a lack of classroom space in September 2006. The department building has since been restored.

fellowships for students; publishing of magazines and daily and weekly newspapers; compilations and translation of books and scientific papers.

MoHE, while ensuring rebuilding and continuance of old universities and institutes, like Kabul University, Kabul Polytechnic, and Kabul Medical Institute, is also engaged in the establishment of new universities and colleges which will eventually exist in all Provinces. Some of the new universities already established include the Khost University, aka Shaikh Zayed University (SZU), which was set-up in 2008 and offers courses in medicine, engineering, computer science, agriculture and technology for about 3,000 students through its nine faculties. In 2008, MoHE signed agreements worth \$4.6 millions to build universities in the provinces of Jawzjan, Bamyán, Paktia, Kunduz, Faryab and Badakhshan.

The government has also encouraged establishment of good-quality private higher education institutions with proper incentives and quality control mechanisms. The American University of Afghanistan established in 2006 and located in the Karte Se area of Kabul, claims to be the first such private higher education institution. It offers three undergraduate degrees, as well as intensive English language preparation courses and professional development training. Another privately-assisted university is the Kardan University which was established in early 2002. Kardan

Important Universities in Afghanistan

Kabul

American University
Bakhtar University
Dawat University
Kabul Institute of Medicine
Kabul University
Kardan University
National Military Academy
Polytechnical University of Kabul
Rana Institute of Higher Education
University of Pedagogy

Khost

Hara University
Khost University

Nangarhar

Aryana University
Khurasan University
Nangarhar University
Al-Beroni University
Balkh University
Bamiyan University
Faryab University
Paktia University
Takhar University

Bold steps by Afghan Government

The Government of Afghanistan (GoA) has taken bold steps to tackle the rehabilitation and development needs of the country.

In the past five years, it has made notable efforts to revive the higher education sector alongside the ongoing progress in primary and secondary education. 19 higher education institutions reopened their doors and enrolment jumped from 4,000 students in 2001 to 37,000 in the fall of 2007.

The Afghanistan government and the international community have agreed to expand the nation's higher education sector to create jobs and meet projected requirements for skills in key sectors, such as mining, construction and engineering as well as agriculture. This was announced at a UN-backed international conference on Afghanistan held in The Hague on 31 March.

A Strategic Reforming Plan for the next decade has been launched. In another attempt to improve the level of education in universities, the salaries of teachers and professors were raised last month by 80-100 per cent, depending on their qualifications. The curriculum in public universities will be revised to meet the development needs of the country and private sector growth by incorporating recent knowledge in scientific and technical education, and the education of teachers into the higher education curriculum.

Under the reform plan, by the end 2010 student enrolment would reach 100,000, with at least 35 per cent of them female. Universities will be prepared to meet the demands of 1 million high school graduates by 2014.



Dr. M Azam Dadfer, Afghan Minister of Higher Education

gets its name from a Dari word which means professional. Kardan University made a small beginning in a small classroom with 15 students. It now offers higher education in the disciplines of management sciences, information technology, engineering and social sciences at graduate level. It has established educational linkages with universities abroad.

Expansion of universities, including through private sector involvement is a good step towards increasing capacity building and encouraging the return of Afghan intellectuals. The universities employ about 2,000 professors. Six per cent of Afghan professors at the universities have Ph.D. degrees, 34 per cent have Master's degrees, and 60 per cent have B.A. degrees only (see box for a list of such institutions).

The Afghanistan Higher Education Project (a USAID-funded project) which is focused on faculty development and establishment of new universities alongwith beefed up security of the campuses, are integral parts of an overall programme to rehabilitate and strengthen the capacity of education system to improve access to quality education throughout Afghanistan.

Various SAARC Member States, drawing on their past linkages with Afghanistan are engaged in helping revival and revitalization of education sector in Afghanistan. NGOs, notably the Bangladesh based BRAC has set up a dedicated Afghanistan programme to assist primary education. Pakistan and Sri Lanka have also offered assistance through different programmes, including student and faculty exchange programmes. India, which was one of the earliest partners of Afghanistan in education, has devoted a significant part of its developmental assistance since 2001 to the education sector. Some of the key assistance programmes include reconstruction of Habibia School, Kabul; grant of 500 annual long-term university scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate studies and establishment of the India-Afghanistan Foundation for cultural and educational cooperation. Indian NGOs are also active in skill enhancement projects in Afghanistan. Afghanistan-India-UNDP Programme for Capacity for Afghan Public Administration (CAP) is imparting professional skills to Afghanistan public administration.

To meet the need for more qualified teachers, UNICEF is helping to establish

teachers' training colleges in each of the country's 34 provinces. The colleges are part of a major investment in teaching standards, along with development of a new curriculum, teacher accreditation and textbooks for primary school students. UNICEF has provided support in the form of construction, library furniture, and stationery and computer equipment for nine new teachers' training colleges.

Teachers hold the key to change in Afghanistan. Despite all the international efforts in capacity building, teachers of Afghanistan face a real threat from the Taliban, warning them to stay away from schools and colleges and telling them stop teaching or face the consequences.

Yet, with rare exceptions, it doesn't stop them. Everyone knows that education is the way forward for a country that has been through 23 years of civil war and five years of the Taliban's brutal medieval theocracy, which closed all the schools in the country.

Today, six million students are back in the classrooms, two million of them being girls. No Census has been done in Afghanistan, but the population is estimated to be between 22 and 25 million. Since the life expectancy in this troubled country is only 40 years, one can deduce that the number of students still being denied an education is vast.

Today, as Afghanistan moves out of the crisis-mode into forward-thinking and forward-building, the fruits are starting to appear on the tree of the higher education. Universities in Afghanistan are once again becoming producers as well as consumers of knowledge as they strive to provide learning opportunities for youth to ensure the nation's future supply of educated professionals who contribute to national development in all fields.

Yet there is a long and difficult journey ahead before the institutions of higher learning become widely accessible to qualified youth in order to ensure new generations of educated leaders, scientists, scholars, and professionals who contribute to the growth of a stable democratic society.

(This article has been largely built from the information provided at the MoHE website: <http://www.mohe.gov.af>. Kindly visit the website for additional information).

Afghanistan Higher Education: Facing Global & Local Challenges



The higher education system in Afghanistan revolves around colleges and universities, as there is a limited number of technical institutions in the country. Admission to universities or technical institutions is through an entrance examination since there is limited space, and limited number of seats and scholarships for the students.

Most of these universities, are limited to a four-year college that offers BA and BS degrees except for the medical colleges. There are only a few programmes offering Master's degree, available only at the Kabul University and Teachers Colleges or Universities. The courses offered by these universities are largely limited to traditional subjects such as humanities, law, science, engineering, architecture, medicine and few other disciplines. There are 22 universities or public institutions of higher education and 15 private institutions of higher education that have mostly developed in the past two to three years. There are over six million children enrolled at the primary and secondary levels in primary, secondary and high schools, whereas there are just 55,998 students enrolled (total up to 2008) in different institutions of higher education in the country, out of which there are only 9,926 female students. Afghanistan is making every effort to meet its goal (Afghanistan National Development Strategy in 2006) that 35 per cent of total enrolment in higher education should be female students.

Demand for higher education in Afghanistan is approximately five times more than the available facilities, and this ratio is rapidly changing, unfortunately not in favour of the students. The Strategic Plan of the MoHE basically focuses on taking care of this dilemma. In order to improve the capacity in providing access for citizens, MoHE has encouraged promotion of cooperative programs, academic partnerships and technical exchanges between Afghan and international institutions of higher education. In the past two years we were able to establish academic affiliations with 11 foreign universities and several national institutions of higher education in Kabul.

Education is vital to human development in any country and higher education is essential to the national development in every aspect of social, economic, and political life. Priority of MoHE is to increase enrolment, improve access and to ensure quality higher education. The Government policy encourages an important and effective role for private sector in higher education. The university co-operation plans that have already begun will allow the institutions of higher education in the country to interact and be supported by recognized foreign universities. Public-private partnership is the best opportunity for both sectors to share their ideas and resources and ultimately to benefit all.

The establishment of South Asian University (SAU) in Delhi is an effort by SAARC to promote cross-border education, which would fulfil the long desired goal of member states including of Afghanistan that their students study in India and other institutions of higher education in the region. This new development meets perfectly well the expectations of the strategic plan for higher education in Afghanistan. SAU shall attract students from both genders, male and female, without much locally imposed cultural constraint. Also the new university may serve as an opportunity for female students that may significantly contribute to the socio-economic development of the countries in the region and beyond.

[Excerpts from the paper "Afghanistan Higher Education: Facing Global & Local Challenges" presented at the Sub-National Preparatory Conference for South, South-West and Central Asia on Higher Education in February 2009 by Professor Quadir A. Amiryar, MCL, Ph.D., Senior Advisor, Policy & Governance, Ministry of Higher Education. Prof. Amiryar is also a member of the Inter-Governmental Steering Committee on the Establishment of the South Asian University. He is also a member of SAU's Task Force on Governance and Legal Structure]

Friendship and Understanding at Maldives



The Fifth Meeting of the Committee of Heads of SAARC UGCs/Equivalent Bodies was held in the Maldives during June 1-2, 2009. This Committee comprises Chairmen of University Grants Commissions and similar bodies that fund and oversee public universities of SAARC States. The Committee aims to strengthen cooperation among the SAARC countries.

In the Meeting, held in the beautiful Bandos Island Resort, the delegates discussed about exchanging staff and students among SAARC States, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, fostering friendship and understanding by exchange of scholarships and fellowships and organizing competitions among tertiary students.

The Hon'ble Vice President of the Maldives, HE Dr. Mohamed Waheed Hassan inaugurated the Meeting and reaffirmed that Maldives looks upon the South Asian University (SAU) as a great seat of learning for young men and women of the SAARC Region. For Maldives, the importance of SAU is too obvious to be emphasized.

Professor G K Chadha, the CEO of SAU, participated in the meeting as a special guest. He briefed the delegates on the work being carried out in the Project Office and the advances being made to start teaching in mid 2010.

After the Bandos-Male meeting, Prof. Chadha took time off to visit the North of the Maldives on a study tour to gain first-hand experience of the variety of communities living in the Maldives that SAU would serve in the long run. He visited the islands of Hanimaadhoo, Kulhudhuffushi, Neykurendhoo and Nohivaranfaru, which are village-like communities with distinct cultures and economic base. In each island, he visited important sites and held discussions with local community leaders, education officers, teachers and students. Prof. Chadha also visited the Kulhudhuffushi Campus of the Maldives College of Higher Education, soon to be the country's first university. Prof. Chadha was highly impressed with the pattern and rigour of school education in Maldives, in spite of a fairly large number of teachers being brought from other countries, the movement from one island to the other being not so easy, most ostensibly because the residential facilities for students being scanty, and nonexistent in some cases. In his visit to the Capital, Male, Prof. Chadha also visited the Faculty of Engineering Technology – a division of MCHE. He also held discussions with State Minister for Education Dr. Ahmed Ali Maniku and briefed him on the progress being made on the establishment of SAU and its promise for providing world-class educational facilities to SAARC citizens, including those from the Maldives.



*Inputs from: Dr. Hassan Hameed,
Rector, Maldives College of Higher Education and
Member of the Steering Committee on the Establishment of SAU*

SAU in the Context of Sri Lankan Higher Education System

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established when its Charter was formally adopted on December 8, 1985 by the Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



SAARC provides a platform for the people of South Asia to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. It aims to accelerate the process of economic and social development amongst its Member States. With the above objectives, over the past two decades, the SAARC has initiated several programmes with the aim of facilitating regional cooperation and resource-sharing. In this context, the initiatives taken in the field of higher education are commendable. As we know, several professional and other academic bodies have already formed regional charters, grasping the overall philosophy of SAARC. Formation of the Committee of Heads of University Grants Commissions and Equivalent Bodies is one of the forward steps in further formalising and expanding the activities of SAARC. In addition, the SAARC Fellowship Scheme and the Consortium on Open and Distance Learning have the potential to bring in significant benefits to Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, the more recent efforts made to establish the South Asian University is one of the prime projects launched by the SAARC, fulfilling a long-felt need in the region. It is strongly believed that this would be a springboard for our intellectuals to work as a team in addressing issues pertinent to the region, especially areas of poverty alleviation, good governance, transfer of technology and in emerging sciences such as nanotechnology. The SAU also could be a centre of excellence to train the Sri Lankan academics and intellectuals in further education, especially to obtain postgraduate qualifications and undertake collaborative research projects. In addition, as a regional centre of excellence, could be utilized to send some of the students for undergraduate courses in particular fields, as the case may be. From the Sri Lankan point of view, SAU would serve as a window to communicate with the intellectuals of the region and be the leveraging agency to create new world order in tomorrow's Asia.

Prof. S.V.D. Gamini Samarnayake,
*Chairman UGC, Sri Lanka and member of the
Steering Committee on the Establishment of SAU*

The Specter of Subaltern Globalization

SAU sponsored a seminar at the School of International Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), on 20 May 2009. Prof Chadha chaired this event and the Ambassador of Sri Lanka graced the occasion with other dignitaries from Pakistan, Bangladesh and other South Asian countries. Prof Y. K. Tyagi, the Dean of SIS made the introductory remarks.

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Professor of International Relations at the University of Dhaka, was the keynote speaker at the Seminar to speak on the theme, "State of International Relations in South Asia: Beyond Realist Goals."

Prof Imtiaz focused mainly on the transformation of the post-Westphalian/post-colonial state in the age of globalization. The latter, he maintained, arose from a complex combination of multiple interactions, giving rise to a multiversity or multiple universes of knowledge and practices. He highlighted three versions of globalization namely; economic globalization, reverse globalization and subaltern globalization. He then spoke in detail on subaltern globalization, the manner in which the latter with complex networks of smugglers, narco-traders, women traffickers, money launderers, illicit small arms producers and sellers, non-state terrorists, suicide bombers, and a host of other 'dubious and shadowy' actors and activities have come to challenge the state and the international community. In this context, Prof Imtiaz said:

"When things become overwhelming, situations become hopeless, policies become repetitive, and change becomes a rare commodity, much can be gained by reminding oneself and also others the insightful comment of Albert Einstein: 'Imagination is more important than knowledge.' In the context of the demonic impact of subaltern globalization there is a dire need of imaginative interventions, possibly in each and every sphere of our life and living."

With education, Prof Imtiaz said that there is no short cut. We must get used to the idea of protracted interventions in the field of education and that again at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In this context, linearity of thought, modern or otherwise, needs to be abandoned, and greater options ought to be made available in the understanding of 'past,' 'present' and 'futures.'

Abstract

Critics have already referred to the mushrooming of global networks resisting economic globalization as 'globalization from below.' The latter includes a diverse group of people – environmentalists, NGOs, religious groups, small farmers, labour unions, women's movement, consumerists, anti-sweatshop activists, and the like, all one way or another either critical of or directly suffering from and struggling against the impact of economic globalization. Here the forces of the seemingly disempowered non-state have creatively joined hands to overcome the exploitation of the empowered non-state, i.e. the forces of economic globalization. The subaltern nature of the resistance movements, particularly the networking, can hardly be minimized. But then, there is a further subaltern variant to the whole notion of globalization from below.

This refers to the deepening of relationship between and amongst the 'dubious groups' and 'shadowy activities' ranging from smuggling of goods and people, illicit production and trading of small arms, money laundering, narco-production and trading, terrorism, and the like, and that again, beyond national, ethnic, racial, and even religious affiliations. The subalterns, particularly the poverty-ridden and marginalized population, become easy target of such groups and activities, but more importantly the state of being itself becomes a factor for certain groups of (relatively well off) people to rally support and even clandestinely work for their cause. A protracted nature of poverty and marginality and a lack of substantive global concern also push them to seek informal or even criminal means to reproduce their lives or redress the situation. The complex networking at this level and in combination with the resistance movements against economic globalization could be best referred to as subaltern globalization. Here the subalterns, including their ardent supporters and sympathizers, are no less creative and empowered when it comes to organizing and reproducing their activities at the global level, and that too often by challenging the overly empowered forces of economic globalization. Indeed, a spectre is haunting the world, the spectre of subaltern globalization!



About curriculum development, he opined that it had almost become a cliché. But the fact remained that the sponsors as well as the critics of curriculum development have always focused on the word 'curriculum' and not on the compound word, 'development.' Put differently, the development of curriculum is tied up not only with the development of the state but also with the larger developmental world-view called modernity.

Degovernmentalization of schools, he felt, was a step required for the reproduction of fresh, bold and creative thinking. Since public education, both secular and religious, has become state or more precisely government education, at times, even regime-centric education, it is time that the idea of civic or post-political education is given a serious thought. There is evidently a need to overcome the

majoritarianism that is so much tied up with public and governmentalized education. In fact, majoritarianism has not only come to define the core of 'national education' and has in turn alienated the minorities, both religious and linguistic, but also ended up reproducing animosities in the region, with the minorities often finding their grievances more receptive across the borders. Degovernmentalization of schools therefore ought to be encouraged at both national and regional levels, he said. The abstract of the paper is given below.

Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed

Professor of International Relations, University of Dhaka and member of the Steering Committee on the Establishment of SAU and Expert on SAU's Task Force for Governance and Legal Structure

Third Steering Committee Meeting



The Third Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Steering Committee on the Establishment of South Asian University was held in Mussoorie, India on 15-16 April 2009. Mr. Rishi Ram Ghimire, Director, SAARC Secretariat inaugurated the Meeting. Prof. S. K. Thorat, Chairman, University Grants Commission, and Leader of the delegation of the host country, India was elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting.

The main agenda of the meeting included: review of the progress; consideration of the first drafts of Statutes, Academic Plan and Business Plan; Financing Mechanism; and finalisation of Logo of SAU. The Meeting expressed overall satisfaction over the steady progress made on the implementation of the

recommendations/decisions of the Second Meeting of the Steering Committee. Prof. G. K. Chadha, CEO of the Project Office of SAU briefed the Meeting about the status of Project Office, Academic Task Force, Infrastructure Development and Master Plan of SAU, etc. The inputs of the Project Office were commended by the meeting which reiterated the importance of ensuring commencement of the first academic session in August 2010.

On the first drafts of Statutes of SAU, Academic Structure and Business Plan prepared by the Project Office of SAU, the Meeting directed the Project Office to re-submit the documents after re-drafting the same to reflect the views of the Meeting.

Considerable time and energy was devoted to the thrashing out of the crucial issue of funding modalities. The last meeting (36th Session) of the Standing Committee of SAARC (Colombo, 25-26 February 2009) had directed the Steering Committee to finalise the funding mechanism for SAU at this meeting. The Meeting, after deliberating upon the four funding options, agreed to follow the "Principle of contribution to the SAARC Regional Centres" for financing SAU. Under this model, the host government will finance the capital expenditure while the running cost of the institute will be shared by Member States as per an already agreed formula. The Meeting also agreed that the above formula of funding should be uniformly applied to the main campus and regional campuses of SAU.

It was noted that the logos selected by the Project Office through the inter-governmental process were not commensurate with the prestige and stature of SAU. Since the logo will define the personality of SAU, the Meeting cautioned against any haste in the matter and recommended that the Member States take responsibility to get one/two logo(s) essentially from the renowned artists in the field from their respective country and forward these to the Project Office. The next meeting of the Steering Committee will then take a view afresh.

The offer of Nepal to host the Fourth Meeting of the Steering Committee in September/October 2009 was welcomed by all. On behalf of all the delegations, Prof. Kamal Krishna Joshi, Chairman, University Grants Commission of Nepal and the leader of delegation of Nepal thanked the Chairman for smooth conduct of the meeting. He expressed his thanks to the Government of India for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and for extending generous local hospitality to the delegates in the beautiful city of Mussoorie. He also appreciated the SAARC Secretariat for excellent documentation and professional guidance provided during the deliberations of the Meeting.



Spotlight on Project Office Activities

Progress at the Campus Site

SAU Campus would come up in a 100 acre plot of land provided by the Indian Government in a prime location of south Delhi. The plot is being demarcated and all steps needed to effect the transfer of land to the University are being carried out. Simultaneously, efforts are on to develop necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of the future campus. The Inter-Governmental Steering Committee of SAU has given a mandate for beginning the first academic session from July 2010. In order to meet this deadline, it is crucial to build some minimum essential buildings (MEB) on the campus. MEB would include academic and administrative space as well as sufficient hostel accommodation to meet the requirement of the first batch of students. Currently, the building plans for MEB are being finalised so that the construction work may be initiated as soon as possible. An Advisory Committee for Campus Development (ACCD), comprising highly experienced and widely respected experts has been constituted to advise the SAU Project Office about numerous engineering, architectural, climatic and humane aspects of campus development, including MEB. The ACCD is closely working with the Inter-Governmental Task Force on Infrastructure (TFI) that has Prof. SIH Gilani (Pakistan), Prof. SBS Abhyakoon (Sri Lanka) and Prof. AGK Menon (India) as members. Prof. Rajiv K. Saxena OSD in SAU Project Office is coordinating the work of both the Committees. As of now, the ACCD and the TFI are working together to finalize the plans of MEB and to identify construction agencies that would execute the work.

Efforts are also on by the ACCD and the TFI to initiate an inter-SAARC competition for the Master Plan of the main campus of SAU. It is estimated that this competition will be underway within a few months.

Documents Prepared and Submitted by the Task Forces

Several documents have been prepared and submitted by the various task forces and the SAU Project Office. These are the Draft Academic Structure of SAU, the Draft Statutes and the Draft Business Plan. The documents will be circulated to the Member States and their comments would be invited latest by the first week of



Breaking News!

As we were going for printing, we have been informed that the Government of India has approved US\$ 239.93 million as contribution towards SAU. India would provide US\$ 9.464 million for the year 2009-10.

September 2009. Thereafter, the Project Office would further revise the documents incorporating the comments for consideration of the Fourth Meeting of the Inter-governmental Steering Committee. The Project Office has proposed the academic units of SAU. There may be nine faculties, a College of Arts and Science, Interdisciplinary Research Centres and an Institute of South Asian Studies.

LOGO for SAU

The Inter-regional competition held to develop a logo for the University did not meet with the desired success. The entries were screened by an International Committee of Experts. The International Committee felt that the designs received did not adequately reflect either the level of talent available in the Member States or the status of the University. The Committee suggested that one more attempt be made to develop a Logo that befits SAU's status and eminence.

In the last meeting of the Inter-governmental Steering Committee, held at Mussoorie, India, on April 15-16, 2009, it was decided to make a fresh attempt to get high quality entries from respective SAARC countries, in conformity with the recommendation of the International Committee of Experts. SAU Project Office requested the Member States to get 2-3 high quality logo designs prepared by renowned artists in their country and forward them to the Project Office, latest by the end of June, 2009. The idea is to identify a few renowned and highly accomplished artists, in institutes of repute and/or independent designers in each country, and persuade them to attempt a logo design for SAU so that the International Committee of experts has before it a collection of best possible designs from the most talented artists in the region. It is important to invest the best

possible efforts for developing a robust, expressive and region-centric logo that would testify, for all times to come, to the wisdom and initiative for establishing the SAU.

Fourth Steering Committee Meeting

Fourth Meeting of the Inter-governmental Steering Committee on the Establishment of South Asian University will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal in September or October.

The Meeting will discuss the redrafted Statutes and Business Plans after receiving input from the Member States as per the decision of the Third Meeting. The revised document on academic structure already prepared will also be re-submitted in the Fourth Meeting.

A decision on Logo will also be taken in the Fourth Meeting. The existing three-member Expert Committee will recommend three logos selected from amongst the logos submitted by Member States for consideration and approval.

International Positions at the South Asian University, Project Office

SAU Project Office has advertised for three project associates to help in the activities such as drafting of Statutes and Regulations of the University, Recruitment of Faculty, Organising of entrance examinations of students, development of University's infrastructure, etc. Last date of receipt of applications is 15th July 2009.

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