

Moot on Revitalizing SAFTA: Beyond Barriers held at Dhaka

April 18, 2017

Dhaka

Over the last 25 years, SAARC has managed to create situations, institutions and forums; to hold each other's hands and go into talks together. These views were expressed by President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Suraj Vaidya at a roundtable discussion on "Revitalizing SAFTA: Beyond Barriers" organised by SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries in association with Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry and FNF at Dhaka Bangladesh.

The roundtable is aimed at engaging the public and private sector stakeholders to deliberate upon the issues pertinent to implementation of South Asian Free Trade Agreement. The opening session was chaired by Mr. Salam F. Rehman Former President of SAARC CCI and Advisor to Prime Minister of Bangladesh for Private Sector and Business.

Mr. Suraj Vaidya said that unfortunately, SAARC has yet to deliver its promise to fulfill the high aspirations of its peoples in the face of current global economic and financial crises. He opined that SAARC will have to change its ways and its structure and will have to make efforts to revitalize itself. "SAARC's new vision could be seen as a bridge between East Asia, rich in its human resources and technology and West and Central Asia, rich in natural resources and finance" Mr. Suraj added.

Mr. Salman F Rehman in his address said that the region remains the most highly protected region across the world and lags far behind in opening the vistas of foreign competition, trade facilitation, free movement of goods and services and attracting foreign direct investment. He added that we are unable to unleash the true potential of our geographical proximity. He shared that each state is doing very well independently.

The Investment Outlook was launched and shared with the participants on the occasion. It was shared that the Investment Outlook covers 20 key projects from each SAARC member state and invites investments from across SA as well as beyond SA.

Mr. Suraj Vaidya presented a Gold Pin to Mr. Salman Rehman for his relentless efforts to taking SAARC and SAARC CCI forward. The round table session was participated by the private sector of SAARC region and notable Government dignitaries from member states including Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam, Additional Secretary (FTA), Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of Bangladesh, Mr. Taimur Tajammal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Pakistan, Ms. Farita Azizi Shariszata, First Secretary, Embassy of Afghanistan in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Mr. Domang, Counsellor(Trade), Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli, Minister-Counselor, Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Mr. Suleman Khan, Commercial Counselor, High Commission of Pakistan in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Dr. Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, CPD, Bangladesh, Mr. Sanjeev Nandwani, Former Additional Director General, Foreign Trade & Development Commissioner, Falta Export Promotion Zone , India, Mr. Farooq Subhan, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, Bangladesh, Mr. Mr. Kithmina Hewage, Research Officer, Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka and Mr. Kshitiz Dahal, Research Officer, South Asia Watch on Trade Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Nepal.—Agencies