

1ST SAARC YOUTH CAMP 2007

Connecting South Asian Youth



DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS



Message



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA

10 December 2007

Message

I am delighted to know that the First SAARC Youth Camp is going to be held in Bangladesh from 10-13 December, 2007. On the occasion of this vibrant congregation, I extend my sincere felicitations to the juvenile participants from SAARC Countries.

The youth is regarded as the most precious resources of a nation. Nations deserve a lot from the young generation who have great potentials for building a healthy society. The youth of this region have demonstrated their immense capabilities by producing their talents and creativity. I am confident that the First SAARC Youth Camp, Dhaka will strengthen and deepen amity and help building leadership quality among the youth of this region.

I wish the First SAARC Youth Camp all success.

Allah Hafez, Bangladesh Zindabad.

Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed

SAARC Youth Camp 2007, Dhaka

Md. Ismail Hossain

Director General

Department of Youth Development.

"We need you; we need your youth, your strength, and your idealism, to help us make right what is wrong."

Today, 1.7 billion people - more than one fourth of world's six billion people - are between the ages of 10 and 24, making this group of young people the largest ever to be entering adulthood and the largest under-represented segment of the world's population. Young people's contributions to their communities and nations are not entirely understood or maximized. Youth are making a difference as activists, as leaders in the community development, and by their record levels of volunteerism. Increasingly youth are recognized as key participants in decision making and development, as reflected in the growing presence of non-governmental youth organizations and the upsurge of the youth advisory boards and committees to the international organizations and programs.

It is against this backdrop, the first SAARC Youth Camp is being held at the National Youth Centre in Savar on December 10, 2007 to promote mutual cooperation among the youths of South Asian countries. Like the first SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in 1985, Bangladesh boasts of holding another historic event, the first SAARC Youth Camp. Potential future SAARC leaders and stakeholders will gather to develop their skills, widen their horizons of knowledge and deepen their mutual trust and understanding. It is a four-day long program under the auspices of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). A total of 150 youths from eight SAARC countries, in the age group 16-22, will join the camp. Of them, 80 participants are from the host country Bangladesh and 10 each from other seven SAARC countries. The central theme of the camp is 'Connecting South Asian Youth.'

SAARC's engagement with the youth community can be traced back to 1994 when a Ministerial Conference on Youth in South Asia was held for the first time in Maldives to address the problem of the youth and focus on the broad theme of youth and development. Another SAARC Youth Conference was held in India in 2006, to look at the youth related problems in South Asia. The Year 1994 was designated as the "SAARC Year of Youth". In 1995, the SAARC Youth Resolution was adopted to advance the overall development of Youth in the region. SAARC Youth Award Scheme was instituted in 1996 to provide recognition to extraordinary young talents. Under the SAARC Social Charter, the Member States agreed to establish the Youth Volunteers Program, under which volunteers from one country would be able to work in other countries in the social fields.

Realizing its growing role in the national development agenda, the 14th SAARC Summit held in New Delhi in 2007 launched the idea of "SAARC Youth Camp-2007" targeting the youth of South Asian region. The idea of arranging the first "SAARC Youth Camp" was proposed by Hon'ble Chief Adviser Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed from Bangladesh during the above-mentioned Summit in New Delhi which was supported by heads of government and state of SAARC member countries. The idea is conceived and developed as a part of social agenda pursued by SAARC for the last two decades and more.

The camp is a practical outcome of SAARC's collective interest in developing opportunities for the youth of the region, involving young people in the SAARC process and preparing them to face the challenges of the 21st century. The 2007 SAARC Summit Declaration acknowledged the importance of intra-regional tourism and increased exchanges, particularly among the youth, civil society, and parliamentarians.

The overall objectives of the youth camp may be understood as to -

1. Familiarize the youth of Bangladesh with

SAARC, and increase understanding of Bangladeshi youth among the youth of other SAARC countries.

2. Help the youth of SAARC countries to make effective use of information, bolster their self-understanding, and instill the attributes such as creativity, activeness, passion, and entrepreneurship.

3. Help the youth of SAARC countries to share experiences on various issues in their respective country contexts.

4. Encourage young people to be involved in community development and provide them a unique learning opportunity.

5. Raise awareness of rights and duties of the youth of SAARC countries.

6. Build youth leadership in South Asia which may play a critical role in constructing South Asian identity as bedrock of regional cooperation process.

The camp is a timely initiative in view of the fact that South Asia is becoming one of the increasingly interlinked regions in the world in the age of globalization. 'Connectivity' in various spheres has captured profound attention of regional leaders and people in South Asia. Its rich mix of peoples, cultures and politics creates a dominant force in the region. People in the region now recognize that they are part of a global society, rather than a localized environment separated by geographical boundaries. The camp would unite youthful energies towards a culture of peace, embodies the new consciousness youth are bringing into the world: hope, cooperation and a deep sense of our common humanity, facilitates youth participation and intergenerational partnership in decision-making; and provides tools, resources, and recognition for positive youth action.

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) remains strongly committed to promote the youth community in the country. This has been evidenced not only in Bangladesh's interests to host the first ever "SAARC Youth Camp", but also in its national endeavors in various forms. The Government of Bangladesh established the Ministry of Youth and Sports back in 1978 realizing the need to involve the youth into the mainstream of development and nation-building processes. The main task of the Ministry is to identify the problems faced by the youth in our country and devise their solutions. The major thrusts are focused on welfare measures including steps to improve their productive capacity so that they can pursue a life with honor and dignity. The youth in Bangladesh also have a glorious past for their dynamism and sacrifice for the nation. They played a vital role in Language Movement and the war of liberation. They always come forward in times of national disasters and crises.

On the other hand, it is also observed that the youth today in many places do not live in a "youth friendly" environment at national, regional and global levels. They face serious challenges as never before - problems such as drug addiction, deprivation, frustration and youth violence. The widespread poverty in South Asia is also a major challenge for the youth in this region. These are both practical and ethical issues. The long-term solution to solving these problems is to develop a societal base where all types of actors - state and non-state have a critical role to play. Regional youth participation in the form of a camp can help achieving development and security goals of South Asia - regionally, nationally and locally. It can contribute to establish full and better regional connectivity as envisioned by the South Asian leaders. They can be transformed into the reality in different ways: networking and collaboration, actions, policies, and advocacy and awareness. In this regard, governments, businesses and NGOs can work with young people to identify the needs in the community and design and implement appropriate development initiatives. Thus, a vibrant and prosperous South Asia will become a reality.

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Message

I am happy to learn that the first SAARC Youth Camp is going to be held from 10-13 December 2007 in Bangladesh.

On this happy occasion, I congratulate the organizers and young participants of the camp.

The theme of the camp Connecting South Asian Youth is propitious. I hope the camp will contribute towards connecting the minds and hearts of the youth of South Asian Countries.

I wish the camp all success.

Fakhruddin Ahmed

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed

CHIEF ADVISER

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Message



In modern world, the hopes and challenges of our youth are enormous. Therefore, we must think, how to prepare our youth to face the challenges and avail of the opportunities in a rapidly changing world. "The First SAARC Youth Camp 2007" is definitely a great stride for innovations of values, knowledge, perceptions and technology to update life skills of our youth in order to stay ahead. And we are fortunate; Bangladesh is going to organize the first SAARC Youth Camp 2007 in Dhaka.

In true sense, this Youth Camp opens the window of information and knowledge for the young people of South Asia and through which they will be familiar with divers ethnicities, cultures and livelihoods of the people in the region. I am sure, through the process of interactions among the peers, our youngsters will remain connected to each other and work together to make better living of the people in South Asia.

I wish First SAARC Youth Camp 2007 a grand success.

Tapan Chowdhury

Adviser
Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources,
Ministry of Food & Disaster Management
Ministry of Science and ICT
Ministry of Youth & Sports



Message



I am indeed happy and feel proud that Bangladesh is the host of the first SAARC Youth Camp 2007 in Dhaka. This youth platform strives the young people to come closer, work together and have an active voice on regional co-operation and development for the people of South Asia.

It is a great opportunity for our youngsters to share and articulate their ideas, perceptions and views on Youth connectivity in socio-economic development. I think, they will also develop a vision for youth development that would demonstrate that the young people of South Asia are ready to face challenges in future. I will appreciate if my young friends remain connected with their peers, even after the Youth Camp is over.

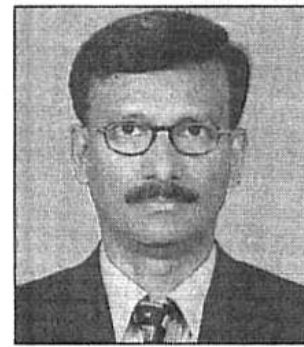
I wish First SAARC Youth Camp 2007 a great success.

Dr. Md. Golam Mustafa Talukder

SECRETARY

Ministry of Youth & Sports

Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Message

The First SAARC Youth Camp, 2007 is the celebration of young South Asia. With their dynamism, energy and enthusiasm, the youth represent the spirit of South Asia. I am very pleased to warmly welcome all the young participants to this event.

Today's world is a global village where interdependence defines our relations. Our well-being is intrinsically linked with the prosperity of the others. In South Asia, we recognized the strength of collective efforts and formed SAARC. Today, with the inception of Youth Camp, I believe, a new strand has been added to the close partnership that we have forged more than two decades ago in Dhaka in 1985.

As we build upon our past achievements, and strive for greater economic and social development of the region, it is only natural that youth should be the centre of our focus. True integration of South Asia would be incomplete if we are unable to connect our youth in meaningful way.

I have great faith in the ideas and visions of our young generation. I am confident this youth camp would contribute substantively in creating understanding and amity and would go a long way in building an enduring partnership to lead South Asia to peaceful and prosperous future.

I wish the First SAARC Youth Camp a resounding success.

Md. Touhid Hossain

Foreign Secretary

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

With the courtesy of:

