The Programming Committee comprises the Heads of SAARC’s Ministries of Foreign/External Affairs. The Committee of Senior Officials monitors the activities of the Standing Committee. Action Committees are set up for specialized cooperation and coordination. The Standing Committee may also set up Action Committees comprising the Member States concerned with implementation of projects involving more than two Member States.

Programme Committee

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Regional Centres

SAARC Regional Centres act as Centres of Excellence in specialized areas.

1. SAARC Agricultural Centre (India, 1980)
2. SAARC Technological & Industrial Property Centre, Kathmandu (1984)
3. SAARC Energy Centre (Islamabad, 2006)
4. SAARC Cultural Centre (Colombo, 2009)

Observers

SAARC’s engagement with its Observers is governed by the Guidelines for Cooperation with Observers adopted by the Standing Committee. The Guidelines allow for the admission of Observers from non-SAARC countries to participate in SAARC meetings.

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The Council is to meet once a year. It also meets preceding each Summit. It reports to the SAARC Summits. Since 1997, the Council has also been meeting in informal sessions on the sidelines of the high-level segment of the United Nations General Assembly.

First SAARC Summit, Dhaka, 7-8 December 1985

Secretaries General of SAARC

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Objectives of the Association

- To promote the welfare of peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
- To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials;
- To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;
- To contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another’s peoples and cultures;
- To promote active cooperation and mutual assistance in economic, social, cultural, scientific and technical fields;
- To strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest and promote cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest.
- Membership

Afghanistan

Bhutan

Maldives

Pakistan

Bangladesh

India

Nepal

Sri Lanka

The Charter Bodies are the main mechanisms of SAARC. These include the Summit, Council of Ministers, Standing Committees, Regional Action Committees, Technical Committees and Joint Action Committees.

Charter Bodies

- The Summit is the highest decision-making body of SAARC. Its main purpose is to provide an opportunity for the Heads of State or Government to strengthen regional cooperation in the agreed areas.
- The Council of Ministers comprises the Ministers of Foreign/External Affairs of the Member States. The Council is responsible for providing strategic guidance and overall direction to the Association.
- The Standing Committee comprises the Foreign Secretaries of the Member States. The Committee is responsible for providing guidance and direction to the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers.
- The Technical Committees are responsible for providing technical guidance and support to the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers.
- The Regional Action Committees are responsible for providing technical guidance and support to the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers.
- The Joint Action Committees are responsible for providing technical guidance and support to the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers.

The key outcome of the SAARC Summit is the Declaration. It contains decisions and directives of the Heads of State or Government to strengthen regional cooperation in the agreed areas.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee comprises the Foreign Secretaries of the Member States. The Committee is responsible for providing guidance and direction to the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers.

First SAARC Summit, Dhaka, 7-8 December 1985

Institutional Mechanisms

Charter Bodies

The Charter Bodies are the main mechanisms of SAARC. These include the Summit, Council of Ministers, Standing Committees, Regional Action Committees, Technical Committees and Joint Action Committees.

Meeting of the Heads of State or Government

The Summit is the highest decision-making body of SAARC. Its main purpose is to provide an opportunity for the Heads of State or Government to strengthen regional cooperation in the agreed areas.

First SAARC Summit, Dhaka, 7-8 December 1985

First SAARC Summit, Dhaka, 7-8 December 1985

Stronger cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest.

The key outcome of the SAARC Summit is the Declaration. It contains decisions and directives of the Heads of State or Government to strengthen regional cooperation in the agreed areas.