



Citizen's Social Charter for South Asia

PREAMBLE

We the peoples of South Asia and citizens of the member, states of SAARC,

Having responded to the decision taken at the SAARC Summit of July 1998 to formulate and adopt a Social Charter for the SAARC region through a broad-based process of national consultations,

Noting that the Charter will focus on the eradication of the poverty, the empowerment of women, the promotion and protection of the rights and well-being of children and youth, human resource development, social integration and the promotion of health, education and nutrition and will thereby protect the rights of the most disadvantaged and excluded groups in South Asian societies,

Endorsing the principles rights and norms embodied in the International Covenants, Conventions and Declarations on human rights and human development, specially the Universal declaration of Human Rights, the Covenants on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, on Civil and Political Rights, the Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Rights of Children and the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Rights to Development and the commitments of the World Social Summit,

Resolving to urge and encourage our states to reaffirm and extend their commitment towards the full implementation of these covenants, conventions, declarations and plans of action and thereby progressively achieve the full realization of the goals and objectives of these instruments for the well-being of the people of South Asia,

Reaffirming the principles and commitments of the SAARC Charter, the Declarations and Commitments of the SAARC Summits and in particular the SAARC commitments for the eradication of poverty, human resource development and the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children,

Taking account of the collective effort already made by SAARC to initiate action on the resolutions and recommendations for monitoring of poverty eradication, control of trafficking of women and children and cooperation in several

areas of social development such as disaster management, food security and protection of the disabled, physically and mentally challenged and socially stigmatized.

Recognizing that the SAARC region has both the largest number and highest proportion of absolutely poor, under nourished and illiterate people in the world and suffers from the highest rates of malnutrition and female illiteracy,

At the same time realizing that within the region there are countries and parts of countries which have performed exceptionally well in increasing life expectancy and achieving high average levels of education and social development, thereby providing lessons for the region as a whole,

Accepting the people's right to information as intrinsic to genuine democracy, and further accepting the overdue need to open State and parastatal activities to public scrutiny, and to citizens' audit,

Acknowledging the vast demographic, socio-economic variations and cultural diversity of the region and the wide disparities in development that exist within it,

Recognizing that for the purpose of achieving the objectives it is essential for South Asian countries (a) to re-affirm all the commitments so far made by them for the social development of the people and (b) to renew, integrate and consolidate the efforts of the states, civil society, and the private sector to achieve higher levels of well-being for the people,

Perceiving that the global transformation of the world economy and the advances in technology are providing new opportunities for human development while at the same time producing new threats to human security and well-being,

Considering that the unquestioning acceptance of the philosophy of globalization and neo-liberalism and the policy prescriptions and regimes of the World Trade Organization and international financial institutions, particularly the indiscriminate opening of national markets, have resulted in jobless growth, labor displacement, loss of ownership of national resources, the undermining of indigenous production and consumption structures, disappearance of units in

the micro, small-scale and informal sectors, loss of macro-economic policy options have unacceptably weakened our control over our economic and political future,

Recognizing that in the prevailing imperfect market situation and the inequitable world economic order, market forces, unless regulated and offset by State and social action, work inexorably to the disadvantage of the poor people and weaker nations,

Resolve to adopt this Citizen's Social Charter to realize the vision of a community of South Asian nations which will be free of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and gender inequality by the year 2020 and in which all citizens live in dignity and freedom and enjoy a high standard of material and spiritual well being,

And make the Charter the platform of advocacy and action by civil society in all South Asian countries and work for its acceptance and adoption by the states and other important actors and power holders in all the member countries of South Asia.

SCOPE, DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND ACTIONS

Article 1. The scope of the Charter will include all the citizens of South Asia, particularly the households living in poverty, women, children, youth, elderly and all other groups who are vulnerable on account of the disadvantages from which they suffer due to the asymmetric structures of power at different levels resulting in various forms of social and economic discrimination and exclusion.

- (i) Each SAARC member state will identify, include and give priority to the vulnerable groups such as the poor, women, children, youth and the elderly that come within the scope of the Charter according to the special conditions in their societies.
- (ii) Accordingly, the Charter will pay special attention to groups such as disadvantaged castes, religious minorities, indigenous peoples, internally displaced, disabled, the elderly and the population adversely impacted by environmental degradation and natural and man-made disasters in each of the countries.

Article 2. The policies goals and actions and resources allocations envisaged in the Charter shall be guided by the norms and principles affirmed and adopted in the International Covenants,

Conventions, Protocols and Declarations on human rights and human development that have special relevance for the Charter. These will include but shall not be limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC), The Cairo Declaration and Plan of Action on Population and Development, the Dakar Declaration and Framework of Action on Education for All of UNESCO, The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, The Durban Declaration and Plan of Action against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance, The Declaration on the Right to Development, the Copenhagen Declaration and Plan of Action on Social Development, The Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Action on Sustainable Development, the Alma Ata Declaration and the Health for All Strategy of the WHO and the ILO conventions on the Rights of Workers.

Article 3. The SAARC states and the peoples of the SAARC countries having endorsed the Social Charter shall keep it under continuous review in relation to the international norms and standards that apply to the various provisions of the Charter to ensure that as far as possible they comply with international norms and standards.

Article 4. Where countries have not yet ratified any of the instruments mentioned in Article 2, the SAARC states and peoples shall initiate discussions among themselves to develop a SAARC consensus that enables the SAARC countries to bring the framework of norms and principles of the SAARC Social Charter in conformity with the internationally accepted norms within three years of the date of endorsing the Charter.

Article 5. The states and peoples of South Asia shall at all times respect and uphold the indivisibility of all human rights, political, civil, economic, social, environmental and cultural, and create the conditions for the full realization of all these rights by all sections of the population, regardless of ethnicity, class, religion and sex.

Article 6. Nothing contained in the Social Charter will derogate from any of the commitments already made by SAARC countries under the various international instruments, charters and covenants ratified by them.

Article 7. The realization of democratic rights, values, processes and institutions will be the foundation of the Social Charter.

- (i) These will be developed and strengthened at all levels and will be designed to empower the disadvantaged groups to participate effectively in the decision-making on all matters affecting their lives.

Article 8. Development strategies and policies shall be designed to achieve a high sustainable rate of growth that will lead to rapid eradication of poverty and enhancement in well-being through equitable distribution of the benefits of growth.

Article 9. The macroeconomic policies shall be regularly evaluated for their impact on the well-being of the poor, women, children, youth, disabled, elderly and other disadvantaged groups and special measures shall be taken to redesign these policies to ensure that these disadvantaged groups remain in the centre of the development process.

Article 10. All sectoral plans and strategies shall contain policies and programmes that specifically target the disadvantaged groups covered in the Social Charter and are aimed at enhancing the capability of these groups to benefit fully from the process of development.

Article 11. One of the main goals of national and sectoral development shall be rapid social integration which enables all disadvantaged and marginalized groups to participate as equal partners in society. All important programmes and policies must contribute to the achievement of this goal and be evaluated in terms of this contribution.

Article 12. The South Asian states and peoples shall take account of the vast demographic, economic and social variations as well as the cultural diversity of the region and the wide disparities in development that exist among them, and within the framework of the Social Charter, shall develop the charters at the national level with the systematic and meaningful contribution of civil

society for the realization of the highest possible standards of well-being.

Article 13. The strategies of human resource development will be formulated and implemented so as to enable all segments of society to gain high quality education for ensuring their creative development, information technology, skills, and services and know-how to enable them to participate actively in social and economic development. In pursuing this objective, special attention shall be paid to the needs of the poor, children, women, youth and other disadvantaged groups covered in this Charter.

Article 14. The State in all SAARC countries shall establish the constitutional, legal and administrative framework to entitle the citizens to the provisions in the Social Charter and enable them to seek redress when the state's obligations under the Charter are not fulfilled.

Article 15. The Social Charter shall be grounded on the fundamental principles of good governance to ensure accountability, transparency, non-discrimination, equity and participation. All activities and programmes shall have well defined structures of rights and responsibilities that provide full information to the people and make the implementing agents accountable to the people.

Article 16. The South Asian countries, their states and peoples shall give the highest priority to the measures and improvements necessary to ensure that no individual shall be denied the right to life due to lack of food, shelter, clothing, joblessness or other privations that cause death or severe distress during conflicts, natural disasters and extreme variations of climate. They shall monitor these conditions and achieve this specific goal before the end of 2005.

Article 17. The strategies and actions envisaged under the Charter must at all times respect the need to protect the environment and take special care to prevent and reverse the degradation of the environment that could adversely affect the lives and livelihoods of groups who are covered by the Charter.

Article 18. In the allocation of national resources social and economic development shall receive equal importance in reaching the needs of the poor,

marginalized and vulnerable population groups who are the subjects of this Charter. And the allocations for specific target groups, such as poor, women, children, etc., shall be clearly identified.

Article 19.The allocations for achieving the goals of the Social Charter such as the eradication of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and gender inequality shall receive the top most priority and not be subjected to any financial stringencies, or budgetary cuts.

Article 20.The primary responsibility for health and education, especially essential health care and primary and secondary education shall lie with the state and the state shall allocate sufficient resources to fulfill that responsibility.

Article 21.The state shall give priority to improve the social and physical infrastructure of the regions in which the majority of the poor and disadvantaged live.

Article 22.The state shall play a major role in promoting and increasing productivity in small-scale farming.

Article 23.The states and peoples of South Asia reaffirm their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and time bound targets that have been set for realizing these goals and shall take action individually and collectively to achieve them. States shall also set targets beyond the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the year 2020, guided by the vision of a South Asia free from conflict, poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and gender inequality, with high levels of well-being for all its people.

Article 24.The states and peoples of South Asia shall create structures and institutional mechanisms that promote an active civil society that can participate in achieving the goals of the Social Charter.

Article 25.The Charter shall provide the framework of norms and principles that will guide the corporate sector in its contribution to the achievement of the Charter's goals through the fulfillment of their social responsibilities and observance of the principles of corporate good governance.

Article 26.In developing the value systems and the ethical foundation of the Charter that will motivate and inspire the peoples of South Asia, each country shall draw on and incorporate what is best in its own spiritual and cultural traditions and share with each other the moral capital that is available in their societies to promote the implementation of the Charter.

Article 27.In applying these directive principles and fulfilling their obligations under the Charter, the states of South Asia, in partnership with the civil society by adhering to the principle of "accelerated inclusion of the excluded in the process of human development" shall

- i. set quantifiable objectives for the improvement of the well-being of all disadvantaged groups as well as for the achievement of other major goals of the Charter. These targets should be set for two benchmarks-2010 and 2020.
- ii. identify the package of policies and programmes and formulate and implement plans of action necessary to achieve these targets within the prescribed timeframe or by 2020.
- iii. support the plans of action with plans for financing and resource mobilization and ensure that the necessary resources are made available through the government budget and other sources of financing including the private sector.
- iv. prepare a comprehensive financing plan for the action plan of the social charter as a whole.
- v. protect the resources for such a financing plan from economic fluctuations that lead to shortfalls of revenue.
- vi. create the enabling environment for the active involvement of the civil society in the plans of action.
- vii. designate the agencies that will be responsible for the implementation of each part of the social charter.
- viii. identify and define the roles and responsibilities of the private sector and its contribution to the implementation of the Charter.
- ix. establish the institutional framework and system to ensure the regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Charter and such corrective action as might be necessary.

Article 28. These directive principles and guidelines shall be appropriately applied by member states to the main tasks envisaged in the Charter.

THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Guiding Principles and Strategies

Article 29. The strategies for the eradication of poverty in the South Asian countries shall be guided by the commitments made in the World Social Summit and the initiatives taken by SAARC in respect of the recommendations of its Independent Commission on Poverty and the action taken thereafter at the national level.

Article 30. The strategies of development adopted by member states shall aim at the eradication of poverty as one of its primary goals and shall link its development policies at the macro, sectoral and micro levels to the achievement of this goal.

Article 31. The national strategy for the eradication of poverty shall be clearly articulated on the basis of systematic participation of parliament, civil society groups and organization of the poor (autonomous) and the obligations of the principal actors in the strategy - the state, the private sector and other stakeholders shall be clearly defined.

Article 32. Poverty shall be addressed in all its manifestations as a condition which is a composite of many states of deprivation -

- the lack and unequal distribution of income;
- the lack of access to productive resources and opportunities to provide a sustainable livelihood;
- hunger and malnutrition;
- limited or inadequate access to education and means of developing skills and acquiring knowledge;
- substandard housing;
- lack of access to safe water and sanitation;
- degradation of the environment;
- lack of access to quality health services and high mortality and morbidity;
- lack of security;
- lack of knowledge and access to resources that limits women's life choices regarding her reproductive health and size of family, and restricts her potential to develop and contribute as an equal citizen of the nation.

The strategies for the eradication of poverty, therefore, will act on all these conditions of

deprivation simultaneously, recognizing that they reinforce and interact with each other to retain people in poverty.

Article 33. The countries shall identify the full profile of poverty and its causation,

- the regional distribution of poverty,
- the varying gradations of poverty ranging from extreme destitution to the layer immediately below the poverty line,
- poverty in special conditions of racial, ethnic and other forms of discrimination and social exclusion that are rooted in feudal structures, caste and religious intolerance.

The strategies, policies and plans of action shall be appropriately designed to deal with the different situations so identified. In doing so, it shall ensure that the strategies reach the poorest among the poor.

Article 34. The strategies for the eradication of poverty shall be aimed at enhancing the income earning capability of the poor and ensure their right to resources to enable them to enter the mainstream of development.

Article 35. The development of the economic infrastructure in transportation, irrigation, communication and power will devote special attention to the needs of poor communities in order to enhance their access to resources in general and their capability to enter the market economy under equitable terms and conditions.

Article 35A. With the dependence of a very large population on agriculture for livelihood in the countries of the region, land reforms hold the key to food security, reduction of poverty and agrarian transformation. The countries of the region shall therefore focus on securing the rights of the tiller, de-concentration of land holdings, providing access to land for the landless poor through re-distribution, preventing alienation of land belonging to tribal communities, allotment of land for house-sites for the houseless, maintaining the sanctity of common property resources and their equitable use by all sections of the village population, ensuring rights and share of women in family property and land distributive measures of the government and firmly opposing any attempts at corporatisation of agricultural land holdings. Adequate restraint and circumspection should be

exercised in the conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Besides, the poor cultivators need to be assisted with easy access to technology and other inputs to make optimum use of their productive assets.

Article 36.The development of the financial sector shall be appropriately restructured to create the necessary capacities and facilities in micro financing and associated services, such as organization, skill development and marketing services. They shall have adequate autonomy and be specially designed to provide the poor with speedy access to resources. For this purpose, the countries of the region shall share and build on the experience of institutions that have worked successfully in this field.

Article 37.The advancements in science and technology, especially those in the field of biotechnology and information technology shall be appropriately packaged for the poverty eradication strategy and made easily accessible to the poor.

Article 38.The strategy for the eradication of poverty shall take special measures to protect the poor from any adverse effects of macroeconomic policies of the market economy and the processes of globalization.

Article 39.The processes and institutions of governance in the South Asian countries shall promote and strengthen the processes of devolution and decentralization of power, paying special attention to those aspects at the level of local government and the community that empower the poor and enhance their participation in decision making.

Article 40.The poor shall be provided with all relevant information pertaining to the policies and programmes for poverty eradication.

Article 41.The process of decision-making, implementation and monitoring shall ensure that the poor have the capacity and the opportunity for effective participation.

Article 42.The social enterprise sector which does not operate on the basis of private profitability criteria shall be promoted and strengthened for the welfare of the poor.

Article 43.The strategies for eradication of poverty will recognize and respond to the dynamics of poverty and its changing manifestations and attributes in the context of socio economic, demographic, cultural and other changes including the positive and negative impacts of globalization.

Targets for the Eradication of Poverty

Article 44.For the purpose of targeting and monitoring, each country shall prepare a set of indicators based on the profile of poverty for that country. The common indicators could include two poverty lines - absolute poverty based on the income required to satisfy the minimum nutritional needs and a higher poverty line where the income is higher by 20 per cent. The targets given below are illustrative of the targets that shall be set:

- i. The proportion of the absolutely poor shall be reduced by half by 2010 and reduced by a further half by 2020. The total number of people below the higher poverty line will be similarly reduced. The highest national rate for absolute poverty in the region in 2020 will not exceed 11 per cent.
- ii. The total proportion of the population with access to improved sources of water will be reduced by half by 2010 and by a further half by 2020. The highest proportion of people without safe water will not exceed 3 per cent in any country of the region in 2020.
- iii. The total proportion of people without adequate sanitation will be reduced by half by 2010 and by a further half by 2020. The highest proportion of people without adequate sanitation in any country of the region will not exceed 19 per cent in any country of the region by 2020.
- *iv. The total number of households living in semi permanent and temporary housing will be reduced to ... in 2010 and to ... in 2020.
- *v. The total proportion of households with the following basic amenities, electricity, gas or kerosene cooker, radio, television, motor cycle, sewing machine,

* All data for computing these indicators should be collected and the targets determined by the respective countries in the national social charters.

will increase from ... in 2000 to ... per cent in 2010 and per cent in 2020.

- *vi. The poverty gap ratio (incidence into depth of poverty) will be reduced by ...
- *vii. The State/Province/District disparities in the incidence of poverty will be reduced as follows: ...
- *viii. The share of poorest quintile in national consumption will rise from ... per cent in 2000 to per cent in 2010 and ... per cent in 2020.
- ix. The human poverty index (HPI) which ranges from 15.8 to 44.2 for the region in 2000 will improve to a range from 8 to 22 in 2010 and from 4 to II in 2020.

Article 45. The national targets will be disaggregated to the appropriate subnational levels for the preparation of action plans and monitoring.

Article 46. The indicators given above are essentially indicators of the outcomes and conditions of well-being to be achieved. Countries should devise their own country specific indicators which relate to monitor key institutional developments and processes that are essential for the eradication of poverty such as access to micro-finance, the growth of the social enterprise sector, rates on unemployment among the poor and the implementation of special programmes directed at the eradication of poverty, such as land reform, access to land, self-employment and gender equity.

Plan of Action, Policies and Programmes

Article 47. All countries shall prepare and implement a plan of action in accordance with the principles and strategies elaborated above in order to fulfill the targets that have been set. The plan of action shall

- i. identify the shortfalls in relation to the guiding principles, strategy and targets that have been set.
- ii. determine a poverty line for absolute poverty denoting a condition in which households do not have the means of satisfying their minimum nutritional and non-food needs and a higher poverty line below which households still do not enjoy an acceptable standard of living and possess basic household amenities.
- iii. define the norms and standards for the satisfaction of non-food needs such as

water, sanitation, housing and educational levels.

- iv. ascertain the number of households and persons living below both poverty lines and below the required norms and standards, including their distribution at the state, provincial, district and divisional levels.
- v. identify the variations of poverty at the provincial district and divisional levels and the characteristics specific to these variations, including the demographic, socio-economic, agro-climatic, infrastructural, ethnic, caste, gender disparities and other characteristics.
- vi. design policy packages and measures specific to these variations in the attributes of poverty to achieve the targets that are set.
- vii. devote special attention to female-headed households, gender inequalities, elderly and the disabled among the poor.
- viii. design and develop the human poverty indices and use them along with other indicators for monitoring and evaluating the progress in the eradication of poverty for the states of deprivation under both poverty lines.

Article 48. Policies and Programmes for Poverty eradication shall further ensure that

- i. the policies and programmes in health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and housing identify the poor and especially address their disadvantaged condition in each of these sectors
- ii. adequate investment is made for the improvement of the economic infrastructure in the districts and divisions in which poverty is concentrated.
- iii. the needs of the poor for credit are identified and that a sustainable and freely accessible system of credit for the poor is further strengthened and developed.
- iv. access to training and skill development is provided to enable the poor to engage in self-employment and micro-enterprise with special focus on ethnic minorities and women.
- v. the safety nets available to households in absolute poverty, through poverty alleviating forms of assistance, are rationalized and strengthened

- vi. institutions that encourage and promote savings among the poor are developed and strengthened and their capacity for self-reliance and sustainable development thereby enhanced.
 - vii. partnerships with the private sector for the eradication of poverty are developed and a policy environment conducive to private sector investment that would provide livelihoods for the poor is created.
 - viii. the participation and involvement of civil society organizations in the programme for the eradication of poverty is strengthened
 - ix. the institutional mechanisms that will identify the duty bearers and rights holders for each activity developed, the relevant information provided to the poor and thereby the poor enabled to participate actively and effectively in the decision making processes and monitoring of implementation.
 - x. targeted programmes for ethnic minorities will be designed to ensure their fullest participation in social and economic opportunities available in their respective countries.
- v. The estimate of private sector investment and resource flows will be prepared in partnership with the private sector.
 - vi. The principle of optimum utilization and efficient use of sources will be adopted.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND PROMOTION OF THEIR WELL-BEING

Guiding Principles and Strategy

Article 50.The state, the private sector, social institutions and other organs of civil society in all member countries of SAARC shall take concerted action to empower and enable women to realize their full rights as citizens and achieve complete equality of status with men.

Article 51.For this purpose, they will identify and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in all spheres of life-social, economic, political, cultural, religious.

Article 52.In this task they will be guided by the principles embodied in CEDAW, the Women's Charters and Plans of Action that have been prepared by SAARC countries as follow up of their ratification of CEDAW and the SAARC commitments made at Summits and Ministerial Conferences such as the Rawalpindi Conference and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development 1994.

Article 53.In all matters women, particularly women of the poor and other disadvantaged groups, will be treated as actively participating subjects with freedom of choice and decision making power over their lives and not merely as target groups and objects of top-down policies.

Article 54.South Asian countries will continuously review and reform existing legislation and enact new laws as would be necessary to achieve the goals and objectives that have been set in Articles 50-53.

Article 55.The state will enact, strengthen and improve legislation to protect women against all forms of violence including domestic violence, harassment, dowry deaths, honor killings, violence specially directed against women in times of war and conflict and other violations of women's rights.

Allocation of Resources

Article 49.The allocation of financial and other resources for the eradication of poverty will conform to the following principles and guidelines:

- i. The allocation of resources for the eradication of poverty will be estimated on the basis of the total increase that is needed in the income of the poor based on the measurement of the poverty gap for the two types of poverty,
- ii. The resource allocations from the government budget and the other resource flows that are needed to generate this increase in the income of the poor will be guided by this indicator,
- iii. The resources needed to close the gaps in relation to other manifestations of poverty in education, health, water and sanitation will be estimated and monitored for optimum utilization and efficient use of those resources
- iv. Guidelines will be provided for the resource flows for the credit to the poor,

Article 56. Political institutions and processes will be reformed to enable women to participate actively in the country's political life and gain equal representation in the elected assemblies in the country's democratic system at all levels.

Article 57. The laws and social structures will be reformed to ensure women's equal rights to property.

Article 58. The state will ensure that women have non-discriminatory and equal access to remunerative employment and enjoy equal representation in the managerial and decision making positions at all levels.

Article 59. Affirmative action will be taken by the state where necessary to compensate for disadvantages suffered by women from discriminatory structures and practices that have prevailed in society. Special attention will be paid to the rights and well-being of women in disadvantaged groups such as caste groups' ethnic minorities and tribal groups where discrimination against women is heightened.

Article 60. The state shall collaborate with the private sector, civil society organizations and religious institutions to develop the value systems and advance the knowledge and behavior which promote an equal partnership between men and women in the family, the local community and society as whole.

Article 61. The state shall make every effort to uphold the dignity and worth of women and to promote the goal of equality to counter the misuse of religious ideology and customary practices for the purpose of degrading the status of women.

Article 62. The system of education at all levels shall provide and guarantee equal access and opportunities to women.

Article 63. Education at all levels will inculcate the values of gender equality and remove all forms of biases and stereotypes which are derogatory to women from all teaching materials and aids.

Article 64. The central role of the family as the primary unit of human relations will be strengthened and the concept of democratic families shall be promoted wherein women,

children and dependents shall have their due participatory rights.

Article 65. Health services will be strengthened to address the gender-specific health needs of women.

Targets

Article 66. In setting the targets the countries will be guided by the commitments already made in millennium development goals, the World Social Summit and the Beijing Platform of Action and the SAARC Ministerial Conference at Rawalpindi and other relevant SAARC initiatives. The range of targets will include the following:

- i. The share of women in the workforce which currently ranges from 35 per cent to 65 per cent will increase to a range from 45 per cent to 65 per cent in 2010 and 55 per cent to 65 per cent in 2020.
- ii. *The share of women in the industrial sector of the workforce which currently ranges from 24 per cent to 8 per cent will increase to ... in 2010 and to ... 2020.
- iii. *The share of female legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals will increase from the current range of ... to ... in 2010 and to ... in 2020.
- iv. *The rate of female unemployment will be reduced to ... in 2010 and 5 per cent in 2020.
- v. *The ratio of female to male earned income will increase to ... in 2010 and to ... in 2020.
- vi. *The female representation in elected assemblies in the national provincial and local levels will increase from the current level ranging from to in 2010 and to in 2020.
- vii. Adult female illiteracy will be reduced from a range between 4 per cent and 77 per cent to a range between zero and 40 per cent in 2010 and zero and 20 per cent in 2020. The highest national rate of female illiteracy in the region will not exceed 20 per cent in 2020.
- viii. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education shall increase from

* All the data for computing these indicators are not currently available. They should be collected and the targets completed.

- ix. Ratio of literate females to males (15-24 age) which currently ranges from 54 per cent to 98 per cent will increase to a range between 70 per cent and 100 per cent in 2010 and 85 per cent and 100 per cent in 2020.
- x. Maternal mortality which was in the range between 60 and 540 per 100,000 live births during the period 1980-1999 will be reduced to the range between 16 and 200 in 2010 and between 10 and 100 per 100,000 live births in 2020. The highest national rate of maternal mortality in the region will not exceed 100 per 100,000 live births in 2020.
- xi. The rate of fertility which ranged from 5.5 to 2.1 during 1995-2000 will be reduced to a range from 3.5 to 2 in 2010 and 2.5 to 1.8 in 2020. The highest national fertility rate in the region will not exceed 2.5.
- xii. *The proportion of births attended by medically trained personnel which currently range from 14 per cent to 85 per cent to increase from 50 per cent to 100 per cent in 2010 and 75 per cent to 100 per cent in 2020.
- v. use them for evaluating and monitoring the improvement in the quality of life of women along with other indicators.
- vi. review and reform legislation to remove all forms of discrimination against women.
- vii. examine wage policies for discriminatory practices and devise and implement gender-friendly policies.
- viii. strengthen legislation, procedures and practices within institutions to protect women against all forms of violence including domestic violence and harassment at the work place.
- ix. take alternative methods such as quotas and reservations that would enable women to participate actively in the country's political life and gain equal representation in the elected assemblies in the country's democratic system at all levels.
- x. reform laws and create awareness about the evils of existing social structures to improve the property rights of women.
- xi. design innovative measures to give equal social recognition and attribute value to the productive non- monetized work of women in the family and household sector.
- xii. review the Civil Service Code for reforming employment policies, promotion schemes and decision making structures in the public sector to ensure that women enjoy equal representation in the managerial and decision making processes at all levels.
- xiii. provide incentives and undertake measures to motivate the private sector to provide an equitable gender balance at the senior managerial levels.
- xiv. restructure training and employment policies to promote women's equal participation to several occupations that are presently male dominated.
- xv. undertake programmes with the participation of state and civil society organizations to promote the behavioral changes that would produce an equal partnership between men and women in family and community with shared responsibility for parental care, management of the home and reproductive behavior.

Article 67. The national targets will be disaggregated appropriately to provincial, district and divisional levels.

Plans of Action Policies and Programmes

Article 68. The plan of action will be prepared in accordance with the guiding principles and targets that have been elaborated above. The plan of action shall

- i. identify the shortfalls in relation to the guiding principles, the strategy and targets that have been set.
- ii. identify the disparities in the status of well-being at the national, provincial, district and divisional levels,
- iii. formulate the packages of policies and programmes taking these disparities into account,
- iv. design and develop the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) used in the Human Development Report for application in the national and sub-national levels.

- xvi. strengthen diagnostic, preventive and curative health services and research to address the gender-specific health needs of women and the increasing demand for health care by the aged female population.
- xvii. implement population policies and programmes that will provide free access to family planning services and promote behaviour which reduces fertility and improves birth spacing.
- xviii. identify prime causes of adult female illiteracy and institute special programmes to remove those causes.
- xix. establish a national body (if one is not already available) to deal with women's well-being and make one of its responsibilities the development and implementation of the action plan for the protection and promotion of the well-being of women.
- xx. reduce gender disparity in school level education.

Allocation of Resources

Article 69.The state shall prepare a plan for the mobilization of resources and the financing of the plan of action. The resource and financing plan will

- i. estimate the financial and human resources needed for implementing each of the activities in the action plan and for achieving the targets that have been set.
- ii. mobilize the resources that are needed from both domestic and foreign sources.
- iii. ensure that the resources are made available through the government budget and other clearly identified sources including the private sector and civil society organizations.

THE RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

Guiding Principles and Strategies

Article 70.The policies and actions for the realization of the rights of children and the improvement of their well-being will be guided by the principles and norms embodied in the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, the Dakar Declaration on Education for All, the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care, the commitments made at the 2002 UN Special Session on Children and the Children's Charters

and Plans of Action which have been formulated by SAARC countries and are in the process of implementation.

Article 71.The concerns of children, their needs and rights shall be brought to the center of national planning in all SAARC countries. In the words used by SAARC heads of state in their Summit declaration "they should be seen as the human bridge between what the community is and what it aspires to be." All public policies and actions should therefore be tested for their impact on children and how they promote or thwart the capacity of children to realize their full potential.

Article 72.The strategies for the well-being of children shall be directed to ensuring their survival and reducing infant mortality and at sustaining a high quality of life in all stages of child development, enabling children to achieve high standards of health and nutrition and engage fully in the activities of learning, education, sports and recreation. In addition to these, the strategies shall be directed to address the issues of abandoned children, refugee children, street children, juvenile justice, pre-schooling of children and non-formal education for school drop-out children.

Article 73.Existing legislation shall be revised and amended and new laws enacted where necessary to ensure compliance with the norms and standards accepted by SAARC countries through their ratification of the CRC.

Article 74.The efforts of all South Asian countries shall be directed at removing all forms of child labor especially in hazardous occupations and child exploitation that prevent children from realizing their full development potential.

Article 75.Special attention shall be paid to the elimination of all forms of violence against children, child abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking and child marriage, child pornography, use of children in conflict and crime. Special protection should be afforded to children involved in conflict by provision of legal immunity from trial, imprisonment and punishment.

Article 76.The policies and programmes related to children should be guided by the principle of indivisibility of children's rights. All children's rights are inter-related, each and all of them being

inherent to the human dignity of children. Thus, the implementation of each right enunciated in the CRC should take into account the implementation and respect for the other rights of the child.

Article 77.All policies and actions designed to promote the well-being of children should invariably observe the principles of universality and non-discrimination.

- i. The forms of discrimination and social exclusion that result from poverty, caste, ethnicity and religious intolerance and gender discrimination are exacerbated in the case of the children and women in the groups which suffer from such exclusion. The disadvantaged groups among children should be continuously identified, included and affirmative action taken where necessary to redeem children from this vicious cycle of exclusion.
- ii. Prevailing social institutions, customs and practices that discriminate against the female child should be identified and rooted out to protect the rights of female children and ensure that they enjoy full equality of opportunity to realize their potential.
- iii. New and modern technology, used to reinforce the bias against the girl child, which is posing a new threat to the very survival of the girl child, should be challenged with the full force of the law.

Article 78.The principle of active participation of children in all matters relating to them should be observed at all levels which affect their lives, and opportunities provided for children to participate in decision-making processes which affect their lives. This includes access to necessary information.

Article 79.The principle of the best interests of the child should guide all policies, programmes and the delivery of services. It should be applied to resolve any conflicts which may arise between different rights. The “best interests” principle will also be the foundation to evaluate laws, administrative practices and resource allocation for children.

Article 80.The family which has responsibility for the care and protection of the child shall be supported and strengthened. Its capacity to provide an environment conducive to the survival and

development of the child through infancy, the pre-school stage, the school life and adolescence shall be appropriately enhanced and the necessary attitudinal changes prompted to enable the family to cope with the challenges and hazards of rapid social change and modernization.

Article 81.The value systems, norms, and prescriptions of the UN Convention on children’s rights shall be widely disseminated among the administration and policymakers, and throughout the school system, the community, the family and society as a whole to promote the realization of the rights of children and the enhancement of their well-being.

Article 82.Planning and policymaking for children shall be closely attentive to the changing needs of different stages of a child’s life including gender specifics.

Article 83.The education of children shall be guided by the principles and plan of action adopted at the Dakar Conference of UNESCO on Education for All and the relevant programmes developed by the UNICEF

Article 84.The health care of children shall be guided by the principles and action plans adopted at the Alma Ata Conference of the WHO, the Health for All Strategy and the Programmes for Immunization and primary health care developed jointly by the UNICEF and WHO.

Article 85.The policies for the development of children shall ensure that cognitive learning is effectively combined with value formation which prepares the children for adult responsibilities and equips them with the attitudes and codes of conduct required to play a mature role in a democratic and egalitarian society.

Targets

Article 86.In setting targets the SAARC countries should be guided by the Millennium Development Goals, the CRC and the global plan of action, the Dakar Plan of Action and the Children Charters and Plans of Action that have been formulated at the national level. The targets should include the following:

- i. The incidence of low birth weight which currently ranges from 13 to 33 will improve in 2010 to the range from 8 to 20

- and in 2020 to the range from 6 to 12. The highest national rate in the region in 2020 will not exceed 12.
- ii. The proportion of underweight children in region which is currently ranging from 30 to 56 will be reduced to the range from 15 to 28 in 2010 and from 8 to 15 in 2020. The highest national proportion of underweight children in the region will not exceed 15 in 2020.
 - iii. Infant mortality which currently ranges from 17 to 84 per thousand live births will come down to the range from 12 to 52 in 2010 and from 8 to 35 in 2020. The highest national rate of infant mortality in the region will not exceed 35.
 - iv. Under five mortality which is in the range from 19 to 104 per thousand live births will be reduced to the range from 12 to 70 in 2010 and the range from 8 to 46 in 2020. The highest national rate in the region in 2020 will not exceed 46.
 - v. The gross enrolment for all three levels combined currently ranges from 77 per cent to 37 per cent. In 2015 it will rise to the range from 85 per cent to 50 per cent and in 2020 it will rise to the range from 93 per cent to 66 per cent.
 - vi. Targets for net primary school enrolment and secondary school enrolment to be shown separately.
 - vii. Targets for the ratio of male to female at all three stages (primary, secondary, higher) should be shown separately.
 - viii. Elimination of gender disparity in enrolment (primary and secondary) by 2005.
 - ix. Elimination of all forms of child labor by 2010.
 - x. Indicators of violence against children and child abuse should be developed for monitoring and controlling the incidence of these crimes against children.
- ii. distinguish the different stages of child development and identify the strategic policies, targets and actions for each stage.
 - iii. identify the failures in policy and implementation and formulate the policies and programmes needed to fulfill the targets, especially in child health, nutrition and education.
 - iv. gender-disaggregate the national targets to the state/province/district levels.
 - v. identify the disparities in the status of well-being in terms of the indicators set for targets at the national, provincial, district and divisional levels, and adopt strategies to reduce inequalities across states/provinces, districts.
 - vi. review existing legislation for its compliance with the CRC and undertake amendments and enact new legislation as necessary to protect and promote the well-being of the child.
 - vii. examine existing institutions, public and private, other than schools that deal with or provide services to children, evaluate whether their procedures, attitudes and practices are inimical to the well-being of children and violate children's rights or are potentially in conflict with them; if and where they so violate, implement programmes to correct the situation.
 - viii. provide special support for children suffering from physical and mental disability and train and develop the personnel needed to provide the educational and other services needed by them.
 - ix. review and improve the existing laws and institutions for care, custody and adoption of orphans in accordance with the principle of best interest of the child
 - x. make special institutional arrangements or establish a special authority to investigate into and deal with the incidence of child abuse, sexual exploitation of children, child pornography and trafficking of children and take action to protect children against these types of activity.
 - xi. identify and examine the causes of school drop out and child labor and prepare a medium term and long term programme to make education compulsory up to the age of 14 and eliminate the conditions that

Policies and Programmes

Article 87. The plan of action will be prepared in accordance with the guiding principles and targets that have been elaborated above. The plan of action shall

- i. identify the main shortfalls in relation to the guiding principles, the strategy and targets that have been set.

- promote early school drop out and child labor.
- xii. progressively reform legislation and strengthen enforcement of laws to prohibit and eliminate child labor by 2010.
 - xiii. identify and implement the reforms that are needed in the system of education including school curricula and extra curricular activities to meet the policy goal of combining cognitive learning with value formation directed at the preparation for the working life, adult responsibility and good citizenship.
 - xiv. identify and implement policies and programmes to strengthen and enhance the capacity of families to fulfill their changing responsibilities to create the environment conducive to the development of the full potential of children.
 - xv. formulate and implement a programme for the wide dissemination of the CRC and the education of children parents and society in general in the essentials of the CRC.
 - xvi. undertake necessary retraining of teachers and develop structures of teaching and learning to enable children to engage in decision-making, problem solving and participating more actively in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.
 - xvii. develop the partnerships between civil society organizations and to enhance the quality of learning and civic education.

Allocation of Resources

Article 88. A financing plan should be prepared for the mobilization and the allocation of resources for the implementation of the action plan for protecting and promoting the well-being of children. The financial plan should

- i. prepare estimates of both human and financial resources necessary for each programme, intervention and activity within a specified time frame.
- ii. identify the sources of financing through the budget and other sources, foreign and local.
- iii. the financial resources required for the action plan on children should rank among programmes that receive the highest priority.

THE RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF YOUTH

Guiding Principles and Strategies

Article 89. The strategies and policies dealing with youth should be governed by the principles that are embodied in the international covenants, conventions and declarations that deal with civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, the rights of women and minorities and the right to development and the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration and Plan of action on poverty, employment and social integration that have special relevance for youth.

Article 90. In the context of rapidly rising expectations, the breakdown of traditional value systems and the sweeping social, economic and cultural changes that are taking place in the South Asian countries, the protection and promotion of the rights and well-being of youth is vitally important to the entire process of orderly development and good governance and should therefore have a central place in national policy-making.

Article 91. National strategies of development shall define the role of citizenship that youth assumes as a new generation in society. The strategies should include youth as an essential resource and a constructive and responsible force in society. Conditions should be created to enable youth to foster, nurture and give full expression to their special attributes of creativity and innovation and their capacity for renewal, reform of society and dynamic change.

Article 92. National strategies and plans for the development of youth shall create institutions and processes that fulfill the needs specific to this stage of life. Policymakers shall be guided by the knowledge that the failure to enable the youth to satisfy their needs and realize their full potential leads to discontent, rejection of existing systems and forms of unrest and revolt that have manifested themselves in most South Asian countries.

Article 93. In order to succeed in integrating youth to society and mobilizing them for constructive participation in society,

- i. National strategies shall enable youth to fulfill their aspirations and participate in the process of development,

- ii. At the same time, the system of education both formal and non-formal must address the rising expectations of the youth.

Article 94.The state, political parties and civil society shall create a conducive environment to promote and enable youth to participate more actively in civic and political life.

Article 95.In order to gain the confidence of youth in the democratic process and the institution of government, the fundamentals of good governance need to be observed in all government activities and the public realm. These are: transparency, accountability, non-discrimination, justice and equity, and participation. Society should provide role models of good governance and probity in public life that would inspire the youth.

Article 96.The state should expand and diversify tertiary education, technical education and vocational training on a substantial scale to meet the rapidly growing demand as progressively greater numbers graduate from secondary education.

Article 97.Economic policies should attempt to achieve, promote and sustain a high rate of growth and enable rapid structural change that will create adequate employment opportunities in the modern sectors to match the job expectations of youth and absorb the new entrants to the workforce.

Article 98.Education in life skills, parenting, household management, child care and sharing of parental responsibilities should be an integral part of planning for youth and should be organized and made readily available.

Article 99.Strategies for the protection of youth shall aim to alleviate the stresses specific to this stage of life which manifest themselves in anti-social behavior, drug addiction, criminal activity, high rates of youth suicide, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Article 100.Strategies for the well-being of youth shall focus on the needs of the female youth in the context of their increasing participation in the workforce, in civil society organizations and in the public life. The gender inequalities and forms of gender discrimination that persist and assume new forms render this transitional stage of life

particularly stressful for the young female population. Youth related policies should address these problems.

Article 101.Youth shall have the right to all information necessary to make informed choices governing their lives to play their role as citizens.

Article 102.The participation of youth in processes of decision-making and monitoring the accountability of government and other important power holders in society shall be institutionalized and made an essential part of good governance.

Targets

Article 103.As a set of indicators for monitoring the development and well-being of the age group 18-29 that would normally be classified as youth is not readily available from among the indicators that are commonly used such as the indicators for poverty, the well-being of women and children or the Millennium Development Goals, countries should develop the required data base and identify a set of reliable indicators for monitoring the well-being of youth and setting the targets for 2010 and 2020. This database shall provide a gender-disaggregated scenario (Baseline) of multidimensional youth poverty with future projections where possible. The targets should include:

- i. The proportion of youth who have completed secondary education, male and female.
- ii. The proportion of youth participating in tertiary education, male and female.
- iii. The rate of participation of youth in workforce male and female.
- iv. The rate of unemployment of youth, male and female.
- v. *Participation in representative democratic institutions (national, provincial, divisional, local).
- vi. *Participation in civil society organizations.
- vii. The proportion married.
- viii. The proportion divorced.
- ix. Rate of contraceptive use.
- x. The rate of crime among youth.
- xi. Incidence of drug addiction among youth.
- xii. Rate of youth suicide.

* The development of these indicators would require further study on the nature of the data to be collected and used to ascertain the degree of youth participation in these activities.

- xiii. *Participation in sports.
- xiv. *Participation in the creative arts.

Plan of Action, Policies and Programmes

Article 104. The State in collaboration with civil society, the private sector and other social institutions shall prepare a national strategy, a framework of national policy and a plan of action to achieve the goals and targets set in the two preceding sections.

Article 105. The necessary institutional mechanisms shall be established to ensure that the youth are adequately represented and effectively participate in the process of formulating and implementing the national strategy, the national policy framework and the action plan.

Article 106. The plan of action for development and promotion and protection of the rights and well-being of the youth shall:

- i. Formulate and implement programmes for the diversification of tertiary education and the improvement of its quality and content to enable youth to gain access to advances in information technology and to a wide range of scientific knowledge and technological skills.
- ii. Estimate the increasing demand for tertiary education and expand the facilities for tertiary education and technical training.
- iii. Include programmes for and the expansion of opportunities for youth to engage in small-scale enterprise and self-employment by developing their entrepreneurial skills and providing access to credit and technology.
- iv. As agriculture will continue to be the main provider of livelihoods well into the future, improve the extension services and the marketing infrastructure for small scale farming and strengthen links between small scale farming and large-scale private sector to transform small scale farming to high income, technologically advanced enterprise that will be attractive to youth.
- v. Organize programmes of non-formal education and value formation in collaboration with civil society organizations and other concerned bodies to deal with the specific needs of youth in

relation to the new roles and responsibilities that they assume. These include education in life skills, parenting, household management, child care and sharing of parental responsibilities.

- vi. Strengthen and develop programmes of health education for youth, particularly in reproductive health care and preventive health care related to STD and HIV/AIDS.
- vii. Strengthen and expand facilities and services for prevention of drug addiction and rehabilitation of victims
- viii. Conduct studies into the causes of violence crime and suicide and develop programmes and policies to address these problems.
- ix. Make special provision in existing legislation, policy and practice to enable and facilitate the youth to participate in the political life including both political parties and elected assemblies.
- x. Expand the facilities to provide incentives and take supportive measures to increase the participation of youth in sports and cultural activities.
- xi. Promote the formation of youth associations and involve them in the activities of the state and civil society.
- xii. Organize and motivate youth to participate in monitoring and upholding standards of good governance and create the systems and institutional mechanisms to provide youth with the opportunity for such participation.
- xiii. Establish a national body (if one is not already available) to deal with youth affairs and make one of its responsibilities the development and implementation of the action plan.
- xiv. The various elements in the national strategy policy and plan of action should be so designed and integrated as to be capable of providing a vision of the future society that can fulfill the aspirations of youth.

Allocation of Resources

Article 107. The state should prepare a resource mobilization and financing plan which follows the guidelines given for the formulation of the finance plans for the other parts of the Social Charter. It should include:

- i. estimates of the human and financial resources required for the implementation of the action plan.
- ii. The sources of financing from national and foreign sources, the state, private sector and civil society organizations.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIAL CHARTER

Guiding Principles and Strategies

Article 108.The principal elements of human resource development for implementing the Social Charter are included in the action plans for eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and the protection and promotion of the rights and well-being of children and youth. Human resource development will also incorporate the main elements of population policy that have been included in the plan of action relating to the rights and well-being of women, children and youth. In addition to what has been included in the action plans the following overall guiding principles should direct the national strategy of human resource development.

Article 109.The overall strategy for human resource development must be guided by the principles and actions plans of the Jakarta Plan of Action, the Dakar Plan of Action for Education of All, the WHO strategy of Health for All which deal with the needs of the whole population and the Declaration and Plan of Action of World Social Summit, The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Article 110.The strategy of human resource development shall be directed at the coordination of all the activities relating to human resource development contained in the action plans for the population groups covered in the Charter.

Article 111.The key elements in human resource development will be education, training and skill development, healthcare, food security and nutrition, housing, environment, water and sanitation, social security, empowerment and participation in decision-making.

Article 112.The strategy of human resource development in each of these areas shall be formulated and implemented in terms of the full life cycle of a person. All persons will have the opportunity to realize their full potential in every

stage of their lives. The human resource development strategy shall be directed at building the capacity in all persons to fulfill their functions and roles and realize their potential in each life stage.

Article 113.Special attention shall be paid to the reproductive stage in life; health care and services will be aimed at providing information and enhancing the capacity of women to make choices and take decisions on child bearing and birth spacing.

Article 114.For this purpose, the strategies shall be directed at identifying the specific needs of human resource development of each age group. Within each group they should identify and deal with the rights and needs of the groups that are disadvantaged, subjected to systematic discrimination or in need of special care and protection such as the poor, women or groups suffering from social exclusion on grounds of caste, class, ethnicity or religious intolerance.

Article 115.One major goal of human resource development is the enhancement of the productive capacity of all persons. Human resource development strategies should aim at developing a productive workforce that has the capacity to keep pace with rapid advancements in science and technology and the process of globalization.

Article 116.Human resource development will also be aimed at developing the wider human skills and civic awareness and sensibility that enable persons to function effectively in the family, the community, the polity and society.

Article 117.The protection and promotion of the rights and well-being of the workforce must be guided by the principles embodied in the ILO conventions and the International Covenants on Human rights.

Targets

Article 118.Targets for human resource development for 2010 and 2020 should be selected from the targets that have been set for the population groups covered in the charter and should include the following:

- i. Participation in primary, secondary and tertiary education (male and female)

- ii. Educational and skill composition of the workforce: male and female.
- iii. Rate of Unemployment: male and female.
- iv. Increase of Life expectancy: male and female.
- v. Control and Eradication of major communicable diseases.
- vi. Healthcare for prevention and reduction of non-communicable diseases.
- vii. Availability and Accessibility of health care at all stages of life.
- viii. Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in accordance with ICPD agreement.
- ix. Regional inequality in the selected social indicators.
- x. Gender inequality.
- xi. Age specific indicators of well-being to include the elderly.

Plan of Action, Policies and Programmes

Article 119. The plan of action for human resource development will supplement the other action plans of the Charter to ensure that health care and education of high quality are available to all, productive employment with adequate income earning capacity is generated so as to reduce unemployment to the minimum and people are equipped with the knowledge and capabilities to adapt to rapid demographic and socio-economic changes and the process of globalization. For this purpose, the action plan will-

- i. identify the shortfalls in relation to the principles, strategy and targets and take action to make good the shortfalls.
- ii. expand facilities for the realization of universal basic and secondary education and facilitate access to tertiary education for all who qualify.
- iii. create the infrastructure and opportunities for life long learning.
- iv. develop the preventive and curative health care services for the control and eradication of major communicable diseases and for the prevention and cure of non-communicable diseases.
- v. implement macroeconomic policies and sectoral development strategies that promote rapid economic growth and structural change and expand opportunities for employment in the modern sector.
- vi. develop and implement programmes that identify the environmental dimensions of

human resource development such as protection of people in areas prone to environmental degradation and natural disaster and provide opportunities for improving their well-being.

- vii. implement labor legislation, establish the institutions and provide the conditions necessary to protect and promote the well-being of the workforce.

Allocation of Resources

Article 120. The States should take account of the financing plans for the other action plans prepared under the Charter and prepare a resource mobilization and financing plan to supplement these as appropriate. This would include:

- i. estimates of the human and financial resources required for the implementation of the action plan.
- ii. The sources of financing, national and foreign, state, private sector and civil society organizations.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Article 121. In implementing the Social Charter, the states and peoples of South Asia shall-

- i. at all time respect the indivisibility of human rights and act with the understanding and knowledge that the implementation of the Charter requires complementary action to promote and protect the civil and political rights of the people.
- ii. comply with the directive principles given in Articles 1, 7, 11, and 15 and focus in particular on social integration, the rule of law and good governance.

Article 122. In order to reinforce the processes of social integration envisaged in the action plans of the Social Charter, the states and peoples of South Asia shall

- i. fulfill their commitments made at all international, regional and bilateral levels for promoting social integration in their countries.
- ii. fulfill their obligations under the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural rights, and in the case of countries who have not ratified the Covenant, take action under Article 4 of the Social Charter.

- iii. respect and protect moral and ethical equality and human dignity of all citizens;
- iv. eliminate all forms of discrimination arising from caste, tribe, class, gender, religion and race and enable the people in all such vulnerable groups to enjoy full and equal rights of citizenship.
- v. eradicate all forms of human exploitation such as human trafficking, bonded labour.
- vi. protect the rights of minorities.
- vii. prevent the growth of majoritarian forms of government that enable a majority to violate the rights of the opposition, dissidents and minorities.
- viii. strengthen the value systems and culture that foster tolerance, pluralism and diversity thereby promoting social integration and harmonious co-existence.

Article 123.In order to ensure the rule of law and good governance, the states and peoples of South Asia shall

- i. fulfill their obligations under the international covenant on civil and political rights and other related international declarations and instruments.
- ii. eliminate all forms of violence and abuse of power directed against women, minorities and disadvantaged groups.
- iii. enact the legislation, create the institutions and regulatory systems and promote the processes that maintain and uphold
 - transparency,
 - accountability,
 - non-discrimination,
 - equality, and
 - participation

in all areas of governance and the political life, including the multi-party political institutions.

- iv. strengthen the legislation and institutions for the eradication of corruption in all its manifestations through out society, enact the necessary laws and create the institutions where they are not available and mobilize the whole of society against corruption.
- v. broaden and deepen the democratic institutions and processes and the system of local government to reach and empower people at the community level.
- vi. strengthen the institutions and processes that guarantee free and fair democratic

elections and active participation of the people in the electoral process.

Article 124.The three preceding articles on social integration and good governance are in addition to and do not replace or in any way derogate from any charters, instruments, constitutional provisions, legislation and plans of action which SAARC countries have designed separately and are implementing for the fulfillment of the obligations and rights of states and peoples in regard to civil and political rights, social integration and good governance.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (WORK PROGRAMME)

Article 125.A citizen's social charter implies that monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be based on citizens' initiatives and a framework of accountability for and ownership of these functions will be built within the civil society organizations so as to reflect the grassroots focus and orientation of the Charter.

The National Level Actions

Article 126.Civil society will organize itself at the national level as a *Citizens' National Forum*, which will coordinate the activities of civil society organizations for monitoring and implementation of the Citizen's Social Charter in the country.

Article 127.The *Citizens' National Forum* will give leadership to the mobilization of citizens for the implementation and monitoring of the Citizen's Social Charter, as well as the SAARC Social Charter, and in particular for evaluating and monitoring performance and for advocating improvements and revisions where necessary.

Article 128.The *Citizens' National Forum* will identify those parts of the Citizen's Social Charter and the SAARC Social Charter that can be implemented through citizen bodies and shall mobilize themselves to undertake the implementation of these parts. These could include civil society initiatives in the field of poverty eradication such as the micro financing sector, the social enterprise sector and other self-reliant citizen's institutions which undertake the implementation of any segment of the action plans through the mobilization of their own human and financial resources.

Article 129.The Citizens' National Forum's capability needs to be enhanced for collecting data/information and for their analysis and evaluation. (to be further expanded by *Professor Muchkund Dubey*)

Actions at the Regional Level

Article 130.The citizens of South Asia will establish a Citizen's Forum for South Asia for:

- i. monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Citizen's Social Charter and the SAARC Social Charter at the national level.
- ii. creating regional public awareness and maintaining citizen's vigilance to hold states accountable for the implementation of the provisions of Citizen's Social Charter and the SAARC Social Charter.
- iii. mobilizing and coordinating region-wide civil society initiatives and strengthening of citizens' institutions in the form of a citizens' sector for promoting the implementation of the Citizen's Social Charter and the SAARC Social Charter.
- iv. strengthening and promoting the exchange of the experience and best practice of people's organizations in all aspects of the Citizen's Social Charter and the SAARC Social Charter.
- v. sustaining advocacy for the full implementation of the Citizen's Social Charter and the SAARC Social Charter and their enhancement and improvement.

- vi. building of a credible monitoring system not only for reviewing the Charter but also to review the implementation of all national, regional and international commitments that the South Asian countries have made, including compliance of the reporting requirements that are part of many of these Conventions.
- vii. preparing alternate or shadow reports by the people in response to the reporting requirements so as to establish suitable mechanisms for accountability and advocacy. These reports should reflect the diversity of the groups involved in the effort.
- viii. developing method of constant assessment of social trends, performance of various institutions at various levels from national and provincial Governments to the bodies of local self-government, who are responsible for implementing the provision of the Citizen's Social Charter and the SAARC Social Charter.
- ix. establishing network of independent social audit institutions and mechanisms at every level from the village and ward upward to participate in the exercises of monitoring and keeping a watch on the activities related to the implementation of the Charter. All use of public funds and public actions should be subject to public accountability undertaken by the citizen's right to information.