



*People's Struggles for Poverty Eradication:
Towards A New Development Agenda in South Asia*

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SAAPE



South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)

*People's Struggles for Poverty Eradication:
Towards A New Development Agenda in South Asia*

Proceedings of the **4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SAAPE**

18-19 December 2012

Kathmandu, Nepal



South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)

Proceedings of the 4th General Assembly of SAAPE

Published by:

South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)

Publication Date:

April 2013

Printed at:

Sthapit Printing Press
Kathmandu, Nepal

Contact Address:

SAAPE Secretariat
P. O. Box: 8130, 288 Gairidhara Marg, Gairidhara, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel.: +977-1-4004976, 4004985
Fax: +977-1-4004508,4443494
Email: saape@saape.org
Website: www.saape.org

Table of Content

Foreword	v
Acronyms	vi
1. Changes and Challenges of South Asia: A Political Perspective of SAAPE	1
2. SAAPE Milestones	4
3. Proceedings: Inaugural Session and Sharing of Country Situations	6
4. Thematic Presentations	8
5. SAAPE's Strategic Direction 2013-2015	10
6. Session on 'SAAPE Poverty and Vulnerability Report 2013'	14
7. People's SAARC Session	16
8. Country Resolutions	18
9. SAAPE 4th General Assembly Declaration	21
Annexes	23
Annex 1: Professor Babu Mathew's Inaugural Remarks	23
Annex 2: SAAPE Activities	25
Annex 3: Programme Schedule	28
Annex 4: List of Participants	30
Annex 5: Manesar Declaration	33

Foreword

South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) is a regional people's platform working unitedly against the structural causes of poverty and social injustices in South Asia. SAAPE has been continually engaging over the years in strengthening and consolidating the social movements in South Asia. Contributing to a political process of poverty eradication through conscious efforts by promoting peoples' politics of good governance, food sovereignty, gender equality, peace and labour rights through their own mechanisms, SAAPE aims to achieve its mission through strengthening the social movements across the countries in South Asia. SAAPE strongly believes in a democratic political process that helps strategizing genuine politics of poverty eradication through creating an enabling environment of options and opportunities leading to people's political empowerment.

SAAPE initiative has already passed its 11 years of struggle against poverty. Manesar meeting (2000 AD) and the South Asia Civil Society Network (SACSN) meeting (2001 AD) formed this alliance to collectively fight against poverty, injustice and indignity in the South Asia region. And it is our pleasure to share the proceeding of the fourth General Assembly organised on the theme of '**People's Struggles for Poverty Eradication: Towards A New Development Agenda in South Asia**'. Over 100 members from the eight countries of the region participated in the General Assembly, representing people's organizations, peasant movements, women movements, youth, workers unions, informal sector, academia, human rights defenders and grassroots social movements. This proceeding primarily captures the process and deliberations of the participants in the 4th general assembly held in 18 and 19 December 2012 in Kathmandu.

I would like to thank all the participants for their active engagement in discussions and deliberations, shaping the future directions of SAAPE and contributing to chart out the strategic areas to be engaged with. The secretariat staff Praman Adhikari, Prerna Bomzan, Som Rai, Pamir Gautam, Sumnima Dewan, Ashim Neupane deserve special thanks for their tireless work and valuable contribution to make this assembly a grand success. Thanks are due to Dr. Sarba Raj Khadka who supported in preparing the political document of SAAPE to present in the General Assembly and for his advisory role to SAAPE secretariat in bringing the institutional memory to the General Assembly. I am indebted to Dr. Arjun Karki- out going Co-ordinator of SAAPE for his constant guidance and intellectual support to enable us to organise the 4th General Assembly and to take of the coordinating role of SAAPE. Finally, I would like to thank "Bread for the World" for its constants support to SAAPE in order to effectively engage in South Asia for poverty eradication and social justice.

Thank you,

Dr. Netra Prasad Timsina
Co-ordinator

Acronyms

ADS	Agricultural Development Strategy
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ANPFa	All Nepal Peasants' Federation
ESCR	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
GA	General Assembly
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHGs	Green House Gases
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IRA	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
LDC	Least Developed Country
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MNC	Multinational Corporation
RTFO	Regional Thematic Focal Organisation
SAAPE	South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SACSN	South Asia Civil Society Network
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1. Changes and Challenges of South Asia: A Political Perspective of SAAPE

Introduction

It has been 12 years that South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) came into existence in 2001, building on the principles that came out of Manesar (India) multi-stakeholder gathering in 2000. Manesar declaration offered an opportunity that galvanised like-minded people and institutions into a concrete and dynamic platform on which the very foundation of SAAPE is laid on. SAAPE strongly believes in a democratic political process that helps strategizing genuine politics of poverty eradication through creating an enabling environment of options and opportunities leading to people's political empowerment.

South Asia constitutes 3.61% (i.e., 5,216,748 square kilometres) of the total land area of the world, providing abode to above 1.51 billion people that comprises about 23% of world's population. Nearly half of this population is living under different forms of poverty and exclusion. Deep rooted structural poverty, exclusion, food insecurity, poor governance, gender injustice, violence and conflicts are the salient features of South Asian society. South Asia has the highest number of people living under the poverty line and who are severely malnourished. It is the region divided between the hopes of the rich and the despairs of the poor. Of the eight countries, four are Least Developed Countries (LDCs), facing severe hardships in terms of development and socio-economic wellbeing of the people.

Dominant political systems in the region range from limited democracies to democracies in transition. Even within democracies, democratic cultures and institutions are weak and their autonomous functioning is questionable. However, most of the governments of these countries acclaim as they being the democratic, transparent, accountable entities respecting the rule of law for promoting the interests of their citizens. These are the political

dogmas preached by most of the political forces in the region; however, the reality is just opposite in many respects. Though all nations have judicial structures, their intention and ability to ensure equality, rule of law and compliance to human rights does not stand up to internationally accepted standards. Rather, these systems of non-accountability to people, militarist values, social, economic and political hierarchies dominate the region. In most of South Asia, minority communities increasingly feel unprotected and are still looking for adequate representation at all levels. A history of violation of minority rights has left the minorities of South Asia insecure and vulnerable. In many regions of South Asia, these minorities are amongst the ultra-poor and excluded. And, when power is centralised, disempowered groups are mobilised along the lines of identity politics.

Conflicts in different forms and manifestations —mainly rooted in denial, discrimination, exclusion, deprivation and marginalisation— are frequently faced by South Asian society. Often these conflicts are deep rooted based on widespread poverty, traditionally interweaved mechanism of exclusion and fundamentalism of different forms and magnitude.

Democratic discourse is a growing trend in South Asia. The ideals associated with human rights, people's power and entitlements are entering the daily discourse, as various people's movements contest and struggle with the dominant elitist ideologies. The idea of a people's democracy based on non-violent mass mobilisation, shook the roots of the traditional feudal monarchy of Nepal in April 2006; bringing back the multi-party democracy and starting afresh the process of democratic constitution-building after long years of conflict, stalemate and oppression. This struggle has become iconic for South Asia. Nevertheless, the region's greater sections of the populations are



impoverished, marginalised, deprived and denied of their fundamental rights to be free from poverty, hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, diseases and all kinds of bondage.

In recent years, South Asia has, thus, seen some positive development as well as some dangerous trends. Political struggles that brought back democracy to Pakistan and Bangladesh; the overthrow of the monarchy in Nepal; all signified the growing strength and success of people's socio-political movements. However, the growth of corporate power under the disguise of state protection in the region; the further marginalisation of minorities and the continuous attacks on them; the growing economic disparities as a consequence of neo-liberal reforms and rapid militarisation of states are the dangerous trends.

“Growth” and market centric dominant neo-liberal development paradigm in South Asia

Irrespective of the nomenclature of the current political systems and the political forces in each of the countries of South Asia, they are continuously following modus operandi prescribed by the structures of neo-liberal economic development doctrine that puts profit before people. The dominant development paradigm in operation is market centric, skewed growth (ignoring equity) led that essentially concentrates wealth in the hands of few transnational corporations and elites, use high fossil fuel consuming infrastructures that destroy the environment and put the entire human civilisation at risk. The dominant development paradigm has been creating increased miseries and destructions among the destitute women and men and offering benefits to both the new and traditional elites (*Kulins*). As a result, the number of the resource poor and the chronic hunger stricken people has remained around 1 billion in the world, of which above 45% live in South Asia alone despite much hyped development endeavours for last several decades. It is solely guided by the harmful principles enshrined in the texts of Washington Consensus and WTO, IFIs and other instruments created for suppressing the wellbeing and happiness of the toiling masses in our parts of the world.

The national and regional political systems, structures and “development” endeavours are either faulty or inadequate to recognise and enhance the potentials of the region and positively respond the basic needs of majority people. The spaces for civil as well as progressive political forces are shrinking as a result of interventions and encroachments by the

forces both inside and outside of the region in the name of ‘containing terrorism’ or ‘promoting democracy’. The dominant development paradigm per se is failed to safeguard the human rights, needs, interests and well-being of the most in need – dalits, women, peasants, workers, different minority groups, etc.

Plundering of resources by the elites’ is also equally responsible for failing the basic needs of the toiling masses including women and peasants. The natural resources such as land, forests and water bodies which mainly form the basis of livelihoods of most South Asian people are being put in the hands of markets directly or indirectly. ‘Colonial and/or feudal mind-set’ is another root cause failing to address the problems the region is facing. That is why most of the governments of these countries are often found ready pouring scarce resources into building and strengthening military might than feeding the starving child or availing medicines for most common and curable diseases faced by the people.

State of democracy in South Asia

The ruling elites in South Asian countries claim that they exercise democratic principles in their respective regimes. Nevertheless, the ground realities are quite unconvincing of their claims. Devolution of power and authority to the lower level institutions and peoples’ organisations is either minimal or not happening at all. The political parties just get highest scorers for ruling over the majority oppositions. The oppositions are fragmented hence they cannot command more than 50% votes necessary to form a government by majority votes. Irrespective of the names and the ideology they subscribe, most of the political parties are either elite captured or poorly performing. Democratic principles, norms and values are waning in one or the other way. People’s participation, inclusion and ownership are always at stake. The women who form at least the half of the populace are sparsely represented in the government structures. Leaving one exception of Bangladesh aside, all the governments and the states are led by males mostly representing upper class and caste interests in essence. Women’s share is subnormal, even if some of the governments are headed by woman members of the region. Dalit, minority groups and disadvantaged sections of the society are disproportionately represented in the governance system, if any. Some countries of the region have also followed positive discrimination approach increasing women’s participation in the government structures, at least at policy level, but it is taking time to get translated into practice.

Nepal does not have people's representatives in the local government bodies for the last 15 years, so there is apparent lack of local democracy even for delivering the essential services to the people. New constitution making process in Nepal is not progressing and there are a number of hurdles and obstacles in making the democratic constitution. In Maldives, the elected President was intimidated forcefully, waiting for next election in 2013. Pakistan has been vulnerable in terms of reinstating and maintaining democracy. The latent war between the judiciary and executive is yet not settled on the issues of President's allegedly 'dubious' activity. In Sri Lanka, the current president is portrayed by some as a 'war hero' after the LTTE struggle and their cadres were suppressed mercilessly, instead of addressing the problems that the rebellion forces had been raising. Freedom of speech and protection of human rights defenders are the most pressing issues of Sri Lanka at the moment. There is unnecessary control over press and the independent civil society activities. Human rights issues in Bhutan are continued to be in misery as millions of Bhutanese citizens are in exile as political refugees. The so called largest democracy in India self-claimed by ruling elite is in peril as the largest proportion of the world poor live in India with poverty and destitution. Afghanistan continued to be unstable and have extreme poverty and injustices. In Bangladesh, the gap between rich and poor is being widened and the large section of population lives in extreme poverty and injustices.

Most of the major international human rights instruments have been ratified by the national governments of South Asia, with few exceptions. However, the human rights situation is not improving in the region as expected. Even though the civil and political rights have been receiving prominence for some long, they are yet not enjoyed as expected. The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) and right to development that concern most working class people are least attended, if any. Millions of people are reportedly violated of their ESCR, e.g., the right to adequate food, right to shelter, right to energy, right to information, right to development, right to education and health. They are also denied exercising their rights to informed participation and rights to live in a healthy environment. Perpetual poverty and hunger coupled with the impacts of climate change are feared the most serious human rights violations, which are either ignored or least attended.

The regional political structures such as SAARC remain as a coterie of few believing more on gatherings and delivering nothing. Moreover, the national governments serve as the contractors for the anti-people forces and processes.

Impacts of resource intensive development paradigm and people's reaction

As a result of the faulty development paradigm, poverty and vulnerability have been pandemic, exacerbated by the ever increasing impacts of global warming *Vis a Vis* climate change. Industrialisation and other forms of development that produce unchecked amount of carbon and other GHGs are now putting the entire humanity at the verge of collapse, the poor having constrained inherently limited capacity being at the forefront of bearing the brunt of the climate catastrophe. Although the people of South Asia are least responsible to contribute to the climate crisis, but they are the first and foremost impacted by it. As the South Asia region is the largest home of the world's poor, the total number of the potentially climate vulnerable people is the highest one.

In these political and economic contexts, SAAPE has been continually engaging over the years in strengthening and consolidating the social movements in South Asia with the prime goal of contributing to a political process of poverty eradication through conscious efforts promoting peoples' politics of good governance, food sovereignty, gender equality, peace and labour rights through their own mechanisms. It laid major emphasis building on what the people already have in terms of their social institutions, movements and resources and what additional facilitation they may need proliferating their struggles for rights and justice, linking localised movements to national and regional initiatives having multiplier effects. All sections of the people deprived of their opportunities and rights are to be brought under the people's alliance (e.g., peoples' SARAC, South Asian Labour Forum, South Asia Peasants' Coalition, South Asia Peace Alliance, etc.) challenging irrelevant systems and non-performing structures. Therefore, under the political facilitation of SAAPE, different campaigns having specific/concerted as well as holistic impacts are being promoted at the moment, linking them with other social movements so as to exert desirable pressure on the anti-people systems and structures.

2. SAAPE Milestones

SAAPE was established as a regional platform for the South Asian likeminded peoples and groups and the basic objective of SAAPE campaign has been to establish relations of poverty with politics and human rights. The mission of SAAPE is to facilitate the process for establishing suitable mechanisms thereby ensuring people's genuine participation in the decision making processes at all levels which would contribute towards creating a South Asia where all individuals are able to fully enjoy all human rights for dignified living. This chapter is intended to highlight SAAPE's milestones since the Manesar meeting in 2000.

Multi-stakeholder Gathering including Civil Society Groups, Manesar, India (27-29 September 2000)

In the year 2000 civil society actors from South Asia and their well-wishers from Europe came together in Manesar, India to collectively fight against poverty and injustice in the South Asia region. The factor that brought these actors together was the recognition that civil society organisation and NGOs' expertise in macro-economic and political frameworks could help in effectively addressing rampant poverty and

The Manesar Declaration recognised that the economic policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation promoted by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the non-participatory development model followed by the South Asian States as the major reason for growing poverty and deprivation in the region.

injustices prevailing in the region. The meeting consequently formed the South Asia Civil Society Network (SACSN) and also adopted the "Manesar Declaration."¹ The declaration recognised that the economic policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation promoted by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the non-participatory development model followed by the South Asian States as the major reason for growing poverty and deprivation in the region. The participants of the meeting resolved that only a 'rights based approach' to social development would help in eradicating

poverty and ensuring the dignity of poor, marginalised and deprived peoples of South Asia.

South Asia Civil Society Network Meeting on Poverty Eradication, Kathmandu, Nepal (December 2001)

As a follow-up to the Manesar consultation, the SACSN met in Kathmandu, December, 2001 with the theme of "Fighting unitedly against poverty, hunger and injustice". The Kathmandu meeting felt the need for an Alliance to further pursue their goals which subsequently led to the creation of the South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE). SAAPE, since then, is firmly based with the vision of creating a society free from poverty, hunger and injustices so as to strengthen peoples' democracy and their empowerment. Since its establishment, the mission of SAAPE has been to facilitate the process for establishing suitable mechanisms so as to ensure people's genuine participation in the decision making processes at all levels to contribute towards poverty eradication.

First General Assembly (GA), Colombo, Sri Lanka (14-16 June 2003)

"Power, Politics and Poverty in South Asia"

The First General Assembly of SAAPE was held in Colombo from 14 to 16 June 2003 with the theme "Power, Politics and Poverty in South Asia." The purpose of the Assembly was to analyse poverty, politics, power and the politics of development in South Asia, to formalise the SAAPE alliance and to strategise about how SAAPE could better facilitate the work of its member organisations in eradicating poverty in the region. The meeting also intended to provide a space for sharing experiences from the various social struggles and mass movements represented by the SAAPE membership, and

¹ See Annex 5: Manesar Declaration

SAAPE Structural Change: From Thematic Groups to Campaigns Groups

The Kathmandu Annual General Meeting (2004) established 5 Regional Thematic Groups - Gender, Food Sovereignty, Labour, Peace and Demilitarisation, and Just and Democratic Governance.

The Second GA in 2006 established a Core Committee comprising of 15 Members: 5 from each of the regional thematic groups, 8 from each of the countries, 1 from European partner and 1 from the Secretariat.

The AGM held in Kathmandu in 2007 established Advocacy and Campaign Coordinators at the 5 Regional Thematic focal points to work as extended Secretariat.

The Core Committee Meetings held in Colombo and Kathmandu in 2011 decided to change the structure from regional thematic groups to campaign groups and subsequently three campaign groups- Gender Rights, Food Sovereignty and Peace & Demilitarisation were formed.

discussing how to work together, learn from each other, and formulate constructive next steps forward. The Colombo Declaration reiterated the Manesar Declaration and reaffirmed the power of people in the South Asia region to regain control to abolish both poverty, and the politics that creates this condition. The country focal points were also established at the First GA meeting.

Second General Assembly, Kathmandu, Nepal (2-3 July 2006)

"Struggles for Grassroots Democracy: A South Asian Civil Society Perspective"

The real challenge in most countries in South Asia is to improve the process of governance in such a way that public policy fundamentally protects the general public interests rather than being a hostage to vested interests keeping the vast majority of poor and marginalised deprived of access to political decision-making, natural resource use and human development. Increased commitment to democracy and justice are, therefore, prerequisites for the South Asian countries in order to achieve their development goals. It was against these background, the second General Assembly of SAAPE held in Kathmandu on 2-3 July 2006 focused on the theme of "Struggles for Grassroots Democracy: A South Asian Civil Society Perspective." Given the historic failure of the IFIs policies in eradicating poverty and development, the participants of the GA called to downplay and delegitimise the International Financial Institutes (IFIs), and international capital for their self-proclaimed right to set agendas for poverty eradication and development. The participants took note of the region's food crisis and the severity it

could bring to the millions of the South Asian population and therein, committed to work towards realising food sovereignty and food security for the people of the region, and struggle to create a supportive policy framework – promoting Eco-Agriculture, opposing GM food, and promoting peasant alliances for ensuring food sovereignty.

Third General Assembly, Kathmandu, Nepal (8-9 August 2009)

"Global Financial Crisis and Implications in South Asia"

The global economic crisis that began in 2007 is in fact symptomatic of the broader failures of neo-liberalism and casino-financed capital system. Its impact in South Asia could be felt in terms of food crisis, fuel crisis and financial crisis. Therefore, the 3rd General Assembly held on 8-9 August 2009 in Kathmandu, Nepal under the theme "Global Financial Crisis and Implications in South Asia." The Assembly recognised that the neoliberal economic policies has not only led to the loss of millions of jobs and intensification of poverty in South Asia but has also deprived the South Asian population their rights to life and self-determination. The GA, therefore, called the South Asian Government and the international community to recognise and support the development alternatives initiated by the communities that incorporates the principles of gender justice, ecological sustainability and participatory democracy. It is only under this development paradigm that would fulfil the basic legal, social and economic rights of all citizens in the region.

3. Proceedings: Inaugural Session and Sharing of Country Situations

The Fourth General Assembly of SAAPE was organised on 18-19 December 2012 in Kathmandu, Nepal. In the inaugural session of the General Assembly, Dr. Netra Timsina, co-ordinator designate of SAAPE welcomed all delegates and participants and highlighted SAAPE's engagement over the years in strengthening the social movements in South Asia with the prime goal of poverty eradication through conscious efforts of promoting democratic governance, and human rights, food sovereignty, gender equality, peace and labour rights through their own mechanisms. In his welcome speech, he noted the necessity to overcome the dominant paradigms of development and expected the Fourth General Assembly (GA) to develop a strategy and alternative development model to engage in people's struggle against poverty in South Asia.

Following the welcome note by Dr. Timsina, Professor Babu Mathew in his keynote speech², criticised the existing neoliberal development paradigm that has continuously exploited Africa, Asia and Latin America and in South Asia its impact could be felt in terms of disappearance of social security measures and fading of people's movements and organisations. Prof. Mathew was critical about the prevalence of the bourgeoisie democracy in South Asia and insisted that SAAPE must take up issues of new constitutionalism, independent judiciary, new meta-narrative and cultural movement. For Prof. Mathew, the ongoing financial and economic crisis have deeply fractured the hegemony of the dominant neoliberal paradigm and the present time demands an alternative ideology of development that would keep people at the centre of any development agenda.

Dr. Arjun Karki, SAAPE founding member and adviser highlighted the evolution and development of SAAPE since the Manesar meeting in 2000. In his analysis of the current international scenario, Dr. Karki opined that Neoliberalism, globalisation, imperialism and neo-colonialism as well as various policies promoted by developed countries have been working against the wellbeing of the population residing in developing and least developed countries and has only produced further poverty, inequality, injustices, discrimination and marginalisation.

Therefore, in order to come out of the current dismal environment, Dr. Karki said that it is necessary to make an urgent and radical shift from the current development paradigm to genuine human rights approach of development which would ensure inclusive and sustainable development in real terms that will address and overcome the present increasing global inequalities in terms of economic, social, ecological and democratic justice.

The opening session of the GA also included sharing of the country situations where the country delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka highlighted SAAPE activities in their own countries and the obstacles faced by them as a result of on-going global economic crisis.

Mr. Raz Mohammed Dalili of Afghanistan highlighted poverty, human rights and democracy as major challenges facing Afghanistan today. Though a democratic government exists, the decade long corruption and lawlessness have left the Afghan people without hope and human rights and poverty remains a major concern for the majority of Afghani population whereas, on the other hand, most of the members of the parliament are busy for their own gratifications. Mr. Dalili observed that as the situation of Afghanistan will affect all South Asia, civil societies in South Asia and SAAPE in particular, must contribute to ease the problem faced by the Afghan people and be more active so as to make the voices of Afghan population heard to the world.

Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad from Bangladesh noted consolidation of democracy as a major challenge to Bangladesh. On the issue of land, Mr. Mohiuddin said 65% of people in Bangladesh are landless but given the lack of land availability, it is necessary to develop a mechanism that would ensure good harvest for all on the basis of justice. Mohiuddin opined that state sovereignty must be seen from peoples' perspectives and it is vital to ensure people's ownership of natural resources for people's sovereignty to prevail. SAAPE has been inspiring all for 11 years as a regional network and, therefore, regional politics should be part of SAAPE core thoughts.

² See annex 1 for Prof. Mathew's inaugural remarks.

Mr. S. B Subba expressed his dissatisfaction over the ongoing diplomatic negotiation between the governments of Nepal and Bhutan for not being able to repatriate a single Bhutanese refugee. For him, resettling the Bhutanese refugees in different parts of the world could be a good option in terms of humanitarian perspective but is not a concrete solution as it could create similar situations of oppression in other parts of the world. Mr. Subba questioned the type of democracy in Bhutan where only two political parties closer to the royal family could operate and where media faced a strong state censorship. He saw the declaration of democracy in Bhutan as being nothing except for means for the king to consolidate more power.

Ms. Ujjaini Halim from India was critical of Indian government's adoption of neoliberal policies that has resulted in land grabbing by multinationals, increased violation of human rights especially encroachment of land of indigenous people, the current discussion of pension funds to be invested in the global market etc. She opined that the SAAPE country process should be strengthened in all of South Asia to maximise the impact and should avoid duplications and create synergies with existing country platforms. She also highlighted the necessity to revisit SAAPE's goals and mandate and evaluate the relevance of SAAPE's country level intervention in order to see whether interventions are allowing common people to raise and understand structural discriminations and whether it has developed a common political understanding where we want to reach.

Mr. Ahmed Nizam from Maldives highlighted the political development in Maldives after the adoption of a new constitution in August 2008 which paved the way towards electoral democracy in Maldives. However, the task of democracy consolidation faced a number of challenges. While separation of powers is enshrined in the Constitution, putting those ideals into practice continued to be a challenge and Mohamed Nasheed had to resign on 7 February 2012 and was succeeded by the Vice President Waheed who formed a National Unity Government. Given the cloud of suspicions between political parties and political elites, Mr. Nizam expressed his deep and

grave concern over the on-going political crisis in the Maldives.

Ms. Sharmila Karki from Nepal highlighted the on-going political environment prevailing in Nepal and was of the view that the on-going political wrangling among political parties has not only resulted in the current political instability, political disagreement, and weakened state institutions and mechanisms but has also deprived the general Nepalese population from their political, economic, and cultural rights. She opined that political parties must work in building consensus and help the country to overcome from the present state of emergency prevailing in the country. Ms. Karki said that CSOs in Nepal are actively engaged in various issues to uplift the living condition of vulnerable and marginalised Nepalese population, and called on to strengthen and broaden these activities.

Mr. Karamat Ali from Pakistan expressed his satisfaction over political development taking place in Pakistan for the past 2-3 years. For him, militarisation has been the root cause of obstacles to democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan. However, the weakening of military's dominant position in Pakistan and their action against the terrorist and peoples' movements against the Mullahs and Taliban in recent years has provided a sense of optimism to future politics in Pakistan. Mr. Ali also praised the Pakistani constitution that established some fundamental economic and social rights along with the right to information for people.

Mr. Herman Kumara from Sri Lanka sees poverty level rising whereas military expenditure growing at the cost of other social expenses in Sri Lanka. For instance, the expenditure on defence is higher than that on education which is a staggering amount of two hundred and ninety billion rupees. Land, water, forests, labour laws and some laws related to social welfare are bearing the brunt of government's planning to make the country a favourable tourist destination. Mr. Herman criticised the government's brutal action against civil society organisation, curtailing media freedom and failure to ensure human rights in Sri Lanka and demanded to put an end to this abuse and violation of human rights in Sri Lanka.

4. Thematic Presentations

Dr. Sarba Raj Khadka on behalf of the Secretariat presented the overall activities³ of SAAPE carried out after SAAPE's Third General Assembly 2009 to date. Dr. Khadka's presentation was followed by thematic presentations by the three campaign groups including achievements, challenges and lessons learnt from the campaigns.

Food Sovereignty Campaign

Mr. Prem Dangal (General Secretary - All Nepal Peasants' Federation ANPFa) on behalf of the Campaign group against Land Grabbing presented the major activities carried out during the period. The main focus of the group was advocacy, campaign and lobbying work with the government, peasants and others for ensuring food security, food sovereignty and land rights. The campaign group organised workshops, conferences and public hearings on discussion or debates mainly on the issues of the peasants. They also conducted some research works and networking activities for alliance building.

Floor Interventions:

- An alternative framework has been prepared for Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) in Nepal. There is a steering committee with four representatives from the peasant coalition. Apart from the issues that the government put forward, the committee put forward one more issue that is the necessity to address peasant rights and their representation in both decision and policy making levels. Only then can the road to self-reliant agricultural development be attained. There should be an independent mechanism to monitor the implementation process of the ADS. Another issue which was brought to light before the government was that all subsidies which were phased out due to pressure from international bodies such as the IMF and WB, have to be restored. The government agreed.
- The budget allocation by the government should be allocated to agricultural sector as per the sector's contribution to the country's GDP. For example: if agriculture contributes 35% to GDP then, 35% of the budget should be allocated to agricultural sector.

- Peasants' participation from the Centre level to grassroots to VDC should be ensured.
- Agriculture commission could be an apex body to monitor all those actives and planning.

Women rights campaign

Ms. Sharmila Karki (Member- All Nepal Women's Association ANWA) on behalf of Women Rights Campaign group presented the major activities carried out during the period. The main focus of the group was advocacy, campaign and lobbying work with the government, women groups and other for women's empowerment. The women group in their presentation highlighted various workshops, conferences and public hearings on discussion or debates mainly on the issues of the women rights and gender justice, organised by them. The campaign group also conducted research works and networking activities for alliance building.

Demilitarisation, Democratisation and Social Justice Campaign

Mr. Yadab Banstola, Executive Director of National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice- Nepal and Mr. Shujauddin Qureshi (Pakistan Institute for Labour Education and Research -PILER) on behalf of Demilitarisation, Democratisation and Social Justice Campaign group presented the major activities carried out during the period. The main focus of the group was advocacy, campaign and lobbying work with the government, trade unions, informal sector and other on the issues of Demilitarisation, Democratisation and Social Justice in South Asia. The campaign group has organised workshops, conferences, rallies and demonstrations mainly on the issues. Campaign group has also conducted some research works, published campaign materials and organised networking activities for alliance building.

Floor Intervention:

- National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice- Nepal has been pressurising the government and raising the requirement of an independent commission regarding the ten years of conflict. The Alliance has organised regional conferences to address issues of post-conflict

³ See Annex 3, SAAPE activities and all campaign group activities in detail.

justice where they have invited the victims of the conflict, senior members of various political parties, leaders of civil society movements as well as SAAPE Secretariat members. The Alliance has also published publications on demilitarisation.

Floor Open for Discussions and Suggestions:

- SAAPE has converted from its thematic groups to campaign working mode. There is however, some confusion and implications that the thematic groups have not changed their strategies accordingly. We should have discussions to make the strategy more effective. The campaigns should be of regional nature. However it is necessary to create a link between community level and regional level. Otherwise the campaigns will not be successful. Also, it is important to have a common understanding of budget, the process and programmes of SAAPE. It is important to have a communication officer for coordination of such issues. There has to be a common understanding of the budget, as well as the accountability of the budget should be clear. Another important issue to discuss is the necessity of linkage between the SAAPE campaigns and regular regional processes. It is also important to address the lack of communication among campaign groups. There are many duplications and synergies but there is a gap among the focal points of the campaigns.
- SAAPE should not be planning country processes. It should strictly be a regional South Asian process. Some campaigns cannot be launched in one single country alone. While designing objectives, they should be clear in direction and linkage.
- The definition and concept of gender and empowerment are evolving. Women contribute to GDP. The economy is getting feminised with each day. Health care system has become too expensive for many families to afford. Hence, the care for the sick, elderly and children have become burden for the women. It is also the "cultural nature" of women. If women are not recognised and provided with their sexual and reproductive rights then pregnancy as well as malnutrition will increase. This will take a heavy toll on their health. These issues have to be urgently addressed especially when it comes to budget allocation by governments. Gender is a cross-cutting issue. There has to be increased awareness regarding its importance.
- It is important to relate our issues of neoliberalism, democracy and fundamentalism with the reality we are facing.
- The necessity of the day is cross- learning with each other. We have a lot of learning to do with each other because though our local context maybe different, the specifics are very similar.
- The situation of Afghanistan is very different from those of other South Asian countries. Every day is an emergency situation. We cannot bring people in open areas and hotels or safe areas are very expensive to afford. Afghanistan is supportive of SAAPE groups and country processes, but it has to modify strategies according to its own country situations to make it work.
- Mr. Md. Mujibul Haque Munir, Equity BD, Bangladesh: There are many issues in the South Asian countries. It is not possible for SAAPE to work with all these issue. So, first of all SAAPE has to prioritise the issues, it has to identify the most important issues to work with. To make any campaign with any issue effective in South Asia level, it is also important to make effective campaign in the national levels. Country level processes have to be strengthened and there should be strong coordination among the country members.

5. SAAPE's Strategic Direction 2013-2015

The session focussed on various issues facing the South Asian region and thereby, analysed opportunity and challenges for SAAPE in the current existing scenario. In this session, the participants discussed the strength, weakness and expectations from SAAPE in order to formulate its future strategic direction.

New SAAPE members' feedback regarding their experience with SAAPE

- **Abdul Awal, (Noakhali Rural Development Society-NRDS) Bangladesh:** It is important to analyse how governments and development agencies are promoting neoliberalism. It is also imperative to find three major issues or concerns raised by people from the grassroots level so that SAAPE can link those issues with its three campaigns. Moreover, only then we can combine grassroots level movement with national level. Ongoing movements should also be aligned with ongoing activities. The livelihood of the people of South Asia is at stake and it is imperative to highlight the importance of farmers and communities and their role in achieving sustainable livelihood by themselves. Grassroots development is the call of the day. Also, different countries have different ground realities. Therefore, country alliance should be considered thoroughly at the South Asian level.
- **Harsh Mandar, (Centre for Equity Studies) India:** There should be clarity on areas where SAAPE member countries will work together. All of us are parts of groups and movements in different countries, but how does that add up to more than the sum of the parts? There should be a collective approach to work on themes and campaigns such as Universal Social Protection to be legally enforceable, an urgent need to reform the interrelated caste and economic system of South Asia as well as the issue of Right of minorities and how they are treated by state and fellow citizens should be considered as burning issues to be addressed with immediate need and importance.
- **Samia Ahmed (SUPRO), Bangladesh:** South Asia is rich in natural resources. The development indicators of the West make them rich, but do not make us poor. The issues which must be given urgent attention and action by SAAPE are: Taxation. Budget issues are linked with MNCs. It is a form of globalisation. MNCs dominate the power structures and parliamentarians in South Asian countries. SAAPE has to build strong negotiations and conditions at the higher level with MNCs for the benefit of South Asia. Food security is another main issue. Women Farmers should be recognised while talking about agriculture and food sovereignty. Regarding land ownership, in the case of marginal farmers and *Adibasis* who do not recognise paper work, for them land is a natural resource and *Adibasis* cannot understand the complex mechanisms of land ownership. The water issue is another huge problem of South Asia. Bangladesh, India and Maldives can work jointly together regarding this issue through SAAPE. Natural resources have to be accounted for as it is an issue which goes beyond boundaries.
- **S.B. Subba, Druk National Congress:** The Human Rights situation in South Asia is deplorable, and it will continue to be as long as the Bhutanese refugee issue will not be given serious thought by SAAPE. The struggle for repatriation of Bhutanese refugees should be highlighted in the SAAPE draft. Bhutan has been a faithful member of SAAPE since its inception. Country specific issues should be given due importance and should be dealt as a regional issue.
- **Linda Chhakchhuak, India:** The issues in North-East India are foreign related issues as it shares borders with 4 foreign countries. There are major problems resulting from this cross border linkages. Infiltration from Bangladesh has brought about various problems to ethnic communities who are struggling for their rights and ownership to resources. Both governments are silent in this issue. Hence, land grabbing has a completely different meaning for ethnic people. Land grabbing is institutionalised by the very governments who rule their people. Also, the definition of democracy has to be pondered upon because it's actually about numbers. One cannot trust it completely as there are cases of manufactured democratic movements. The issue of neoliberalism is another big problem. Policies belong to neoliberalism. Governments don't exist anymore as corporates are ruling through democratic institutions and is controlled by a small group of people. Privatisation has deepened its hold, while creating policies which

will have a global structure such as taxation. How do we deal with this upcoming problem? South Asians were never fundamentalists. It is necessary to determine the root causes of such burning problems to find lasting solutions. The role of SAAPE should also be well articulated: it is a think-tank or a campaign mode? Will it work with individual governments, SAARC or the UN has to be clarified. At the moment it is scattered and it is extremely vital to have a clear channel of working for all of us so that we can be more effective to work together.

- **Kiran Kamal Prasad, National Law University, India:** The history of South Asia has its foundations in the caste system. Bonded labour is more than poverty; its root lies in the caste system. Labour is a cross-cutting theme. Bonded labour brings focus on rights of labour as well as excluded communities. Labour rights should be recognised through bonded labour. The Constitution states minimum standards of labour through minimum wages which itself is unconstitutional because they are extremely low. Hence it downgrades identity and dignity of the labourer. In South Asia we have socio-cultural methods to exploit labour through demeaning means of the caste system such as exploiting the labour of Dalits who have become caste-slaves. This issue has to be addressed as it is of vital importance.
- **Md. Mujibul Haque Munir:** Country level processes have to be strengthened and there should be coordination among country groups.
- **Mohammad Saeed Niazi, Civil Society Development Centre, Afghanistan:** More than "what" can SAAPE do, emphasis should be given to "how" SAAPE can work together for significant changes in the lives of the people of South Asia.
- **Ujjaini Halim, Institute for Motivating Self-Employment (IMSE) India:** Agrarian crisis has to be recognised and given its due importance. New issues are emerging on this regard such as rights of small food holders, which goes beyond peasants. We should link agrarian crisis to with other thematic areas - gender, climate change and agricultural investment. How can we focus on small food producers in South Asia? What are the strategies to empower them? There is an on-going debate on responsible investment in agriculture. World Bank is proposing a strategy while civil societies are thinking of alternatives. We can learn from country examples such as creating Watch Processes, for example in India there was a "watch election process". Perhaps

such examples can be replicated as having Watch Processes for MNCs and others.

- **Rakhi Sehgal, India:** It is very important to consider in clarity the role of SAAPE, who conducts and supports its campaign. SAAPE is not the only regional process, there are many others and it would be better to link SAAPE with such regional processes that have similar vision of South Asian regionalism. SAAPE should also be careful regarding the fact that there is no hegemony in bigger countries. It would also be better to conceptualise our issues keeping countries such as Afghanistan, Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh and others in mind. This is also a rich moment in South Asian history to re-envision the role of SAAPE, to analyse the objective reality faced by South Asia, and the root causes of this reality. It is necessary to have analytical thinking on what is the objective reality of South Asia today and then identify the roots causes of what we are facing. It is important to link campaigns to South Asian countries that are advocating on similar issues with their governments. Lastly, it is imperative to not forget that the foundations of SAAPE rest on the SAAPE members trying to build a political consensus and ensuring this through people-centric advocacy. Ours is a political effort. These twin goals should not be forgotten during our activities.

How will SAAPE move forward now?

- **Nesar Ahmad, Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre, India:** A suggestion could be that SAAPE can have country chapters, so as to make it easier for movements and campaigns to connect in similar issues within countries.
- **Manizha Barakhi, Afghanistan:** SAAPE should have a sharing session on "Lessons Learnt by SAAPE" so as to look back at mistakes and our way forward. There should also be a communication strategy to link countries together. This strategy could be rotated from country to country so as to ease pressure at the Central level. New comers to SAAPE should be given separate orientations regarding SAAPE for their better understanding.
- **Balram Banskota, ANPFa Nepal:** We should focus on the root causes of poverty in South Asia especially regarding means of production. Agriculture and its contribution to the GDP must be highlighted.
- **Raz Mohammed Dalili, Sanayee Development Organisation (SDO) Afghanistan:** There should be an emergency strategy of SAAPE so as to have

- a focal point in each country to take immediate actions regarding emergency situations. Perhaps one person in each country can be nominated as a focal point who will communicate with all, and we can come together to advocate against such injustice. This will help us to stand up together as South Asia.
- **Karamat Ali, Pakistan:** It is not necessary to waste time emphasising country level works because it is more important to work for a South Asian campaign as a whole. Campaigning in solidarity is the need of the day.
 - **Sita Poudel, ANWA Nepal:** We must identify the problems prevailing in South Asia. Poverty has multi-dimensions, it goes beyond borders. There is a paradox on how we work. Sometimes we say we need to work on grassroots level and sometimes at regional level. Therefore, there should be clarity on the activities undertaken by the SAAPE process. On the other hand, South Asia despite being an agrarian economy, there is a challenge of establishing progressive agrarian reform affecting the livelihood of majority of population in the region. We must also identify various missing groups working at grassroots level and link them with the SAAPE process. Most importantly we need an efficient regional coordination among us to promote better communication and effectiveness.
 - **Mohiuddin Ahmad, Bangladesh:** It is important to have self-reflection about the things we have failed to achieve. Are we multiplying our partners or have we been able to accelerate this process? We need stimulus. We should scale down our activities such as how many campaigns can we handle effectively at a time. SAAPE as a regional platform must not be involved in similar regional activities being looked after by other regional programmes. We should concentrate on relatively untouched areas in compliance with our original ambitions and our platform politics. We should work on two areas consistently: i) positive contribution to on-going discourse on issues related to poverty and ii) agenda of People's SAARC.
 - **Prem Dangal, Nepal:** We have raised 3 campaign programmes. This has to be formalised in national level. So far, we prepared a position paper at country level, and that should be regionalised. The character of the campaign must be discussed. It should not be limited to only workshops and seminars. We should work on networking, linkages and invite organisations and individuals who are specialised in certain issues to interact.
- There must be lobbying and advocacy at regional and international levels. SAAPE can facilitate this process.
- **Farooq Tariq, Pakistan:** We went on from thematic groups to campaigns. And it's not been long that this has been initiated, yet some of us are already giving new suggestions. This could be considered as a type of anarchist trend. We should stay consistent to some methods we initiated as it will take some time to see results. Thematic groups should give importance and consideration to address Religious Fundamentalism. We should spread the consciousness of acting as South Asians together to address our national issues. We should promote linkages with other national bodies as well. Solidarity on the South Asian front is the call of the day.
 - **Linda, India:** SAAPE should have regional vision. Greatest crisis in South Asia right now is the crisis in Afghanistan. If we don't work on this crisis, it will drag all of us down like a chain reaction. Perhaps we could work on a coalition for a smooth transition for Afghanistan post 2014 and build pressure on the government and international community. We should have workshops on trade policies being implemented on South Asia by World Bank, IMF etc. to have people's views on the impact on these policies. Exchange programme for activists to build friendship could be initiated. We should work on an Emergency strategy to address tragic incidents. Special papers on the Sri Lankan situation could also be initiated to bring out the truth.
 - **Rokeya Kabir, Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangh (BNPS) Bangladesh:** We need to overcome the question of minorities whether it is by gender, religion, caste system or others. Citizenship is provided only for passport and voting rights but now we want to expand it. Entitlement of full citizenship will help to overcome the question of minority. SAAPE as a regional political entity must collaborate with other movements in South Asia. SAAPE has a responsibility to discuss about national issues as a regional issue to bring forth for the governments of our countries to sit up and take notice. Campaigns are articulation of voices from the grassroots level to the regional, national and international level. SAAPE must address the different structural issues of poverty.
 - **Dr. Arjun Karki, Nepal:** SAAPE was primarily established to deal with regional issues. An issue does not have to be an issue for all countries, it

can be a one country issue but it can have regional significance. We need to focus on one major campaign. Other issues can come under other advocacy and campaign front. Campaigns have to be regional in character. We have talked about social protection, issues of refugees, militarisation, gender but we cannot deal with all these issues facing us. We have to focus on one issue so as to make the campaign effective. We need to build a regional campaign that captures the social movement of South Asia. Therefore, we need to prioritise issues and make sure that national campaign will have regional significance. We also have to give importance and strengthen the People SAARC. It can be a front that can deal with all other issues that we have discussed as well as bring together all other major advocacy groups. We could have one major campaign - food sovereignty because it deals with multiple interrelated issues such as land grabs, agrarian reform, larger issue of climate change and sustainable development. We can continue with other two campaigns as well, but perhaps we should make one major. We should think about it. We are vibrant and we articulate our issues and push our agendas well in Annual General Meeting and General Assemblies, but when we go back home we forget about it. We want to see strong commitment and volunteerism. We decided on three campaigns and we should see to it that we achieve them and not just on paper. Sometimes we do not have money for one campaign while in the other hand there have been cases of under-spending where the campaign did not take off. It is also difficult to raise funds as we are critical of funding anyway. Regional and national campaigns should have linkage and regional significance between them. All three campaigns need to do that.

- **Prof. Babu Mathew, India:** India already has a powerful Right to Food campaign. So SAAPE could join that. That campaign has two parts: 1) distribution and 2) production. The Indian campaign primarily focuses on distribution and Nepal on production. So, there is a possibility of India's component to link up with that of Nepal.

Subsistence farmers in India are in high number and this issue can be connected to Right to Seeds and Climate Change. Regarding Dr. Karki's suggestion to focus on one campaign, in six months' time from now, our steering committee should analyse the progress of the campaigns, and if any has minimal impact, then the proposal should be taken into consideration.

- **Raz Mohammed Dalili, Afghanistan:-** I would like to emphasise two issues to be put in our strategy, 1) Situation of Afghanistan and the aftermath of the withdrawing of international soldiers. Our government is weak and what would happen after the international community leaves without a strategy. After 2014, the region will be at risk from fundamentalism especially in Afghanistan and Pakistan. 2) Emergency cases which are coming up and the role of SAAPE when these kinds of incidents happen should be specified. Each country should have a focal point to be active when these kind of emergency cases occur.
- **Prof. Anuradha Mitra Chenoy, India:** Afghanistan is in a difficult situation and speaking from liberal narrative point of view which is a small group in Afghanistan, we are worried about the Taliban and the kind of distinctions being made by international community. They are distinguishing between good and extremists Taliban, and it seems clear there will be a temporary ceasefire. Taliban wants just a temporary negotiation. They don't want partial power hence nobody is allowed on the negotiation table. The first step should be to bring civil societies and women on the negotiating table and this process should be transparent. American occupiers or international forces and Taliban should not strike a deal behind everyone's backs. The peacekeeping forces which remain have to ensure that there is a regional solution so that some regions are not kept out for they will make an alliance with the Taliban. There are many complications, therefore, transparency is necessary and civil society should be a parallel part of it.

6. Session on 'SAAPE Poverty and Vulnerability Report 2013'

SAAPE has been publishing its Poverty and Vulnerability Report every 3 years since 2003 in which not only root causes of poverty and proven alternatives at the grassroots are presented but also pertinent issues linked to poverty eradication needing organised voices at the grass root people's level are also covered by the report.

Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal has been appointed as the lead author of *SAAPE Poverty and Vulnerability Report 2013* and the report is expected to be released by mid-June 2013. Dr. Khanal at the Fourth General Assembly of SAAPE presented the Floor with a detailed and articulate presentation of the poverty and vulnerability report (2013) of SAAPE. Dr. Khanal highlighted the main objective of the poverty report to:

- Assess the roots of multiple crises viz., financial, energy, food and environmental in South Asian countries,
- examine transmission mechanism of multiple crisis and their ramifications on vulnerability and poverty in South Asia at overall country level in general and various socio-economic groups in particular focusing on issues like food sovereignty and women's right among most deprived in the light of social security and justice system in place in different countries,
- assess more specifically the effects of globalisation on informal economy in general and women workers in particular linking macroeconomic/labour policy with the poorest people/women taking larger legitimate share of women in national resources into account,
- review the trends in militarisation and democratisation in South Asian countries based on country specific situation,
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of on-going movement at the grass roots to counter crisis prone anti-people policies and programmes backed by country case studies on issues like food sovereignty, women's rights, militarisation and democratisation in the light of current survival strategies and actions of the vulnerable population, and

- in the light of above, propose alternatives for generating synergies to the people's movement at the grassroots and also creating pressures to the governments in the South Asian region to stop militarisation and strengthen social security and justice system as a part of sustainable poverty eradication strategy in the South Asian region.

After Dr. Khanal's presentation the floor was open for queries, discussions and suggestions where various participants raised their concerns and made suggestions regarding the report.

- **Prem Dangal:** It would be helpful to know how the country report was made, so as to be able to contribute in its formation. In the report it is important to highlight the fight against imperialism and climate politics as well as where poverty truly lies. We want self-reliant agricultural policies rather than expert-led policies. Green Revolution should now be stopped to give way to self-sufficiency. People's right to take part in decision making process and social movements has to be strengthened. This report should also be compatible with our campaign so that it will guide us theoretically as well as ideologically.
- **Rakhi Sehgal:** Instead of outsourcing country reports, it would be better to form a team in the Secretariat and arrange workshops in different countries. The team can work on accumulating and writing information for the reports so that it retains a systematic strategy and coherence. The workshop will also be able to invite new members to SAAPE network and help make it more dynamic.
- **Harsh Mandar:** While focusing on poverty, it is important to stress on social elements of poverty in South Asia. Also, what is South Asian about this report? It would be better to have a South Asian Perspective on poverty, have thematic wise chapters rather than country chapters, and the issue of poverty and vulnerability should be dealt as an issue which spills across borders in South Asia.
- **M. S. Niazi:** There was no report from Afghanistan in this report. I would appreciate if some guidelines are shared for us to contribute to this report.

- **Farooq Tariq:** There is a crisis of capitalism. That has to be dealt in more detail. Policies promoted by capitalism affect all of South Asia. The issue of debt should also be highlighted. There is no alternative to debt. Linkages of poverty and repayment of foreign debt should be highlighted along with the connection between neo-liberalism agendas and poverty. Also, the linkage between religions to poverty where many believe that poverty is something which is God-gifted, must be addressed.
- **Balram Banskota:** Alternative economy suggestions should be highlighted in the report to eliminate LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation) which will help to reduce poverty, reclaim our rights to natural resources and implementation of genuine agrarian reform.
- **Sharmila Karki:** The SAAPE Report should be reader friendly and women friendly. Jargons have to be avoided and a separate chapter on "Feminisation of poverty" has to be included.
- **Karamat Ali:** Instead of compiling different country reports, it is better to synthesise it and make it a South Asian Report. The necessity of regional planning, coordination and South Asian solutions to our current predicament have to be addressed in the report. So that we can come up with a solid conclusion to help improve direction of our campaigns.
- **Sarba Raj Khadka:** It is important to consider the language of the report, so that it will be easier for SAAPE countries to translate this into their local languages. This will help our readers to understand the report. It is important to share the report with all for efficient result. It is also difficult to understand whether it is crisis of capitalism or we are the one who are in crisis. Capitalism is recovering but we are dealing with the debris that capitalism has left. It is vital to ponder upon alternatives of capitalism.
- **Mohiuddin Ahmed:** This report is a regional report; we don't need a country specific report. It should reflect our regional campaign and should give South Asian flavours. The report should contribute towards value addition. The report should be critique of the on-going policies. Gini-coefficient data for the past 20 years will bring the true picture of Neoliberal policies. Similarly the chapters in the report should bring out its relation with gender. Also, we should manage our contingencies without extending the deadlines.

Recorded live broadcast videos of SAAPE 4th General Assembly are available at:

<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/saape-4rth-general-assembly-2012>

The screenshot displays the Ustream interface for the 'SAAPE 4th General Assembly 2012' channel. The browser address bar shows the URL www.ustream.tv/channel/saape-4rth-general-assembly-2012. The channel name is 'SAAPE 4th General Assembly 2012' with 1 follower. The main video player shows a live broadcast of a woman speaking at a microphone, with a timestamp of 46:52 / 54:33 and an 'OFF AIR' indicator. The sidebar on the right lists recorded videos:

Video Title	Duration	Recorded	Views
Prof. Anuradha Chenoy (JNU), Part II	09:33	4 months ago	76 views
Prof. Anuradha Chenoy (JNU), Part I	12:37	4 months ago	22 views
Mr. Harman Kumara	13:30	4 months ago	47 views
Mr. Karamat Ali	17:54	4 months ago	13 views
Mr. Sharmila Karki	19:52	4 months ago	0 views

7. People's SAARC Session

The official SAARC being unable to fulfil its promises, the Peoples' SAARC was established in the mid-1990s to organise consultations parallel to the official SAARC Summit with two main objectives: i) to provide a platform for the peoples of the SAARC countries to consult, discuss and devise strategies to address common issues from a people's perspective; and ii) to play the role of a watchdog to the SAARC process towards its commitments; identify areas of collaboration and gaps in existing mechanisms; and build collective pressure for pro-poor policies. In its Fourth General Assembly, SAAPE dedicated one of the sessions for Peoples' SAARC where Professor Anuradha Chenoy made a presentation on "Towards a people friendly foreign policy for all SAARC countries."

Prof. Chenoy in her presentation highlighted the following points:

- Nationalism still remains the basis of all South Asian states foreign policy and because of this the concept of regionalism remains weak in the region. The changes taking place in the foreign policies of the South Asian countries are motivated to match neoliberal globalisations, but on the other hand, government's accountability to its citizens remains weak.
- There remains wide divergence on South Asian countries' perceptions about each other. India wants to protect its geo-strategic interests, isolate Pakistan, and balance China in order to establish its unchallenged primacy in the region. But other South Asian countries are suspicious of India's hegemonic attitude and use 'India threat' to control and calibrate their own political systems, minorities; opposition and are bent towards balancing India with China.
- Social movements in South Asia are basically inward looking with nationalist frame and have neglected the foreign policy debates. It is necessary that South Asian Social and Peoples movements link the domestic and the regional problems as one state problems could be better resolved collectively at the regional level. Civil Societies in South Asia should also raise their voice on several issues like de-militarisation, reforming of international institutions, UN, transparency, Demystifying disputes, Liberalising visa regimes, resolving river water dispute, Amendment of SAARC rule to discuss bilateral issues etc.

Floor open for discussions and queries:

- **Faisal Bin Majid, BNPS, Bangladesh:** Countries use the "Indian threat" to manipulate and keep their power. But this is largely due to the attitude of the government of India who supply the fuel of this attitude. It is the responsibility of the Indian civil society to break this and show the attitude that Indian politicians are to blame not the Indians in general.
- **Rokeya, Bangladesh:** We need to be able to transcend our borders regarding poverty, caste, ethnicity and many more while talking of foreign policy. Also women's issues are intricately tied to their peripheral issues such as rape, dowry and others. The politics of gender have to be addressed. It has not been given serious consideration yet. Democracy is another topic we need to address while we speak of South Asian foreign policy level discussion. Various dimensions of migration are coming up these days such as the recent problem of Rohingya in Bangladesh. How we as SAAPE can go forward to mitigate such incidents? In one country there are two kinds of people: the rich and the poor. How do we deal with issues along the border of gender, caste, ethnicity and many more while speaking of foreign policy? Nationalism built on territorial border can be transcended.
- **Gopal Krishna Siwakoti, INHURED International, Nepal:** There have been cases of cross border forced migration which are a natural phenomenon these days in South Asia. Migrants have not been treated well even within legal framework. States have clear doctrines; Secretarisation of migration for the interest of national sovereignty and security. There are bilateral and trilateral interests, political pressure and diplomatic protocol to be maintained. In this connection, how do we civil societies work in terms of protecting those people who are crossing the border through legal frameworks within international standards?
- **Prof. Babu Mathew:** Is it true for sub-imperialists to have common interest in foreign policy? And what do countries of particular regions minus India: how do they take forward their interests more effectively?

- **Linda, Mizoram, India:** Development is also militarised. There are cases of people resisting certain projects where military is sent to safeguard those projects.
- **Karamat Ali, Pakistan:** Continuing militarisation and intensification of 'nuclearisation' has threatened the peace and security in the region. There is no regional mechanism under the SAARC process to settle the dispute arising from this development. There is no dispute solution mechanism. Moreover, there is no water sharing mechanism in the region. Could you think of some type of South Asian mechanism or treaty to deal with these issues? Similarly, on the issue of minorities, how can we find solution to such problems in the regional context? Is there any regional safeguard that South Asia can initiate? As the international law does not guarantee rights to such people.

Prof. Anuradha Chenoy's Response: There was an attempt to resolve issues regarding Indo-Bangladesh border and water dispute but it could not be solved because of West Bengal chauvinism where the chief minister stopped it. There are various possibilities to resolve our conflicts if we alter the SAARC mechanism which does not address bilateral issues. However, a People's SAARC can change that and then bilateral issues or issues of environment, migration, water sharing and management can be addressed. To pressurise India to agree to such term, civil societies and countries can put pressure on G20 so that India might yield. Social movements must also pressurise countries to resolve many issues having regional implication. Therefore it is imperative for South Asia to come together through a SAARC union as People's SAARC.

It is also necessary to look at various issues from gender perspectives. Women are in public places now. It makes a difference. However, we need to have balanced positions where women in power, are gender sensitive and feminists.

There is a difference as to how India and South Asia function together. It is a big emerging power. Indian policies can be quite a nuance at some moments. India provided assistance to Maldives and an Indian company got an airport contract. Maldives nationalised it and then India said they would cancel their aid, but they did not. Hence, it depends on the pressure from businesses as well as civil societies. Civil societies have to keep up the pressure to transform the political scenario. It should consider complexities and deal with it case by case

Indian civil society should be sensitive in issues of migration. India has not said anything about Tibetan migrants and labour migrants from Nepal because of its political convenience. SAAPE needs to encourage national alliances of people's movements and for them to be part of SAAPE projects. They also need to be part of SAARC and SAAPE should try and build a dialectical sort of relation with them. Only then there will be a response.

It is important to understand that women's movements are burdened with their own internal movements such as honour killings and dowry. They have no time and are too tired to give attention to regional problems. A People's SAARC Secretariat would be a huge development towards taking on responsibility regarding such issues and then issuing statements on behalf of everyone as well as receive contributions from each government. Governments now have funding but they will create their own alternatives if South Asia does not push for its rights.

8. Country Resolutions

SAAPE Resolution on Afghanistan

The 4th General Assembly of the South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) inaugurated in Kathmandu on 18 -19 December 2012 with the principal theme of "People's Struggles for Poverty Eradication Concerning a New Development Agenda in South Asia". Over 80 members from the eight countries of the region participated in the General Assembly, representing people's organisations, labourer movements, women movements, civil society actors, youth, academia, human rights activists and grassroots social movements. Afghanistan's current situation was one of serious topic of discussion during the conference that the following issues raised and agreed by the participants:

By building on the experience gained in the last decade, and by learning from the lost opportunities, Afghanistan and the International Community, based on a common vision, should focus their efforts on bringing security and stability to Afghanistan and in the region in order to prevent citizens of Afghanistan and other countries from being victims of regional terrorism and unrest.

Emphasising on human rights values and the protection of the achievements made in the last decade, Afghanistan should strive to further its capability in crisis management, fighting corruption, and improving the delivery of social services and development. This also requires the Afghan government and the international community to join hands to further strengthen democratic processes and institutions, protect fundamental rights and freedom of press, and promote human rights principles and end the prevailing culture of impunity. Both parties must increase their joint efforts in promoting people's trust in a participatory system of governance and the Afghan government's ability to deliver justice to the victims of war and improve living conditions for the citizens of Afghanistan.

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned issues, General assembly SAAPE proposes the following points to the SAARC countries and international community. We believe these issues will help Afghanistan and unified vision for the future of the Afghan people and the country as a whole, especially in relation to the transition process, the long-term commitment of the International Community, and the peace and reconciliation process:

1. Transition Process

Expectation from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- The fourth phase of Transition should be based on a thorough evaluation of the first phase and lessons learned, with full consideration of the necessary capacities, resources (human and financial), and the demand and satisfaction of the people,
- Equal attention must be paid to the civilian dimension of the transition process (quality of social service delivery without any gender or ethnic discrimination, good governance, effective measures to curb corruption, promotion and protection of human rights, and reform and independence of Judiciary) in parallel to the military aspect of transition (qualitative and quantitative support to Afghan security institutions),
- To give priority to implementing the rule of law, supporting and strengthening democratic process and institutions (i.e. reform and independence of electoral process, in particular), and to merit-based appointments,
- To strengthen healthy working relations between the judiciary, legislative, and executive, and specifically to establish a professional, effective, and responsive cabinet.
- Conducting upcoming presidential and parliament free and fair elections on time according to the constitution without any interfere of the government.
- To consider, based on past experience and the ineffectiveness of previous methods of one way offer and privileges, the Peace and Reintegration Strategy is a necessary and inseparable ingredient that must complements and support good governance, curbing corruption, independent judiciary reforms, ending culture of impunity, and promoting justice,
- To uphold human rights values and civil norms in all negotiations and efforts for peace and reconciliation initiatives as a basis for clearly making a distinction between friend and foe and in the implementation of its polices with a clear vision.

- To implement, based on its international obligations and commitment at the Kabul Conference, Bonn Conference the action plan of transitional justice, while taking practical measures for improving the rule of law, justice and due processes.
- To no subordination of human rights values, women's rights, fundamental and civil rights in any political efforts for peace and reintegration process.
- To consider mechanisms for reintegration that supports justice and accountability for armed groups who wish to join the peace process, while ensuring that they no longer remain a threat to the people and the country.
- Extend its cooperation for the implementation of sustainable development (poverty eradication schemes, support to local industries, agriculture, irrigation, commerce, communication networking, and other infrastructure facilities) in order to lead Afghanistan to self-sufficiency and prosperity,
- Strengthen the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's capacity and capability in furthering its efforts to fight terrorism, drug trafficking and poppy cultivation, based on the decade-long experience in fighting terrorism (at the regional and international levels),
- Assist through technical, financial, and security support - the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in conducting a national census in order to have reliable figures and statistics needed for sustainable development and lasting economic growth.

Expectation from the International Community:

- To support systems and institutions (particularly civil society and democratic institutions) and focus on infrastructures rather than supporting individuals and their dependent groups,
- To focus on supporting and building the National Security Forces (ANA & ANP), and not quasi and parallel security setups (Arbaki, local police, and security companies),
- To continue political, technical, and financial support to state building and nation building efforts in Afghanistan, and exert the required political pressure over regional spoilers meddling in and challenging security in Afghanistan,
- Not to favour strategies that lead to short-term political solutions and speedy reintegration process as a premature exit strategy,
- Not to overshadow the regional and international dimension of the conflict in Afghanistan, and, to assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRA) to address the root causes of the external factors (through military, political and economic pressures),
- To formalise its presence, and based on the Geneva Conventions, to strictly avoid civilian casualties in order to limit the political exploitation of fundamentalists and regional spoilers,
- To uphold and apply universal human rights values in Afghanistan in all humanitarian and development assistance (civil and military), while supporting the complementary roles of civil society institutions in consultation, service delivery, humanitarian assistance, public awareness raising and advocacy initiatives,
- Develop unified and practical mechanisms and procedures in fighting corruption, and enable the IRA to implement it, while providing support to the monitoring roles of Afghan civil society institutions for good governance and responsive government.
- Regularly evaluate aid effectiveness in terms of service delivery and monitoring roles of civil society organisations, as well as elected institutions/entities.

Expectation from SAARC Countries:

- Effectively explore and leverage existing capacities and capabilities available within Afghan Civil Society institutions, as de facto potential, for social services' delivery and implementation of the National Priority Programmes (NPP).
- Support System and institutions (particularly civil society and democratic institutions).
- Provide structural and continued support to monitoring, consulting, and leveraging the complementary roles of civil society and human rights defenders, and women's rights activists on responsive, inclusive, and good governance.
- Simultaneously support advocacy efforts of civil society institutions and human rights defenders in the protection of war victims and the promotion of mechanisms for addressing war crimes while building the relevant capacities of the IRA.

- To Support and protect, both politically and technically, the democratic and civil society institutions, as the connecting and bridging entities between regional powers, and in particular between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

SAAPE Resolution on Nepal

Deeply disturbed at the virtual derailing of the Constitution-Making Process with admittedly grave consequences for the overall process of democratisation in Nepal, we, the participants at the 4th SAAPE General Assembly held on 18-19 December 2012, strongly urge the political leadership of Nepal to:

Urgently develop the broadly needed consensus on the formation of the new interim government so that the path is cleared for the creation of a new Constitution on an urgent basis;

The people of Nepal who laid down tremendous sacrifices to achieve complete democratisation of the state and the society eminently deserve to have a Constitution that reflects their interests, aspirations and hopes, and be governed by a genuine constitutional order.

SAAPE Resolution on Sri Lanka

We, the representatives of SAAPE general assembly learned the alarming situation of human rights violations, challenges of the rule of law, violation of the rights of ethnic minorities, erosion of democratic values of Sri Lankan society, narrowing space for dissent and repression of media freedom, loss of people's land due to land grabbing which lead to deteriorate the socio-economic situation of the people challenges to the life of the human right defenders, are concern about the situation of Sri Lanka.

At the same time, we learned that there is no progress being made on the life of the war affected communities in the north and the eastern provinces of the country though the whole world expected the dividends of peace will be reached those affected communities. The so called development projects have not changed the life condition of those affected people, women who are the heads of the families and the children's life in particular. The most vulnerable communities need more attention and assistance for their livelihoods development, resettlement and security.

We believe that in order to demand the rights, people could organise peaceful, non- violent demonstrations which are acceptable in any democratic society.

We urge Sri Lankan authorities to respect the universal human rights procedures, follow the human rights agreements and provide democratic space for the citizens of Sri Lanka to raise the voices in peaceful manner. We condemn the violations of the rights of the minorities while oppressing their peaceful demonstrations, the right to commemorate their loved ones those who lost their lives during the war, provide more space for interactions among ethnic minorities and majority Sinhalese community for reconciliation and long lasting peace in Sri Lankan society.

We expect Government of Sri Lanka will take all possible steps to implement the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) recommendations which would be a basis for the building up good will and respect the rights of minorities as well as socio, economic, cultural, political and civic rights of Sri Lankan people as a whole.

9. SAAPE 4th General Assembly Declaration

Kathmandu Declaration, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) Fourth General Assembly, 18-19 December 2012

We the members of the Fourth General Assembly, of SAAPE, having met at Kathmandu, Nepal from 18-20, December, 2012, do hereby, unanimously adopt this declaration.

We have assembled at this fourth General Assembly as South Asians drawn from Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Maldives and Nepal and taken note of the emerging situation in our respective countries and in South Asia.

We are deeply disturbed at the all-round degradation in the quality of life that the majority of South Asians are experiencing in their respective countries. We witness increasing deprivations in the human, cultural, economic, social and political spheres of our people.

The average South Asian loves to live in peace and harmony with her neighbours both within and beyond the borders that artificially divide us. When South Asians meet in each other's country, there is so much of joy, happiness and fraternity, irrespective of religion, language, colour of skin or political affiliation. Yet there is so much of violence, cruelty, murder, rape, arson and looting, when extraneous thinking is injected into the locality, the class room, the market place or the place of worship.

The story of Malala bears symbolic witness to what we have stated above. This little girl of Swat region in Pakistan decided that it was her birth right to go to school, but to our utter dismay, certain fundamental forces shot at her and tried to kill her. But this brave could not be killed, in spite of a bullet even in her head. She not only survived but she inspires us with her determination to live as an educated girl against the propaganda of fundamentalists. We, especially, on behalf of all south Asian Girl children rejoice that she has recovered and is alive and smiling.

Malala has upheld the right of girl children to attend school in exercise of her fundamental right to education and it is Taliban that is put to shame for this criminal act against an innocent but determined girl child of Pakistan. We wish to adopt her as the daughter of South Asia and call upon all Governments, educational institutions and all child friendly organisations in our region to introduce scholarships for girl children's education by

collecting donations in her name from all citizens of South Asia. Hence forth all school books should have a lesson in their text books explaining the story of Malala and explain how and why she fought for the right to education for all girl children.

Simultaneously we take note of the tragic reality in all south Asian countries where millions of children go to bed hungry and grow up in acute malnutrition resulting in stunting and underweight, thus affecting their ability to grow up, study and become good citizens. This is happening after more than two decades of neoliberal growth in all countries of South Asia.

The story of hunger, unemployment, disease, illiteracy, homelessness, child labour, gender inequality, discrimination and deprivation, especially against the excluded social groups of our region is writ large in every corner of South Asia.

It is considered opinion and our lived experience that ever since the invasion of neoliberalism into our lands this condition of all round human misery stands further accentuated by the day.

Unfortunately, our leaders, who represent the elite of South Asia are united in importing this economic model which has spread inequality, human deprivation and erosion of the quality of life of the millions.

We must remember that this importation of the economic policies is primarily meant to help the crisis ridden western world of their own problems. This model is inspired by the 'Washington Consensus' (created by the united action of the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and the treasury of the USA) has been imposed on us either through the Structural Adjustment Programme or the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and not through the democratic consensus of our people.

Indeed democracy has also been a casualty in South Asia. There are continuing obstacles to our progress along democratic lines. Recent events in different parts of South Asia, however, witness the rise of democratic struggles. The People, the Bar Associations, the Judiciary, the constitution making process, the media and above all civil society has been fighting relentlessly for advancing and consolidating democratic rights. Unfortunately there are attacks and setbacks in our endeavour and most recently these threats have come from

fundamentalists of different religious origin and even from the ruling circles of the elite as we have witnessed in Sri Lanka.

At the same time we renew our pledge to Peace and we remain committed to the peaceful path of struggle. We call upon all people's movements and all forms of protest and mobilisation in south Asia to shun the path of armed insurrection. There are too many instances where innocent people are the victims of cross fire and it is time for us to learn that the rich traditions of peace and non-violence, in the world and in our region alone must inspire and guide us in our struggle for a new world-even if it is against imperialism aided and abetted by the local elite for their own aggrandisement.

We therefore pledge ourselves in favour of a secular, democratic, humanist order free from discrimination, denial of dignity, and artificial boundaries that impede our travel and our friendships, especially at a people to people level. We want a society that guarantees us all Human rights, especially that which is contained in the international Bill of Rights.

We want a people friendly Rule of Law based political order which is guaranteed by a constitutional arrangement in which Sovereignty rests entirely with the people, with the right to recall corrupt officials along with machinery that can put such usurpers of power behind the bars, after due process of law.

We call upon all our friends in Civil Society and in people friendly political processes to wake up to the needs and aspirations of ordinary people and to strive for a new world order and to make efforts for the same in South Asia. Let us prepare well for the Peoples SAARC and use the coming opportunity to ascertain the will of the widest sections of civil society and move forward to defeat the forces of fundamentalism, elite rule, exploitation, discrimination based on gender or social group and end all evil within the South Asia.

It is important that SAAPE help to appraise the situation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. International community has not been able to significantly contribute to ease this pending problem. There has been no sign of immediate repatriation of the refugees by the Nepal government.

Migration across borders and its impact on receiving states such as the issues in North-East India are foreign related issues as it shares borders with four foreign countries. There are major problems resulting from this cross border linkages. Infiltration from Bangladesh has brought about various problems to ethnic communities who are struggling for their rights and ownership to resources. Hence, land grabbing has a completely different meaning for ethnic people.

There should be an emergency strategy of SAAPE so as to have a focal point to take immediate actions which will help us to stand up as South Asia, against tragic incidents such as the case of Malala. A People's Coalition has to be formed and perhaps it can be linked with the Special Team about to be formed for Afghanistan.

Trade Measures should have a "Look East" policy. We should critically look at on trade policies being implemented in South Asia by World Bank, IMF etc. to have people's views on the impact on these policies.

'Rights to Minorities' and 'No to Majoritarianism,' full citizenship with all entitlements to minorities.' There have been cases of cross border inceptions where migrants have not been treated well even within legal framework. States have clear doctrines and secretarisation of migration for the interest of national sovereignty and security. There are bilateral and trilateral interests, political pressure and diplomatic protocol to be maintained. In this connection, civil societies should work together to develop a mechanism to work in terms of protecting people who are crossing the border.

People's SAARC and Official SAARC relationship has to be linked and maintained so that the two bodies do not work in isolation.

India must not give military aid to South Asia. It is the responsibility of the Indian civil society to break this and show the attitude that Indian politicians are to blame not the Indians in general.

Land and natural resource grab in South Asia is the serious issue that has led to the alienation of people from their rights to live and rights to livelihoods. The land grabbing process must be stopped urgently.

Annex: 1

Professor Babu Mathew's Inaugural Remarks

The consistency of SAAPE's internal coherence despite the fact that the members come from different countries is highly commendable. The effort and dedication of all the SAAPE members from its inception is much appreciated and valued. No member has gone back without feeling inspired or challenged. The SAAPE senior members, the Secretariat and RRN also deserve their share of appreciation for their immense contribution in the success of SAAPE. There has been an amazing progress regarding rights to food, women rights, peace and demilitarisation, democracy, labour rights and more. SAAPE has questioned the model of development, been an eternal critique of neoliberalism, patriarchy, and fundamentalism and though it has never supported capitalism it has unfortunately been a victim of capitalism. It has never forgiven American Imperialism and has never abandoned socialism. It is noteworthy to mention here how SAAPE has been significantly affected by Nepal's Jana Andolan-II.

The fall of the Soviet Union paved the way towards the concept of a unipolar world; the notion that the end of history has come, for a new dogmatism to take over the world. However, such dogmatism is difficult to recognise as it is disguised not just by market forces but through monopoly capitalism, supported by military industrial complex, which has led the world to have repeated mergers, acquisitions and enhancement of the power of multinational corporations which are the backbone of global order and imposed on all of us.

In spite of the crisis that we saw in this form of globalisation, we are not asking fundamental questions. It is important to ask and ponder about such fundamental questions. The way, with which MNCs tried to swallow the world, in spite of that we have seen the crisis. And the best way to illustrate this crisis is: examples of the biggest banks in the USA, insurance companies and General Motors show us how and where state intervention is necessary. The foundation of neo-liberalism lies in privatisation. Privatisation failed and we must reflect on this; why this happened to such a form of capitalisation.

The world should be aware about the crisis of over-

production, which is the crisis of capitalisation and purchasing capacity. People across the world are deprived of their ability to buy; this crisis is repeatedly manifesting but the crisis is camouflaged by this notion explained as "manufacturing consent". The hegemony of the ideology of neoliberalism has suffered a fundamental fracture and in spite of suffering that fracture it pretends as if nothing has happened. It cannot hide the crisis even in Europe such as in Greece, Spain and Italy and their repeated austerity measures while their citizens are losing their jobs, pension funds, and old age benefits. If accumulation at the hands of the most advanced sections of capitalism cannot solve the problems of Europe we cannot expect that system to solve the problems of Asia. This is a crisis that cannot even solve the inner circle of capitalism. They will continue with their consumerism by continuing to exploit the whole world. And hence Africa, Asia, Latin America are being continually exploited. South Asians have a huge responsibility because one fourth of the world lives here. One third of the population in India has been beneficiaries of neoliberalism especially with its success regarding information technology. It has generated jobs and expectations and satisfied certain consumer demands and therefore there are malls where people can go and purchase things. Information technological revolution is a potential ally of the ordinary people. However, two thirds of the people must be identified as well; social groups consisting of Dalits, Adibasis and Muslims comprising the 400 million work forces. The major question to be addressed is what happens to them after neo-liberalism? De-unionisation occurs; the Western world has killed people's organisations. The obstacles that have been placed in the freedom of association is something we should overcome as the highest pedestal of our struggles. It has also led to the erosion of real wages. Social security measures have disappeared. India has completed two decades of neoliberalism growth. 50% of children below 6 years of age have been victims of malnutrition, with stunted growth and even permanent brain damage. So what kind of future does neoliberalism hold? The continued growth of neoliberalism is based on the continuous exploitation of natural resources, land and cheap labour.

When we are thinking about the strategy of SAAPE, it is essential for civil societies to think about strategies which focus on the fulfilment of basic needs of citizens. Regarding Right to Education we must celebrate, especially because of Malala. She teaches South Asians what we must do. In India there has been formal progress on this regard such as judicial pronouncements, statutory formulation, but when it comes to implementation there is a huge lag. Yet it is a progress that we welcome. A great supplement to these basic needs is a piece of legislation which we got through because of civil society efforts: the right to information. The “Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan” of Rajasthan was instrumental in getting this legislation through. The anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle in India was a very powerful one. And as a result the Constituent Assembly was empowered in such a manner that few other constituencies have seen. And on this background we have been able to achieve an independent judiciary. It is imperative to note the roles of independent judiciaries in Pakistan and Bangladesh while we talk of Rule of Law. Regarding federalism; the strength of the Indian Republic is largely due to its power in the central level while having parties of opposition in the state. This arrangement is ideal for the rule of law. Secularism is also far from defeated in India. When we talk of Indian Constitutionalism the 5 year election process has been a tremendous strength. And that is controlled by the federal election commission. And once in 5 years there is a relatively independent election process. Though money and power plays their dirty roles, every ruling party is afraid. Hence, one can see pro-people measures being enacted while the election nears.

It is important to highlight that no Constituent Assembly is well constituted as the Nepalese Constituent Assembly especially in terms of women's representation, social groups, and direct as well as proportionate representation. Here, it is praise

worthy to mention the contribution of Nepal, as one in all of South Asia to successfully have a strong representation of women and social groups in its Constituent Assembly.

In India what we have seen is a bourgeois democratic revolution. The ingredients of rule of law consist of civil, political rights and secularism. It should be pondered as to how SAAPE can play a role in this regard. Here, it is useful to remember the Arab Spring; an urge for democracy. But that democratic urge will not satisfy the needs of the masses. How do we go beyond this kind of a desire for not just a democracy but something more? Since the hegemony of the dominant paradigms is deeply fractured it is time for us to search for an alternative ideology and that is where we have been lacking.

The postmodern critique of political order has been destructive. It has brought about a situation where the political parties have been fragmented to such an extent there is nothing that they can do together. Even the intellectuals of South Asia are fragmented. Hence on that context we need an alternative meta-narrative. The youth are being promoted into a kind of thinking that all they can do is brilliant yet fragmented work. It is in that context that we need to look for a larger alternative.

If there are structural obstacles to the realisation of capabilities then what shall we do? We need to go much beyond while addressing structural questions. In terms of SAAPE's goals for the future we must take into consideration: what can we do at the South Asian level? Very often it has been said that there is a need for a confederation or a union of South Asia. We must take up issues of new constitutionalism, independent judiciary new meta-narrative and cultural movement. A new ideological framework is the call of the day. I hope SAAPE will continue to take up issues of this nature and inspire all of us.

Annex: 2

SAAPE Activities

The following sections of this report briefly present the **major activities** undertaken during this period (after 3rd GA).

Thematic and Campaign Activities

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, LIVELIHOODS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND EMPLOYMENT

October 2010

Campaign on SAARC Food Bank (SFB)

Equitybd, Bangladesh in collaboration with other civil society organisations organised a campaign programmes on 26 October and 27 October 2010 in Dhaka prior to the 4th board meeting of SFB in Dhaka, Bangladesh in order to pressurise board members to come out with common decision for strengthening the operationalisation of SFB.

January 2011

Formation of South Asian Parliamentary Forum on Food Sovereignty

Two days round table caucus organized by Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (PKRC) from 23-24 January 2011 in Islamabad, Pakistan was attended by parliamentarian and civil society organisation representatives from five countries namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal. The caucus agreed to form a South Asian Parliamentarian Forum on Food sovereignty.

South Asia Regional Conference on Climate Change and its Implications on Lives and Livelihood of Poor People

All Nepal Peasants' Federation (ANPFa), a Regional Thematic Focal Organisation on food sovereignty, climate change, livelihood and employment, organized a two day long South Asia Regional Conference on Climate Change and its Implications on Lives and Livelihood of Poor People from 1-2, January 2011 in Kathmandu.

February 2011

Research on "Budget allocation in agriculture sector in Nepal" and "Impacts of Climate Change on Peasant Women in Nepal" carried out by ANPFa

March 2011

Study on Impacts of Climate Change in Pakistani Peasant and Women

2011

Weekly programme telecast on Food Sovereignty Issues

Six series of programmes on the issues of food sovereignty were organized and broadcasted in ABC television, Nepal.

December 2011

A Workshop on WTO, Agriculture and Sustainable Development

A workshop on WTO, agriculture and sustainable development was held in Calcutta, India in 12 December 2011. The workshop was organised by Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) and Our World is not for Sale (OWINFS) and co-organised by SAAPE, ANPFa, Indian Federation of Toiling Peasants (IFTOP), and Institute for Motivating Self-Employment (IMSE). Representatives of farmers' groups from various south Asian countries, and civil society activists actively participated in plenary discussion session in workshop.

Launching of Campaign against Land Grabbing in South Asia and Campaign activities

June 2012: Nepal and India, July 2012: Pakistan, October 2012: Bangladesh, November 2012: Sri Lanka.

GENDER JUSTICE/WOMEN RIGHTS

August 2010

South Asian Women Conference on "Role of Women in Building Movements in South Asia"

Women Workers Help Line (WWHL), RTFO Gender Theme organized a South Asian Women Conference on "Role of Women in Building Movements in South Asia" in Pakistan on 24th August, 2010.

October 2010 – March 2011

Advocacy and Lobby meeting with political parties in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan

To address the issue of women equal participation in politics and for the purpose of advocacy and lobbying, gender thematic focal organisation in coordination with country thematic focal organisation organized four advocacy and lobby meeting with political parties of Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan in 5 October 2010, January 20 2011, February 25 2011 and March 29 2011 respectively.

November – December 2011

16 days activism held against VAW in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka

Violence in different forms like domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcisions affects the lives of millions of women in South Asia. Under these circumstances gender thematic focal organisation in coordination with country thematic focal organisation organized 16 days activism against violence against women in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

2011

Gender Budget analysis of Ministries of South Asian Countries

Various researches were undertaken in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal in order to get the figure facts regarding the gender aspects of budget of some important ministries of South Asian countries.

August 2012

Launching of Women Rights Campaign in Nepal and campaign activities

All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA) organised a campaign launching programme in Nepal. 'Campaign on Women Empowerment for Gender Justice and Poverty Eradication' was launched in 24th August 2012.

LABOUR RIGHTS

March 2011

Workshop on 'Setting Labour Agenda for South Asia'

Workshop on 'Setting Labour Agenda for South Asia' was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 30th to 31st March 2011. The workshop was organized to identify regional labour issues and consolidate the trade union movements in South Asia. During the workshop, participants agreed to re-activate South Asian Labour Forum, which was formed during South

Asian Consultation Conference held from 20-23 May in 1996.

PEACE, JUSTICE AND DEMILITARISATION

October – December 2010

Peace rally organized in Pakistan and Nepal

Labour Education Foundation (LEF) and South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) jointly organized a peace rally "Labour for Peace" at Shimla Pehari ground near US Consulate in Lahore on Thursday, 21st October, 2010. Main theme of the rally was "Stop Drone Attacks, Stop Religious Fundamentalism". Similarly, National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice- Nepal (HR Alliance) organized a peace rally on 11 December 2010 in Nepal.

'Do human rights exists?' meeting held in Sri Lanka

IMADR Asia, Platform for Freedom and South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) jointly organized a meeting "Do Human Rights Exist?" in Sri Lanka on 10 December 2010.

July 2011

Regional Conference on Challenges and Way Forward for Democracy and Peace in South Asia

In July 1-2, 2011, SAAPE organised a regional level conference on 'Challenges and Way Forward for Democracy and Peace in South Asia' with an objective to contribute towards strengthening democracy and sustainable peace in South Asia.

July 2011

Conference on Rights of Bhutanese Refugees

To analyse the contestations and identify the way forward for the effective and acceptable repatriation of Bhutanese refugees from Nepal, a conference on rights of Bhutanese refugees was organized in Jhapa district of Nepal, where the Bhutanese refugees are residing, in July 6 2011.

December 2012

Demilitarisation, Democratisation and Social Justice Campaign

National and Regional Conferences on Demilitarisation, Democratisation and Social Justice

Rally, demonstration

Publication of campaign materials

ADVOCACY, LOBBYING AND CAMPAIGN

January 2011

Participation in Regional and International Programmes

SAAPE organised and actively participated in the seminar entitled 'Envisioning New South Asia: People's Perspective' from 18 to 19 January 2011 in Dhaka, Bangladesh to discuss the possible contours of an effective SAARC Union and the possibility of a peaceful, democratic, united and just South Asia.

June 2011

Engagement in dialogue with European Parliamentarians and EU Officials

A team consisting of two core committee members of SAAPE, Ms Rokeya Kabir (Bangladesh) and Mr Farooq Tariq (Pakistan) had visited the EU headquarters in Brussels from 13th-16th June 2011. The visits and meetings were jointly organised and facilitated by SAAPE and Eurostep, and hosted by Richard Howitt, MEP. During the discussions at different forums and meeting with different members of the MEP, the SAAPE representatives argued that the current trend in development policy of focusing on energy and infrastructure is misguided and this does 'minimal, if any, to address the social problems' of the region. Similarly, the privatisation of the health and education sectors, which serves to widen the gap between the rich and poor, was also criticised. Delegation team also called for support for democratic reforms in the region.

Participation and engagement at the UNCTAD XIII, 21-26 April 2012, Doha, Qatar

SAAPE actively participated and engaged at the thirteenth quadrennial session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development on 21-26 April 2012 in Doha, Qatar. SAAPE campaign issues of food

sovereignty, gender justice, demilitarisation, democratisation and social justice were incorporated into the UNCTAD XIII Civil Society Declaration. The PDF copy of the Declaration is attached.

2011

Poster published

The Peace, Justice and Demilitarisation group published the poster raising the issues of expenditures made in defence and militarisation instead of human needs.

Publications

Thematic, Position and Briefing papers

- Religious Fundamentalism in South Asia
- Post-Flood Situation in Pakistan
- Pakistan after the assassination of Osama Bin Laden
- Women's Participation in Politics and Legislative Bodies in South Asia
- Women's Right to Land and Inheritance
- Post Armed Conflict situation in Sri Lanka

SAAPE Bulletin

As a regular process, SAAPE is engaged in bringing out half yearly bulletins that are disseminated to its different stakeholders. Following issues are published after 3rd GA:

- February 2010
- March 2011
- September 2011
- March 2012

Annex 3

Programme Schedule

SAAPE 4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

18-19 December 2012

Kathmandu, Nepal

Day 1: 18 December 2012

SN	Time	Programme
1	0930-1000	Registration
2	1000-1230	<p>Inaugural Session</p> <p>Welcome and presentation of GA highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Netra Prasad Timsina, Coordinator-Designate, SAAPE <p>Keynote speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. Babu Mathew - Dr. Arjun Kumar Karki <p>Updates from the country (7 minutes each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Afghanistan (Mr. Raz Mohammed Dalili) - Bangladesh (Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad) - Bhutan (Mr. S.B. Subba) - India (Ms. Ujjaini Halim) - Maldives (Mr. Ahmad Nizam) - Nepal (Ms. Sharmila Karki) - Pakistan (Mr. Karamat Ali) - Sri Lanka (Mr. Herman Kumara)
3	1230-1330	Lunch
4	1330-1430	<p>Session 1: Reporting from the Secretariat</p> <p>-Prerna Bomzan/Praman Adhikari</p> <p><i>Moderators: Raz M. Dalili and Nuha Mohamed Rasheed</i></p>
5	1430-1445	Tea/coffee break
6	1445-1700	<p>Session 2 – Campaign update</p> <p><i>Moderators: Farooq Tariq and Nalini Ratnarajah</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Sovereignty Campaign (Campaign against land grabbing) (Mr. Prem Dangal) • Women Rights Campaign (Ms. Sharmila Karki) • Demilitarisation, Democratisation and Social Justice Campaign (Mr. Yadab Banstola and Mr. Shujauddin Qureshi)
7	1700-1730	Wrapping up

Day 2: 19 December 2012

SN	Time	Programme
8	0845-0900	Recap of Day 1
9	0900-1100	Session 3: Discussion on SAAPE's strategic direction 2013-2015 Moderators: Prem Dangal and Rokeya Kabir
10	1100-1115	Tea/coffee break
11.	1115-1230	Session 4: SAAPE Poverty and Vulnerability Report 2013 <i>Moderators: Mohiuddin Ahmad and Sharmila Karki</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: Dr. Dilli Raj Khanal, team leader • Plenary discussion
12	1230-1330	Lunch
13	1330-1500	Session 5: People's SAARC session : " <i>Towards a people friendly foreign policy for all SAARC countries</i> " <i>Moderators: Rakhi Shegal and Karamat Ali</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: Prof. Anuradha Chenoy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India • Plenary discussion and way forward
14	1500-1515	Tea/coffee break
15	1515-1615	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative issues and endorsement • Financial report • Fund raising
16	1615-1700	Declaration, adoption and closing

Annex 4

List of Participants

SN	Name	Organisation	Country	Email
1.	Abdul Awal	Noakhali Rural Development Society- NRDS	Bangladesh	awal@nrdsbd.org
2.	Abdul Rasak	All Lanka Peasants Front	Sri Lanka	alpf@sltnet.lk
3.	Afroza Banu	Independent Journalist	Bangladesh	krisreza@gmail.com
4.	Ahmed Nizam	Maldives NGO Federation	Maldives	maldivesngofederation@gmail.com
5.	Anuradha Mitra Chenoy	Jawaharlal Neharu University	India	chenoy@gmail.com
6.	Aqila Naaz	Ajaman Mazareen Punjab	Pakistan	pak_pws@yahoo.com
7.	Arjun Karki	RRN	Nepal	akarki@gmail.com
8.	Asha Kaji Maharjan	RRN	Nepal	
9.	Ashim Neupane	RRN	Nepal	ashim@rrn.org.np
10.	Audrey D'Mello	Majlis	India	majlislaw@gmail.com
11.	Babu Mathew	National Law University	India	babumathewtu@gmail.com
12.	Balram Banskota	ANPFa	Nepal	balram@anpfa.org.np
13.	Basu Dhakal	COCAP	Nepal	basu.eden@gmail.com
14.	Bhagawati Bista	Youth Federation	Nepal	baba.bistag@gmail.com
15.	Bhes Raj Belbase	Journalist	Nepal	belbase_bhesraj@yahoo.com
16.	Bimala Rai Paudel	SDC Nepal	Nepal	bimala.raipaudel@sdc.net
17.	Birendra Adhikari	RRN	Nepal	birendra@rrn.org.np
18.	Bishnu Nepal	Ratriya Samachar Samiti	Nepal	
19.	Bishnu Pukar Shrestha	CAHURAST	Nepal	cahurast@gmail.com, info@cohurastnepal.org
20.	C.K. Khanal	Journalist	Nepal	newscknal@gmail.com
21.	Charan Prasai	Joint Forums for HRs	Nepal	prasai@gmail.com
22.	Charles Pradhan	RRN	Nepal	charles@rrn.org.np
23.	Daya Sagar Shrestha	NGO Federation of Nepal	Nepal	dayasagar@ngofederation.org
24.	Deo Narayan Dhakal	Druk National Congress	Bhutan	kdupthob@gmail.com
25.	Dilli Raj Khanal	Tribhuvan University	Nepal	drkhanal3@gmail.com
26.	Dinesh Tripathi	SAHR	Nepal	dineshtri@gmail.com
27.	Durga Sob	FEDO	Nepal	durgasob@hotmail.com
28.	Faisal Bin Majid	Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangh	Bangladesh	faisal.binmajid@gmail.com
29.	Farhat Fatima	Pakistan Institute for Labour Education and Research	Pakistan	farhat_piler@hotmail.com
30.	Farooq Tariq	PKRC	Pakistan	labour_party@yahoo.com
31.	Gajadhar Sunar	Dalit NGO Federation	Nepal	gdsunar@hotmail.com
32.	Ganesh BK	HR Alliance	Nepal	ganeshbikal@gmail.com

SN	Name	Organisation	Country	Email
33.	Gopal Khanal	Kantipur Daily	Nepal	gopal@kantipur.com.np
34.	Gopal Krishna Siwakoi	INHURED INTERNATIONAL	Nepal	ceasefire_nepal@yahoo.com
35.	Gopal Lamsal	NGO Federation of Nepal	Nepal	gopallamsal@gmail.com
36.	Harsh Mander	Centre for Equity Studies	India	manderharsh@gmail.com
37.	Herman Kumara	NAFSO	Sri Lanka	hermankumara@gmail.com
38.	Kapil Shrestha	Tribhuvan University	Nepal	y2k_cyber_cafe@yahoo.com
39.	Karamat Ali	PILER	Pakistan	karamatorama@gmail.com
40.	Kiran Kamal Prasad	National Law University	India	jeevika90@gmail.com
41.	Kishor Sharma	RRN	Nepal	kishor@rrn.org.np
42.	Krishna Prasad Pandey	Journalist	Nepal	
43.	Lal Bahadur DC	HR Alliance	Nepal	lal_39@yahoo.com
44.	Laxmi Karki	RRN, AATWIN	Nepal	laxmi@rrn.org.np
45.	Linda Chhakhuak	Independent Journalist	India	lindachhakhuak@gmail.com
46.	Madan Karki	RRN	Nepal	madan@rrn.org.np
47.	Mani Pokhrel	South Asian Youth Network	Nepal	pokhrelmani@gmail.com
48.	Manisha Subedi	Jagaran Nepal	Nepal	manisha@jagarannepal.org
49.	Manizha Baraki	Journalist	Afghanistan	manizha.Baraki@gmail.com
50.	Mian Abdul Qayum	Labour Quomi Movement	Pakistan	saira_hs1@yahoo.com
51.	Mohammad Saeed Niazi	Civil Society Development Centre	Afghanistan	m_s_niazi@yahoo.com
52.	Mohammed Ali Shah	Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum	Pakistan	
53.	Mohammed Saleem	AMP	Pakistan	
54.	Mohiuddin Ahmad	Nabodhara	Bangladesh	mohi2005@gmail.com
55.	Monalisa	National Law University	India	Monasingh22@gmail.com
56.	Mujibul Haque Munir	Coast Bd	Bangladesh	reza.coast@gmail.com
57.	Nalini Ratnarajah	Mothers and Daughter of Lanka	Sri Lanka	nalini_ratnarajah@yahoo.com
58.	Nesar Ahmad	Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre	India	nesar@barcjaipur.org
59.	Netra Timsina	SAAPE	Nepal	netra@saape.org
60.	Nuha Mohamed Rasheed		Maldives	nha.rachyd@hotmail.com
61.	Padam Budhathoki	RRN	Nepal	padam@rrn.org.np
62.	Pamir Gautam	RRN/LDC Watch	Nepal	pamir@rrn.org.np
63.	Philippe Dressaisse	Welt Hunger Hilfe	Nepal	philippe.dressaisse@welthungerhilfe.org
64.	Prabin Manandhar	CIDA/CCO	Nepal	
65.	Praman Adhikari	RRN/SAAPE	Nepal	praman@rrn.org.np
66.	Pramesh Pokhrel	ANPFa	Nepal	prameshjee@gmail.com
67.	Prem Dangal	ANPFa	Nepal	premdangal@yahoo.com
68.	Prerna Bomzan	RRN	Nepal	prernazan@gmail.com

SN	Name	Organisation	Country	Email
69.	Rachana Khadka	Youth Union	Nepal	khadka_rachana@yahoo.com
70.	Rajendra Aryal	FEDWASUN	Nepal	rajendra.fedwasun@gmail.com
71.	Rakhi Sehgal		India	rakhi.sehgal@gmail.com
72.	Ram Lakhan Harijan	NIFUWAN	Nepal	ramlakhansharijan@yahoo.com
73.	Ratna Karki	RRN	Nepal	ratna@rrn.org.np
74.	Raz Mohammad Dalili	Sanayee Development Orgn	Afghanistan	dalili.kabul@gmail.com
75.	Robbins Thapa	Online media	Nepal	thapainfo@gmail.com
76.	Rokeya Kabir	BNPS	Bangladesh	rokeya_kabir@yahoo.com
77.	Rushka Sthapit	CWIN	Nepal	s.rushka@gmail.com
78.	Sadaf Awan	Women Workers' Helpline	Pakistan	sadafawan2002@yahoo.com
79.	Sadaf Farooq	National Association of Street Vendors of India	India	nasscoordinator@gmail.com
80.	Samia Ahmed	SUPRO	Bangladesh	director@supro.org
81.	Saraswoti Basnet	Nepal FM	Nepal	basnet.Swr@gmail.com
82.	Sarba Raj Khadka	RRN	Nepal	jajarkot@gmail.com
83.	SB Subba	Druk National Congress	Bhutan	hurob1991@gmail.com
84.	Seema Luitel	RRN	Nepal	seema@rrn.org.np
85.	Shanti Adhikari	CWISH	Nepal	
86.	Sharmila Karki	ANWA	Nepal	karkisharmila@gmail.com
87.	Shobha Gautam	IHRICON	Nepal	shobha.gautam@gmail.com
88.	Shova Lama	Nepal FM	Nepal	
89.	Shrochis Karki	freelance writer	Nepal	shrochis@gmail.com
90.	Shujauddin Qureshi	Pakistan Institute for Labour Education and Research	Pakistan	shuja98@yahoo.com
91.	Shyam Upadhyay	RRN	Nepal	shyam@rrn.org.np
92.	Sita Poudel	ANWA	Nepal	sita_pdl@hotmail.com
93.	Som Rai	RRN	Nepal	som@rrn.org.np
94.	Sudarshan Subedi	NFDN	Nepal	subedi_ashokafellow@yahoo.com
95.	Suman Khatri	RRN	Nepal	suman@rrn.org.np
96.	Sumnima Dewan	RRN	Nepal	sumnima@rrn.org.np
97.	Surya Kunwar	GEFONT	Nepal	surya@gefont.org
98.	Sushila Thapa	RRN	Nepal	sushila@rrn.org.np
99.	Tanka Panta	Journalist		tanka.panta@gmail.com
100.	Tek Bahadur Khadka	Nepal Television	Nepal	TBKhadka@gmail.com
101.	Tulasa Dahal	WWS	Nepal	anwanepal@yahoo.com
102.	Ujjaini Halim	Institute for Motivating Self-Employment	India	ujjainihalim@hotmail.com
103.	Umesh Upadhyaya	GEFONT	Nepal	umesh@gefont.org
104.	Vishruta Singh Rana	RRN/LDC Watch	Nepal	vishruta@rrn.org.np
105.	Yadab Bastola	HR Alliance	Nepal	yadab@hralliance.org.np

Annex: 5

Manesar Declaration

The Hivos India Regional Office had taken the lead in the organisation of a Eurostep South Asia Consultation on Poverty Eradication and Quality of Aid held in Manesar, Haryana, India from September 27 to 29, 2000. Of the 57 participants, 45 were selected representatives of civil societies in the South – NGO representatives, activists and lobbying organisations from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Twelve representatives from the European Commission and Delegation were also present. The Eurostep South Asian Consultation recommendations noted the need to focus on South Asia's population living below the poverty line, the need for independent NGOs and social movements to play a lead role in pressurising governments and donors to give serious attention to countering poverty, and the need for further alliance building and networking between Asian and European NGOs to raise impact at various levels.

During a meeting in Haryana, India, representatives comprising journalists, academics, NGOs and other Civil Society actors from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and India, together with representatives from European NGOs within Eurostep drew the following conclusions and recommendations.

- The process of development is inherently political and if it is inequitable and non-participatory, it can actually create poverty. The objective of eradicating poverty can only be achieved through struggle in which people living in poverty are empowered to take control of their own lives and resources. People living in poverty, the majority of who are women, are best able to identify the structural obstacles that perpetuate and accentuate poverty. In consequence, they are also best placed to set the agenda, to address these obstacles and to define solutions that can eradicate poverty.
- The definition and framework of the Poverty Reduction Strategy as defined by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cannot eradicate poverty. On the contrary, the policies and practices of the Breton Woods institutions as they are currently modelled, accentuate poverty.
- Current forms of globalization based on unfettered liberalization accentuate global inequalities both between countries and within countries. On the other hand, global alliances can actually contribute to the eradication of poverty.
- It is clear that a 'rights based approach' to social development, which recognizes the multi-faceted nature of poverty, is central to its eradication. The rights-based approach can also ensure that the dignity of people living in poverty is recognized.
- The struggle to eradicate poverty calls for partnerships and alliances based on shared values and principles, together with mutuality of concerns.
- Past development policy and practice, which emphasized technocratic approaches, have disempowered people living in poverty by de-politicizing their struggles.

Therefore the participants from South Asia and Europe will work together towards:

- Promoting a multi-dimensional, democratic and comprehensive dialogue.
- Work towards linking constituencies in the North and South to develop common strategies, particularly with regard to the adverse affects of structural adjustment.
- Promoting viable development alternatives based on people's own knowledge and innovations.
- Defending people's livelihoods, including the guarding and nurturing of biodiversity, community resources and their own knowledge systems.
- Promoting the development and strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations to create political and economic democracy.
- Working towards identifying common strategies that address food security concerns including reforms of current policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Agreement on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Raising awareness of human rights violations and promoting the evolution of civil societies in countries where civil society is non-existent.

We call upon the European Union to:

- Develop new pro-poor development strategies, independent of IMF/World Bank models, in consultation with representatives of civil society and peoples' organizations.
- Develop its country strategy papers in proper consultation with organizations of civil society, ensuring that the voices of people living in poverty are heard and reflected in the formulation of the strategies and agendas of poverty alleviation/eradication programs. In addition, a regional strategy for South Asia should be established.
- Develop suitable mechanisms for consultative processes, including a right to information that takes onto account traditional forms of civil society. In this context, the use of new information technology, the media (inclusive of community and alternative forms) and public hearing in project impact areas should be incorporated.
- Give increases emphasis to providing relevant support to peoples' initiatives for poverty eradication.
- Ensure that in its budget allocations there is an increased reflection of the proportion of people living in poverty within South Asia. In addition, emphasis should be given to financing important social

sectors. Scarce Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) resources should not be diverted to the private sector.

- Establish mechanisms for a social audit in all projects that it supports, and to make a commitment to adequately address any negative consequences that are identified.
- Work to ensure that global trade and investment regulations allow national governments to regulate and control their economics in ways that protect the rights of its entire people.
- Use its political and economic influence to make structures of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (more) democratic.
- Mobilize its member states to agree not to sell military arms to countries of South Asia.
- The European Union should explicitly mainstream gender in the development co-operation agreements that it negotiates with South Asian and other countries.
- Strive towards the promotion and preservation of a multi-polar world in which there is a respect for democratic principles and space.

We call upon the state and governments in South Asia to:

- Enhance and strengthen their commitments to social sectors and in particular to ensure that the basic needs of all people are met.
- Ensure that the rights of citizens to life, liberty, human dignity and livelihoods are protected and promoted, particularly those of the marginalized and minorities.
- Ensure that the policies and practices of the state and its institutions are carried out in a transparent, effective and accountable way, free of corruption. South Asian governments in collaboration with the EU countries should take initiatives to stop market driven corruption.
- Reject structural adjustment models defined by the World Bank and the IMF. In addition, the governments in South Asia should not bind themselves to the WTO's agreement on agriculture.
- Reduce expenditures on defence to provide further resources for health, education, agriculture and other programs that address the needs of people living in poverty.
- Actively work together and support networks and alliances on crosscutting areas of concern such as trafficking of women, water, refugees, citizenship, violence, ecology and disasters.
- Ensure that their plans emerge from a consultative process that specifically involves the marginalized. Gender concerns should be emphasized in all such development plans.

We call on Eurostep and its members to:

- Work towards the establishment of mechanisms of dialogue between civil societies constituencies in Europe and South Asia and between South Asian civil society and EU institutions.
- Promote alternative development models drawn from people's experiences and knowledge with a view to their mainstreaming within EU development policies and practices.
- Support South Asian networks and alliances on crosscutting areas of concern such as trafficking of women, water, refugees, citizenship, violence, ecology and disasters.
- Work towards deepening and broadening global alliances that can effectively project the concerns and voices of people living in poverty and promote pro-poor solutions.
- Work together in partnership to build capacity and support for effective policy interventions at the local, national and global level based on a pro-poor agenda.
- Help promote and establish a global alliance to establish a permanent, independent, social audit commission on the policy and practices of the WTO.
- Provide information and analysis of the development policy and practices of the European Union.

We call on Civil Society in South Asia to:

- Work towards setting up regional alliances and supporting existing ones, to work on strategies to effectively change and combat the harmful economic policies of globalization, liberalization and privatization which cause increasing poverty in the region.
- Develop strategies, which create space for people's initiatives and support their struggles, recognizing the specific and different contexts of marginalized groups.
- Develop common strategies that make governments, states and local authorities accountable and responsive to people's needs.
- Establish dialogue collectively and individually with EU representatives.
- Set up a "People for Peace" structure in the region, to influence governments to reduce defence expenditure and work towards peace in the region.
- Work for the establishment of a social audit in all projects supported by the EU and to press for the EU to adequately address any negative consequences that are identified.

Secretariat is based in Kathmandu at Rural Reconstruction Nepal.