



Key Areas of Regional Cooperation for Achieving SDGs in South Asia

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Why regional cooperation for SDGs?

- Shared developmental challenges:
 - poverty, hunger, gender inequality, gaps in social and physical infrastructure
- Shared natural resources, river basins and agro-climatic zone
- Shared vulnerabilities to natural disasters and climate change
- Shared land boundaries/ cross-border spillovers
- Complementary production structures/ intra-industry patterns of specialization
- Most Goals can benefit from a regional approach while some cannot be achieved without it
- While countries remain committed to regional cooperation but the institutional deficits constrain the opportunities



Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms

- *1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, **regional** and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions*
- Sharing experiences in structural transformation and job-creating growth
- Sharing experiences in social protection:
 - Universal or targeted / Conditional vs. unconditional
- Sharing experiences in measurement of poverty and multidimensional poverty



2. End hunger and food insecurity

- *2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of Including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, **regional** and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits ...*
- Sharing experiences in public distribution of food, mid-day meals for addressing the challenge of hunger and malnutrition of children in South Asia
- Regional trade liberalization and facilitation for addressing short-term demand-supply mismatches
- Operationalizing the SAARC Food Bank
- Joint RD&E for climate smart and sustainable agriculture
- Coordinated approach to WTO negotiations on food and agriculture including with respect to public stockholding of food for public distribution



3. Healthy lives for all

- Regional cooperation for cross-border spread of diseases such as H1N1, H5N1 ...Zika, Nipah...
- Sharing good practices in health care e.g. universal health coverage, \$10 eye surgery, Jaipur foot, low cost diagnostics, tele-medicine, affordable generics and vaccines
- Joint R&D for tropical diseases such as Malaria, TB ++
- Sharing of high-end health care facilities, liberalization of trade in health services



4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education

- Regional cooperation in higher education and training especially in STEM to harness the youth bulge in South Asia
- Expansion of scholarships to enhance intra-regional mobility of students; strengthening of the South Asian University
- Liberalization of trade in higher education services



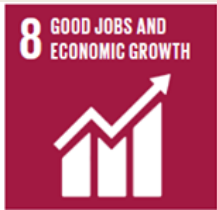
5. Achieve gender equality and empower

- Sharing good practices in enhancing the women's labour force participation in South Asia
- Sharing good practices in enhancing women's share in property ownership, in political and corporate leadership and for fostering women entrepreneurship



7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy

- Importance of regional cooperation for energy security is well recognized in South Asia
- Regional energy cooperation covers development of hydro power resources, electricity trade, trade in refined petroleum products
- Proposals for regional grids and pipelines for transportation of electricity, gas and crude: CASA1000, IPI and TAPI pipelines
- Potential of cooperation in renewable energy (solar and wind) given huge economies of scale
- Regional approach would be more fruitful than bilateral ones



8. Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, decent jobs for all

- Job-creating structural transformation critical for South Asia
 - build productive capacities through a regionally coordinated industrial development strategy to foster regional value chains



9. Resilient infrastructure and inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation

- *9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including **regional** and trans-border infrastructure...*
- South Asia is unable to leverage the geographical contiguity due to poorly developed transport connectivity and facilitation
- Cost of trade in South Asia is higher than that applicable to trade with other continents such as North America and Europe affecting the competitiveness
- Potential of regional value chains is not harnessed

10. Reduce inequality within and among countries



- Sharing of experiences in progressive taxation and social protection policies to address the widening inequalities
- Regional cooperation in implementation and regional follow up and review of the Global Compact on Safe Orderly and Regular Migration



11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- *11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and **regional** development planning*
- Increasing vulnerability of South Asian habitats to natural disasters that have cross-border dimensions; Tsunamis, earthquakes, floods and draughts
- Regional cooperation in remote sensing and early warning systems could be fruitful

Environmental and climate change related Goals: 6, 12, 13, 14, 15



- Cross-border environmental externalities are well recognized such as air pollution in one country spilling over to the neighboring country
- Climate change affecting agriculture across countries
- Climate induced disasters also have cross-border incidence
- Regional cooperation to develop low carbon, energy efficient pathways for development through pooling of resources
- Sharing of good practices in waste recycling, oceans and circular economy



16.Promote peaceful and inclusive societies

- Cross-border dimensions of illicit financial flows, crime, drugs smuggling, terrorism
- Regional cooperation for addressing the challenge
- Sharing good practices in electoral processes, rule of law and administration of justice, strengthening of democratic institutions, e-governance reforms and people-participation in governance
- Promoting networks of parliamentarians on SDGs, building on Speakers Initiative

Regional cooperation as a part of *A renewed global partnership for development*

17. Means of Implementation and revitalize global partnership for sustainable development

- Finance
- Technology
- Capacity-building
- Trade
- Systemic Issues
- Data, monitoring and accountability

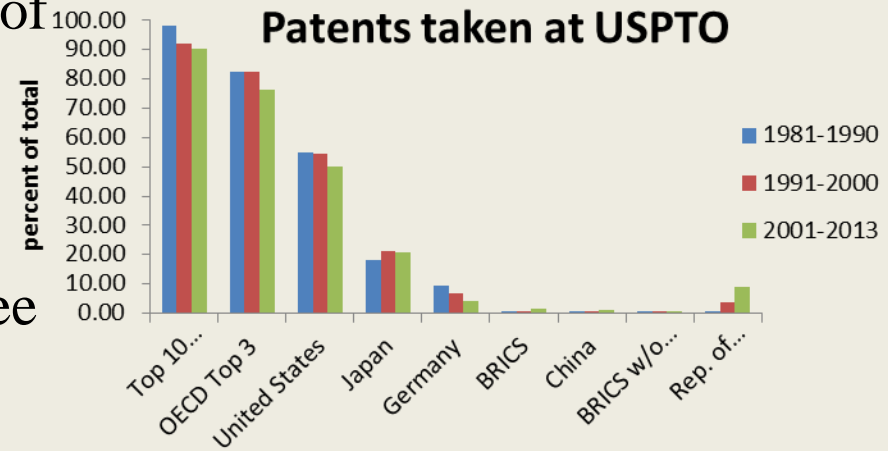


Regional cooperation for finance

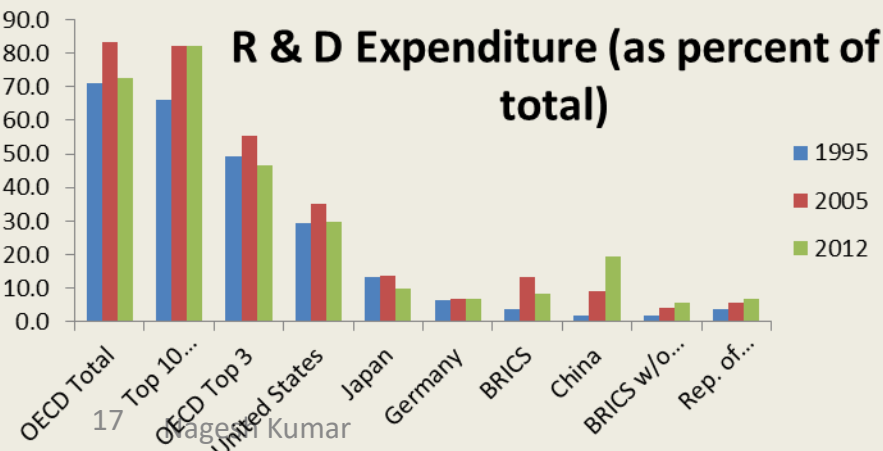
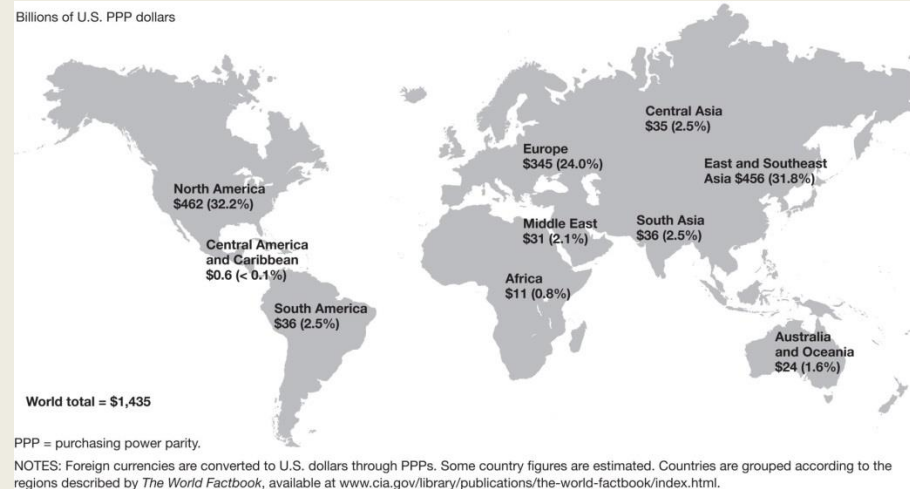
- Development partnership and intraregional FDI
- Cross-listing of securities through creation of South Asia Depositary Receipts
- Reform of SAARC Development Fund to catalyze the large regional infrastructure projects
- Strengthening the Asian Clearing Union to enhance local currency trade

Technology facilitation for SDGs

- Access to technology a major concern for implementing SDGs in the context of high concentration of technology generation activity
- The pattern of concentration has changed only slightly over the past three decades
- Access to environmentally sensitive technologies will be critical for implementing SDGs in South Asia



Geography of Innovation



Technology Facilitation for SDGs

- Harnessing frugal engineering capabilities of South Asia for developing low-carbon affordable products and processes
- Pooling of resources for joint solutions for shared challenges
- Coordination of position in TRIPs and TRIPs+ negotiations for
 - Moratorium on further strengthening of IPRs
 - Extending public health waver to ESTs
 - Granting flexibility to developing countries in implementing TRIPs
 - Differential pricing for technology licensing
 - Strengthening TRIPs provisions (art 66.2) for transfer of technology including environmental technologies for developing and least developed countries

Data, Statistics, Monitoring, Follow-up and Review

- Demanding data requirements to track progress on 169 targets; work in progress at IAEG
- South Asia faces significant challenges in measuring even most elementary data such as registration of births and deaths
- Variations in statistical capacities across countries; Bangladesh, India are best equipped in the region
- Regional cooperation important for evolving common standards and perspectives for methodologies and reporting
- Evolving South Asian Follow up and Review process to feed into the HLPF through APFSD

Statistical capacity in South Asia, 2015

	Methodology assessment of statistical capacity (scale 0-100)	Periodicity and timeliness assessment of stistical capacity (scale 0-100)	Source data assessment of statistical capacity (scale 0-100)	Statistical capacity score (overall average)
South Asia	58	85	70	71
Afghanistan	40	73	40	51
Bangladesh	60	90	80	77
Bhutan	50	87	70	69
India	80	73	80	78
Maldives	50	57	60	56
Nepal	50	87	80	72
Pakistan	70	97	60	76

In conclusion

Much potential of regional cooperation and coordination in implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda

- Sharing development experiences
- building up productive capacities through a coordinated industrial development strategy, strengthened regional connectivity and regional value chains
- strengthening their collective energy and food security, and enhance resilience to natural disasters
- Developing low-carbon pathways through pooling resources
- Augmenting finance, technology, statistical capacity and subregional follow-up and review
- South Asia Network (of Think-Tanks) on SDGs (SANS) could serve as the institutional mechanism to generate ideas for cooperation
- UNESCAP stands ready to support and assist regional cooperation for achieving SDGs in South Asia

Thank you

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Unlocking the Potential of
**Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration
in South Asia**
Potential, Challenges and the Way Forward



Achieving the Sustainable
Development Goals in South Asia

Key Policy Priorities and Implementation Challenges

