

# Promoting SDGs in SA Countries *Regional Means and Instruments*

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**Research-Policy meeting on**  
***Interpreting SDGs for South Asia: In Search of a Regional Framework***

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# Section I: Scene-Setting

- Whilst SAARC may have gone into hibernation and may have become dysfunctional, for now, it is argued here that there are various institutional arrangements in the region, and new modalities could be developed and deployed, which could:

- Catalyse
- Leverage
- Draw Synergies

in terms of

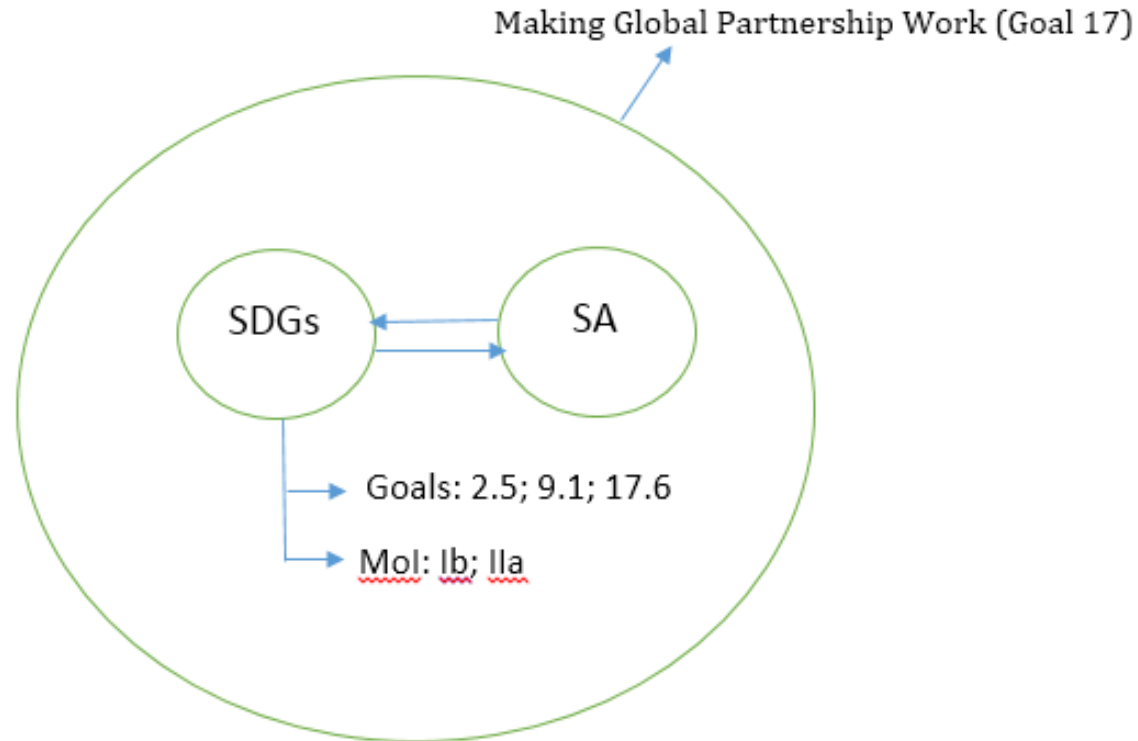
- Harnessing financial resources
- Mobilising human resources
- Drawing positive externalities

Through efforts at:

- : Regional level
- : Sub-regional level
- : Bilateral level

Towards: Achieving the SDGs in South Asia

## Harnessing the attainment of the SDGs



- Initiatives at the SAARC level: Regional and Sub-regional
- Many initiatives at bilateral - sub-regional and region level outside of the formal SAARC framework

## **A two-way reinforcing movement**

SDGs as an entry to reenergising SA-wide cooperation and the SAARC



Cooperation at various levels in SA could be instrumental in promoting and stimulating implementation of the SDGs in South Asia



## **Make use of five connectivities as instruments towards attaining the SDGs:**

- Trade Connectivity
- Investment Connectivity
- Transport Connectivity
- Institutional connectivity
- Knowledge Connectivity

## **To be looked at with SDG lens**

- Poverty audit
- SME interest audit
- Gender audit
- Environment audit
- Inclusiveness audit



These instruments could work both ways. Need to be alert to:

- Immiserising trade
- Exploitative FDIs
- Resource extractive transport corridors
  
- Means of implementation has to be made to work for SDG implementation.  
This is not automatic:
  - Trade-offs of synergies not only in terms of SDG outcomes, but also as regards the means of implementation



## Section II: Selected Means and Instruments

Instruments	Harnessing attainment of SDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Deepening Trade Cooperation:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>by</i> Harnessing the opportunities of trade to stimulate cross border production and value chains; promote market access for the SMES; support environmental sustainability</li><li>➤ <i>through</i> revitalisation and recalibration of the SAFTA, SATIS, BIMSTEC-FTA, BFTAs, CEPA, regional energy grid; trade in energy</li><li>➤ <i>by deploying</i> RoO, sensitive list, harmonisation of rules, replication of best practices, appropriate trade facilitation measures, coordination of energy policies across countries</li><li>➤ A concerted regional coordinated effort in global trading fora particularly in view of the new issues (e-commerce, fisheries subsidies, MSMEs)</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty alleviation (Goal 1)</li><li>• Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy (Goal 7)</li><li>• Creation of decent jobs (Goal 8)</li><li>• Promote the cause of peace (Goal 16)</li><li>• Stimulate global partnership to achieve the SDGs (Goal 17)</li></ul>





<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Harnessing the attainment of SDGS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><i>Catalysing the opportunities of the cross-border investment flows:</i></b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>by framing rules that promote sustainable and environment-friendly production, cross-border trade; help the cause of strengthened global integration of the SMEs</i></li><li>➤ <i>through coordinated investment to develop clusters, value chains</i></li><li>➤ <i>by deploying investment agreements that are mutually benefitting</i></li><li>➤ <i>SEZs that are sensitive to environmental concerns</i></li><li>➤ <i>taxation policies and fiscal incentives that are supportive of the SMEs</i></li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation of decent jobs (Goal 8)</li><li>• Reduce inter-country and within country disparities (Goal 10)</li><li>• Promotion of sustainable production patterns (Goal 12)</li></ul>



- ***Leveraging Transport Connectivity***

*by taking advantage of BBIN-MVA, BRI, sub-regional connectivity initiatives with a view to translating transport corridors into economic corridors by selecting routes, fixing appropriate service charges, investment and industrial clusters that produce jobs, promote production chains that are sensitive to the needs lagged regions, environmental concerns, impact on economic growth, developing growth centres*

- Enhancing intra-regional trade and facilitating poverty alleviation (Goal 1)
- Consumer welfare and producer competitiveness (Goal 11)
- LNOB



- **Effective Institutional Connectivity**
- SDF, SAC, SFB, SSB, SPAP
- For example the working of SFB: Eligibility, Trigger Price, Repayment, storage, quality - many open issues, enforcement mechanism

- Food Security and zero hunger (Goal 2)

- **Knowledge Connectivity**
- Low cost solutions
- Cross country best practices
- Mode 4 → facilitated movement
- TT and CSO connectivity
- Web-based partnerships
- Sharing of data and information

- Overall SDG implementation in an informed and cost-effective manner and measuring and monitoring progress

## Section III. Way Forward

### Learning from ASEAN

- ASEAN Vision 2025: SDGs have been aligned with the ASEAN Vision 2025
- In line with SAARC Development Goals (MDGs: 2005), design SAARC Development Goals in keeping with the goals and targets of the SDGs

#### *Three areas*

- Developmental policies: To align SAARC institutional policies with Goals and Targets of the SDGs (e.g. SFB)
- Market-based signals: To give signals through monetary-fiscal-institutional and stick) to align market practices with SDG Goals and targets (cross-border investment flows)
- Functional initiatives: To align developmental practices in SAARC countries to service SDG goals and targets (e.g. connectivity initiatives)



## **Some proposed instruments**

- Regional energy regulatory authority in South Asia towards a common market for electricity in the region
- Supportive duty structure for import of electricity
- Audit of connectivity initiatives from SDG lens
- Examine the BFTAs and RTAs from the perspective of SMES

## **Learning from low-cost solutions from country experiences**

### *Low cost solutions:*

- Combating infectious disease (SDG-3)
- Non-formal education (SDG-4)
- Disaster-relief (SDG-13)
- Financial inclusion (SDG-10)

### *Addressing Gaps in suitable regional instruments:*

- Making cities and human settlements safe resilient and sustainable (SDG-11)
- Conserve and sustainable use ocean and marine resources (SDG-14)
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystem (SDG-15)
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG-16)



*Thank You*

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