

## Write up on RGoB's Engagement with Regional Organizations

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### 1. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

SAARC was established on 8 December 1985 with the formal adoption of its Charter in Dhaka by the Heads of State/Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan joined the Organization in April 2007 as the eighth member. SAARC also has nine Observers, namely China, EU, Iran, Republic of Korea, Australia, Japan, Mauritius, Myanmar and USA.

SAARC is an expression of the region's collective decision to evolve a regional cooperative framework. It is a manifestation of the determination of the Governments of South Asia to work together towards finding lasting solutions to their common problems in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding and to create an order based on mutual respect, equity and shared benefits. The SAARC Secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Bhutan hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit in 2010.

### 2. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

BIMSTEC was created by the Bangkok Declaration of 1997. It is a regional organisation with seven members: five from South Asia — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka — and two from south-east Asia — Myanmar and Thailand. The organization initially came into being as BISTEC - Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand-Economic Cooperation and later renamed after Myanmar's membership as Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Cooperation. The current name was adopted in 2004 following Bhutan and Nepal's admission.

The BIMSTEC initiative was the first attempt *to build a bridge linking South and Southeast Asia*. The main objectives of BIMSTEC are to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development, accelerate social progress and promote collaboration on matters of common interest in the Bay of Bengal. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell from Bhutan is the current Secretary General of BIMSTEC.

### 3. Colombo Plan

The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific was instituted as a regional intergovernmental organization for the furtherance of the economic and social development of countries in the region. It was conceived at the Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs held in Sri Lanka and was

launched on 1 July 1951. From a group of seven Commonwealth nations, it has grown into an intergovernmental organization of 27 members, including non-Commonwealth countries. The Colombo Plan is based on the partnership concept for self-help and mutual help in the development process with focus areas being, human resource development and south-south cooperation. The Colombo Plan plays an important role in networking in the Asia-Pacific region.

The current programmes of the Colombo Plan are in the areas of public policy formulation in an environment of globalization and market economy, private sector development as a prime mover for growth. The Colombo Plan also provides skills development opportunities towards achieving efficient utilization of physical capital.

Bhutan joined the Colombo Plan in 1962.

#### **4. Colombo Plan Staff College**

CPSC is an autonomous specialized agency of the Colombo Plan. It was established on December 5, 1973. Its main objective is to assist the member countries of the Colombo Plan in developing and enhancing their technician education systems. It became operational in 1974 with the Republic of Singapore serving as the first host Government. CPSC is based in Manila, Philippines.

CPSC has 26 member countries. Bhutan is one of the founding members.

#### **5. Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)**

ACD is a forum established in June 2002. The notion of the establishment of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) was raised by Thailand during the First International Conference of Asian Political Parties, which was held in Manila from 17 to 20 September 2000. However, the idea was formally crystallized during the 34th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Hanoi on 23 June 2001. It is considered the first international Asian entity that aimed at integrating all Asian countries. Currently, ACD comprises 34 members. Bhutan joined the ACD in 2004.

#### **6. International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**

ICIMOD is an intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre that develops and shares research, information, and innovations to empower people in the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. It serves the region through information and knowledge generation and sharing to find innovative solutions to critical mountain problems. Bhutan is actively engaged in helping ICIMOD meet its core objectives of poverty alleviation and environmental conservation in the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH). The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests is the designated nodal agency.

Dr. Pema Gyamtsho from Bhutan currently serves as the Director General.

#### **7. Asian Reinsurance Corporation (ARC)**

The ARC is an intergovernmental organization established in May 1979 under the auspices of the UN-ESCAP. Membership is open to all state members or associate members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. It commenced operations in 1980. From 9 July 2005, Associate Membership was opened to non-ESCAP member countries of the UN, private organizations, private corporations, non-government organizations and multilateral institutions etc.

Bhutan joined ARC in 1979. The Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Royal Government of Bhutan represents Bhutan as a Council Member.

#### **8. South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)**

SACEP is an intergovernmental organization, established in 1982 by the governments of South Asia to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of the environment in the region. SACEP member countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Since its creation, SACEP has implemented several projects and programmes in the areas of environmental education, environment legislation, biodiversity, air pollution, and the protection and management of the coastal environment. SACEP is also the secretariat for the South Asian Seas Programme. Bhutan has been an active member of SACEP since its inception in 1982. SACEP is based in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

#### **9. Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)**

OCA is an independent non-governmental not-for-profit international Asian Sports Organization recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Association of National Olympic Committee and the 45 member Asian National Olympic Committees. The Permanent Headquarters of OCA is in Kuwait.

Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck is the Executive Board Member of OCA.

#### **10. South Asian Sports Federation (SASF)**

SAGF was officially formed in 1983. Bhutan was one of the founding members. The SASF was renamed as the South Asia Olympic Council (SAOC) in 2004 during the 32nd meeting of SASF. It is the governing body of South Asian Games, South Asian Beach Games and South Asian Winter Games. It has 7 member countries located in the South Asian subcontinent and looks after sports ties amongst the SAARC member countries.

The Bhutan Olympic Committee represents Bhutan in the SASF.

### **11. Asian Amateur Athletic Federation (AAAF)**

Bhutan joined the AAAF in 1983.

### **12. Asian Archery Federation (AAF)**

Bhutan joined the AAF in 1983. The Bhutan Archery Federation represents Bhutan in the AAF.

### **13. Asian Boxing Federation (ABF)**

Bhutan joined the ABF in 1983.

### **14. Asian basketball Federation (ABF)**

Bhutan joined the ABF in 1983. The Bhutan Basketball Federation was formed in 1983 as an affiliate member of the Bhutan Olympic Committee and a full member of the International Basketball Federation as well as the ABF. Basketball is one of the most popular sports among the Bhutanese youth not only because of the nature of the sport itself but also because of the active participation of His Majesty in the late '70s and '80s. Bhutan currently has one internationally qualified Referee, one assistant national coach and several volunteer coaches.

### **15. Asian Table Tennis Federation (ATTF)**

Bhutan joined ATTF in 1985. The Bhutan Table Tennis Federation is affiliated to ATTF.

### **16. Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia & the Pacific (ADFIAP)**

ADFIAP is the focal point of all development banks and other financial institutions engaged in the financing of development in the Asia-Pacific region. Its mission is to advance sustainable development through its members. It was founded in 1976 and currently has 87 member institutions in 36 countries. The Asian Development Bank is a special member of the association. ADFIAP is an NGO in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It is headquartered in Manila, Philippines.

Bhutan joined ADFIAP in 1988.

### **17. Asia, Pacific & Oceania Sports Assembly (APOSA)**

Bhutan joined APOSA in 1988.

### **18. Association of National Olympic Committee (ANOC)**

ANOC was established in 1979 during the Constitutive General Assembly in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Its headquarters was located in Paris from 1982 - 2010. It later moved to the Olympic capital, Lausanne in May 2010.

Bhutan joined ANOC in 1990.

#### **19. Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD)**

AITD is an independent, not-for-profit organization devoted to capacity building, non-partisan research and regional cooperation in the infrastructure sector with special focus on transport, trade and logistics. It was established in 1989. The United Nations Economic and Social Council has granted AITD a special consultative status. This status is awarded to select non-government organizations that have the necessary expertise, recognized standing within the particular field of its competence and have the capacity to assist the work of the United Nations.

The Institute has strong linkages with regional organizations in South, SouthWest and SouthEast regions of the Asian continent and provides substantive support to regional groupings like SAARC, BIMSTEC, Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, ECO, GMS, ASEAN, etc. in enhancing skill developments.

Bhutan joined AITD in 1991.

#### **20. Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA)**

APSA was established in 1994, through the cooperation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and DANIDA, to promote quality seed production and marketing in the Asia and Pacific Region. Today, APSA is the largest regional seed association in the world. Bhutan joined APSA in 1996.

#### **21. South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC)**

The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) program is a project-based partnership between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. SASEC aims to promote regional prosperity, improve economic opportunities, and build a better quality of life for the people of the subregion. SASEC countries share a common vision of boosting intraregional trade and cooperation in South Asia, while also developing connectivity and trade with Southeast Asia through Myanmar, to the People's Republic of China, and the global market.

SASEC was formed in 2001 and Bhutan is a founding member of the SASEC Program along with Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. The Maldives and Sri Lanka became full members of SASEC in May 2014, following several years as active observers. Since

2003, the Government of Bhutan has signed numerous ADB-financed SASEC investment projects.

## **22. Asian Badminton Federation (ABF)**

ABF, now called Badminton Asia is the governing body of the badminton sport in Asia under the flagship of Badminton World Federation. Badminton Asia is currently represented by 43 member associations from 5 sub-regions all across Asia. As the governing body, Badminton Asia focuses on promoting, managing and developing the sport in Asia in principles of specificity and universality. Bhutan joined ABF in 1997.

## **23. Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)**

ABU was established in 1964 as a non-profit, non-governmental, non-political, professional association with a mandate to assist the development of broadcasting in the region. ABU promotes the collective interests of television and radio broadcasters as well as key industry players and facilitates regional and international media co-operation. ABU is a member of the World Broadcasters' Union and works closely with the other regional broadcasting unions on matters of common concern such as reserving frequencies for broadcasters, harmonisation of operating and technical broadcasting standards and systems and finalising the Broadcasting Treaty.

ABU is the biggest broadcasting union in the world. Through its members' network, the Union can reach 3 billion people across the Asia – Pacific region.

Bhutan joined ABU in 1997.

## **24. South Asian Telecommunications Regulators' Council (SATRC)**

SATRC was formed in 1997 by an initiative of APT and ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The SATRC is responsible for discussion and coordination of all the issues relating to regulations in telecommunication and ICT which are of common interest to the telecommunication regulators in South Asian countries. These issues included radio frequency coordination, standards, regulatory trends and issues, strategies for telecommunication development and telecommunication related international affairs. The council also identifies and promotes areas of potential cooperation in telecommunication among South Asian countries; and facilitates the exchange of information in these areas through activities such as seminars, training and workshops.

Bhutan joined SATRC in 1998.

## **25. Asian-Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC)**

The APGC was established to further the bonds of friendship and improve the development of golf among Member Associations, member countries as well as other

representative organisations in golf throughout the world through friendly competition in golf.

Bhutan joined APGC in 1998. The Bhutan Golf Federation represents Bhutan.

## **26. Asian Football Confederation (AFC)**

AFC is the governing body of Asian football and one of the six Confederations making up FIFA. Formed in 1954 in Manila on the sidelines of the second Asian Games, the AFC was sanctioned by FIFA in Berne, Switzerland on June 21, 1954.

AFC is headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and consists of 47 Member Associations. Led by the AFC President, the AFC launched its Vision and Mission on January 28, 2016, in Doha, Qatar, setting out its ambitions of being the world's leading Confederation as well as having more successful Asian teams on the world stage and confirming football as the number one sport in the continent.

Bhutan joined AFC in 2000.

## **27. Asian Clearing Union (ACU)**

ACU is a payment arrangement platform whereby the participants settle payments for intra-regional transactions among the participating central banks on a net multilateral basis. The main objectives of the clearing union are to facilitate payments among member countries for eligible transactions, thereby economizing on the use of foreign exchange reserves and transfer costs, as well as promoting trade and banking relations among the participating countries. The Secretariat of the ACU is in Tehran, Iran.

Bhutan joined the ACU in 2000. The Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan (RMA) is a member of the Union.

## **28. Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)**

AIBD was established in 1977 under the auspices of UNESCO. It is a unique regional inter-governmental organisation servicing countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of electronic media development. The Government of Malaysia hosts it and the secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur. The AIBD is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development.

Full membership of the AIBD is confined to sovereign states and they are invited to designate the broadcasting authority of the country to be the beneficiary. The Institute enjoys a membership of 26 countries, 94 affiliates and 58 partners in Asia, Pacific, Europe and North America.

The Bhutan Broadcasting Corporation represents Bhutan. Bhutan joined AIBD in 2000.

### **29. Asian Cricket Council (ACC)**

ACC was formed on the 19th of September 1983, which was then named as Asian Cricket Conference. The aims and the objectives of the Conference were to organize, promote and develop the game of Cricket in Asia. Six Countries were then the Full Members of the Conference and they are India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Singapore. In 1995, the name of the organization was changed to Asian Cricket Council and a few amendments were made to further enhance the activities for the betterment of the game in Asia. Today, ACC has a total of 20 member countries. The present membership consists of nine full members and eleven Associate members. The Full Members are India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, UAE, Hong Kong, Singapore and Nepal while the Associate countries are Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei, Iran, Kuwait, Maldives, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Thailand.

The Secretariat of ACC is based in Dubai, UAE. The Bhutan Cricket Council Board represents Bhutan in the ACC. Bhutan joined ACC in 2002.

### **30. Asian Shooting Confederation (ASC)**

ASC was established to promote and guide the sound development of shooting sports in full accordance with the Constitution and General Regulations of the International Shooting Sport Federation and to strengthen the bonds of friendship and goodwill amongst member federations. The Bhutan Shooting Federation represents Bhutan in the ASC. Bhutan joined ASC in 2002.

### **31. Road Engineering Association of Association of Asia and Australasia (REAAA)**

REAAA promotes the science and practice of road engineering and related professions in the Asia Pacific region through developing professional and commercial links within and between countries in the region. REAAA was set up in June 1973 with a permanent secretariat in Malaysia. It has more than 1,400 members in about 24 countries and holds regular events including annual heads of road authorities meetings, a triennial international conference, technical visits and study tours, trade exhibitions, seminars, forums and workshops. Local REAAA Chapters have been set up in Australia, Brunei, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand and the Philippines.

Bhutan joined REAAA in 2002.

### **32. Association of Government Accounts Organization of Asia (AGAOA)**

AGAOA was formed in 2004 to promote professional understanding and technical cooperation among its members in the areas of government accounts and finance to ensure transparency, accountability and good governance.

Bhutan joined AGAOA in 2004.

### **33. Asia-Pacific Rural & Agriculture Credit Association (APRACA)**

APRACA was formally launched on October 14, 1977, in New Delhi, India. The General Secretariat of APRACA was established at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP) premises in Bangkok, Thailand.

A total of 37 institutions from 16 countries joined the APRACA as founding members – these are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, Iran, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Western Samoa and Thailand. As of 30 April 2019, a total of 86 institutions in 24 countries in the Asia-Pacific Region are affiliated with the APRACA as its members.

Bhutan joined APRACA in 2005.

### **34. South Asian Forum for Infrastructure Regulation (SAFIR)**

SAFIR was established in May 1999. It aims at providing high-quality capacity building and training on infrastructure regulation and related topics, in South Asia and to stimulate research on the subject by building a network of regional and international institutions and individuals that are active in the field. It also aims at facilitating effective and efficient regulation of Utility and infrastructure industries, initiating a beneficial exchange of knowledge and expertise, and set the trend of rapid implementation of global best practices.

Bhutan joined SAFIR in 2006.

### **35. Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC)**

ADRC was established in 1998 with the mission of enhancing the disaster resilience of its member countries, building safe communities, and creating a society where sustainable development is attainable. It works to build disaster-resilient communities and to establish networks among countries through personnel exchanges and a variety of other programs. ADRC addresses the issue of disaster risk reduction from a global perspective in cooperation with a variety of UN agencies and international organizations. ADRC is made up of 31 member countries.

Bhutan joined ADRC in 2007.

### **36. Southeast Asia Water Utilities Network (SEAWUN)**

SEAWUN is a regional network of water supply and sanitation utilities and national water associations established in August 2002. SEAWUN's goal is to help members improve performance in delivering water supply and sanitation services.

Bhutan joined SEAWUN in 2007.

### **37. Asian Forestry Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)**

AFoCO is an intergovernmental organization made up of 15 member countries that are committed to strengthening regional forest cooperation by transforming proven technologies and policies into concrete actions in the context of sustainable forest management to address the impacts of climate change.

Bhutan became a member in 2017.

### **38. Association of Management of Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA)**

AMDISA is a network of Management Education and Management Development Institutions in South Asia. Its mission is to promote management education and management development activities in South Asia, taking into account the economic, social and cultural context of the region. It is dedicated to the worldwide exchange of experiences and ideas in the relevant fields of management and development. It is the only association which networks management development institutions across the eight South Asian Nations.

The Gedu College of Business Studies, Institute of Management Studies, Royal Institute of Management, and Thimphu College are institutions that represent Bhutan in AMDISA.