

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
3rd SAARC-JAPAN SYMPOSIUM ON “PROMOTING ENERGY COOPERATION
IN SOUTH ASIA”

New Delhi

7-8 January 2010

While appreciating the growing energy requirement for socio-economic development in the region, increasing regional demand for energy security and cooperation among the SAARC Member States and their deep concerns on the issues of global warming and climate change, the participants of the 3rd Japan-SAARC Symposium on “Promoting Energy Cooperation in South Asia” held on January 7-8, 2010 recommended that:

1 Enhancing energy supplies is essential to accelerate economic and social developments and to improve the Human Development Indices of the SAARC Member States. Providing access to affordable energy supplies to the teeming millions living below the poverty line is the way forward to alleviate poverty in the SAARC region. This can be achieved through the optimal utilisation of the indigenous energy resources for the SAARC Member States and sharing these resources through cross border energy infrastructure.

2 Recognising the need for collaboration among the SAARC Member States in harnessing the indigenous energy resources and procuring energy supplies from other regions to meet their increasing energy needs, a “SAARC Regional Energy Framework Agreement”, be put in place. Promoting cross border investments in energy sector among the SAARC Member States, investment protection and arbitration mechanisms, sharing of technology, experiences and best practices should form an integral part of this Agreement. Policies that involve the private sector as strategic partners should also be evolved. The existing regional policy development mechanisms need to be effectively utilised for coordination and harmonisation of SAARC Member States’ energy policies.

3 The SAARC Member States should promote renewable energy projects, such as wind, solar and biomass using the latest technology, to reduce the dependence on imported fuel.

4 Energy efficiency and demand side management in the electricity sector are the other two important areas that merit attention of the SAARC Member States.

5 A regional forum should be established where the professionals engaged in energy sector including those in regulatory bodies, generation,

transmission, distribution and exploration utilities could regularly meet and exchange views, ideas, technologies and success stories. This will promote institutional networking and linkages within the SAARC region, which is essential to operationalize the regional level programmes. To start with, the Sikkim University may initiate the concept of establishing a South Asian energy club, as a forum for engaging energy sector professionals to exchange views, ideas, technologies and success stories.

6 The SAARC Development Fund (SDF) should be increasingly utilised for regional energy projects. Besides the commitments from the SAARC Member States the SDF could draw the financial support from international financial institutions to finance regional projects.

7 Cross border energy trade is taking place between India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka and also between Pakistan and Afghanistan. This has to be consolidated by broadening the scope and coverage including through regional power and gas interconnections. Establishing a regional power trading mechanism would be beneficial in this context and help in promoting regional power trade, as in the Southern African Power Pool.

8 There is an imperative need to assess global warming led climate change and its impact on the energy resources in the region. Scientific studies should be carried out with the assistance of environment and glaciology experts to assess the extent of erosion and melting of glaciers which feed the main river systems in South Asia. Help of energy experts be sought to study, strategise and address the energy security concerns of the SAARC Member States.

9 The role of civil society including academics and media in discussions, debate and analysis on issues of energy in the context of regional cooperation/development in South Asia has been very critical and crucial. This has led to many regional cooperation and development projects and ideas in the past. This South Asian tradition has to be consolidated further by organizing regional symposia, workshops and conferences more frequently in the different SAARC Member States.

10 The SAARC Member States may consider incorporating a chapter each on Energy Efficiency to reduce energy consumptions and use of renewable energy technologies for reducing the dependence on fossil fuels as part of the school curriculum.

11 Japan may actively facilitate intra and inter-regional dialogue and cooperation through continuing SAARC-Japan Symposia.