



*The Prime Minister of Nepal*

### Message

On the occasion of the 36<sup>th</sup> Charter Day of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), I wish to extend warm greetings and best wishes to all the peoples and Member States of the SAARC.

The SAARC Charter characterizes our shared vision, collective resolve and mutual pursuit to promote peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia through eradication of poverty, accelerated economic growth and advancement in socio-cultural development. In its journey of thirty-six years, SAARC has achieved several important milestones as a common forum for promoting mutual understanding and cooperation in our region.

As we commemorate the Charter Day, the Covid-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge affecting not only health and economy but also social life and livelihoods in the region and beyond. Compounding to the already existing challenges, such as poverty, terrorism, transnational crime and climate change, among others, the pandemic has hit hard-earned developmental achievements. Given the nature of the virus, no one can be safe until everyone is safe; no one can be protected until everyone is protected. Our destiny is interlinked, and by geography, we are bound to live together in good time and bad time. There is a need for greater regional cooperation today than ever before. To collectively emerge from the pandemic, the situation underlines the importance of more concerted efforts, collaboration and cooperation among the Member States of SAARC.

Endowed with abundant natural and human resources and developmental opportunities, the South Asia is knotted by close social, cultural and civilizational linkages. Our region holds enormous potentials for economic transformation and shared prosperity of our peoples. It is through continued understanding, meaningful regional cooperation and deeper economic integration, we can realize those potentials and transform the developmental landscape of the region for larger benefit of our peoples.

Time has come to move forward with concrete action in the ground with needed political will and commitment. SAARC is not a choice, but a necessity for meaningful regional cooperation in South Asia. As a platform of our hope, SAARC can add value to our efforts for regional peace and prosperity and promote



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understanding in the region. The longer we delay, the more will be the opportunity cost. Giving fresh impetus to the stalled SAARC process including through the early convening of the Summit can rekindle hope among our people and provide ground to move forward.

Regional cooperation prominently features in Nepal's foreign policy. As the current Chair and a founding Member, Nepal has unflinching commitment to the ideals, values, and principles enshrined in the SAARC Charter. Being part of the organization that represents hope of over one-fifth of the humanity, we will continue to play a constructive role to advancing the SAARC process forward in a spirit of unity and solidarity among fellow Member States.

I wish that this special day will inspire all of us to foster mutual trust, understanding and cooperation as well as to deepen regional integration for peace and prosperity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K P Sharma Oli', written over a horizontal line.

K P Sharma Oli

Kathmandu, 08 December 2020