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President of Sri Lanka

**Message on the Occasion of the Commemoration of 36th SAARC Charter Day,
08th December 2020**

I take this opportunity to extend my warmest greetings and sincere best wishes to the Member States of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), as we celebrate the 36th Anniversary of the founding of the SAARC.

Since its inception in 1985, the SAARC has brought all of us together with a greater sense of affinity and inclusivity in the Subcontinent. Today, as we commemorate the 36th Anniversary, all eight Member States may wish to take pride in the efforts and cooperation in our Association.

I would like to commend the recent efforts of the SAARC to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the SAARC Leaders' video conference on 15th March 2020, several other Ministerial Conferences and Senior Officials Meetings by virtual mode and the establishment of the SAARC Covid-19 Emergency Fund, as well as the operationalization of the Covid-19 Emergency Response Grant Proposals of the SAARC Development Fund.

Today, as we celebrate this annual occasion, time is ripe to address a number of common issues to fully realize the founding objectives and goals of the SAARC. On this occasion, Sri Lanka resolves to cooperate with other Members to improve the living standards of the people of South Asia.

I reaffirm on this occasion, the firm commitment of Sri Lanka to the SAARC process and its progress.

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Gotabaya Rajapaksa

08 December 2020