

# An Advocacy Agenda for Mainstreaming Consumer Interest in Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation

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## Key Indicators of SARRC Countries

- **Population: 1.58 billion (about 23% world's population)**
- **40.4% world's poor**
- **% Population >\$2 day: 73.90; 1476 million population living on less than \$1.25/day**
- **Regional Trade: 5% of the total trade**
- **Between 1990-91 to 2000-2010 increased in**
  - **% GDP: 30.26**
  - **% GDP per capita: 61.40**
  - **% Export of Goods and Services: 25.30**
  - **% Import of Goods and Services: 17.15**
- **FDI inflow increased: \$ 13.3 billion/year**

- **Trade Liberalization**
  - ❑ SAFTA adopted negative list approach for tariff reduction.
  - ❑ Non-LDC Members- India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will reduce tariff to 0-5% by 2013.
  - ❑ LDC Members- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal will reduce tariff to 0-5% by 2016.
- **Tariffs, para-tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)**
- **Products in Sensitive List- Reduced products in the list**
- **Large Trade deficit**
- **Bilateral Trade Agreements**
- **Safeguard Measures**
- **Perception amongst Govt., Business Community, Economists, Trade Experts, CSOs and Consumers**
- **Political Consensus**

## Advocacy issues for consumer interest (Contd.)

- **Trust building among member states.**
- **Infrastructure Development- Enhance connectivity, transport will help overall economic growth and help in reducing costs**
- **Building a coalition of people across boundaries.**
- **Social Initiatives**
- **Visa liberalization**
- **Reducing multiplicity of standards and regulatory procedures**
- **Regional cooperation mechanism in the areas of investment, finance, services trade, trade facilitation and technology transfer**
- **Legislative and policy related measures, assistance for improvement of national capacity.**

## Advocacy means

- Awareness raising through cross-broader dialogues
- Research findings dissemination on trade related issues
- Policy Advocacy and lobbying with government & key decision-makers
- Potential affects of the policy on political relationships within the bureaucracy and between groups in government and their beneficiaries;
- TV & Radio Talk Shows
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Media campaign at national and international levels
- Networking amongst policy makers, business community and consumer organizations
- Networking amongst Consumer Organizations at national and regional Level.

## Conclusion

SAFTA countries could benefit significantly from facilitating new market accesses if SAFTA would be more effective. It needs an effective advocacy and lobbying amongst the SARRC countries.

We hope that SAFTA initiative could lead into a successful economic union, which is supposed to be the ultimate target. In short, a more effective SAFTA would be a tremendous chance to gain for all SAARC member states.

**Thank you**