

## **Press Release**

### **Fourteenth Governing Board Meeting of the SAARC Arbitration Council**

The Fourteenth Governing Board Meeting of the SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO) was held on 29-30 September 2025 in Islamabad, Pakistan. Representatives from the esteemed Governments of the Royal Government of Bhutan, the Republic of Maldives and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan attended the meeting in person, while representatives from People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republic of India, the Republic of Nepal, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka participated virtually. The Meeting was also attended by the Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the host country, Pakistan, and the SAARC Secretariat officials.

The Chairpersonship of the Governing Board was formally transferred from the outgoing Chair, Bangladesh, to Bhutan. Accordingly, Mr. Karma Yeshey, Chief Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment, Royal Government of Bhutan, assumed the role of Chair and presided over the meeting.

Addressing on behalf of H.E. the Secretary General of SAARC, Mr. Waseem Shahzad, Director, SAARC Secretariat, stated that the Governing Board serves the critical responsibility of providing strategic oversight for the Council's programme of activities, thus ensuring its full alignment with the Council's mandate and objectives.

The Chair of the Governing Board, Mr. Karma Yeshey, in his address, reaffirmed the mandate entrusted to the SAARC Arbitration Council and called upon the Member States for their continued cooperation in navigating this crucial process.

Mr. Choining Dorji, Director General of SARCO, presented the proposed budget for 2026 and briefed the Meeting on the programme activities undertaken during 2025. He also outlined the key challenges encountered and sought the Board's guidance and endorsement for the proposed programme activities for 2026.

The Meeting undertook a thorough review of the programme activities conducted over the previous year and the activities proposed for the Calendar Year 2026. Additionally, the participants reviewed both the Reports of the Council's audit accounts, as prepared by the Joint Audit Team, and the proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year 2026.

The two days of productive deliberations concluded successfully, resulting in several constructive recommendations, which are set to be presented at the upcoming Programming Committee meeting for further consideration and approval. These recommendations aim to

strengthen the Council's initiatives and ensure the effective implementation of its programs in the year ahead.

SAARC Arbitration Council  
Islamabad, 30 September 2025