

Draft Charter of the South Asian Regional Parliamentary Forum for Energy Cooperation

Preamble

We, the parliamentarians of the sovereign nations of South Asian countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka - recognizing the critical importance of energy security and need for strengthening regional energy cooperation in South Asia and acknowledging the shared responsibilities to address the energy challenges faced by our region and taking in to account the rich and deep historical linkages of cooperation among the people of South Asia, hereby establish the South Asian Regional Parliamentary Forum for Energy Cooperation (SARPF-EC). The Forum strongly aligns with the economic framework of sustainable development that will allow South Asian countries to yield economic well-being for all while meeting climate and environmental goals as early as possible.

Article I: Name and Abbreviation

The name of this organization shall be the South Asian Regional Parliamentary Forum for Energy Cooperation, hereinafter referred to as "Forum".

Article II: Vision of the Forum

Regional energy cooperation for an integrated, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable energy future for South Asia

Article III: Mission of the Forum

To become the credible regional voice of parliamentarians of South Asian countries for deepening regional energy integration for sustainable energy and climate prosperity for the people of South Asia.

Article IV: Aims and Objectives

Aims

To foster long term regional energy security, affordability, and sustainability in South Asia

To contribute towards global and regional efforts to mitigate climate change and accelerate clean energy transition as early as possible.

To harness for the BBINS countries the economic and social opportunities generated from the growth of the clean energy industry globally.

To achieve these aims, the specific objectives of Forum are:

- a. To facilitate cooperation among BBINS countries in the field of energy production, distribution, and utilization by prioritising cross-border electricity trade and establishment of a regional energy/electricity market.
- b. To promote the development and sharing of best practices in the energy sector.
- c. To encourage the development of a well-integrated regional energy infrastructure- South Asia Energy Grid.

Article V: Membership

1. Membership in Forum shall be open and voluntary to any parliamentarian of sovereign nation in the BBINS countries who subscribes to the objectives outlined in Article II and principles outlined in Article V.
2. New members shall be nominated by existing members.
3. The Climate Parliament Group of each member nation shall nominate and appoint their respective representatives to the Forum.

Article VI: Structure and Governance

1. The Forum shall consist of a General Assembly, a Steering Committee, and specialized subcommittees established as needed.
2. The General Assembly (GA) will comprise of all the member parliamentarians and legislators. GA shall be the highest decision-making body.
3. There will be a Steering Committee comprising of one representative parliamentarian from each BBINS countries. It will play a leadership role to meet the aims and objectives of the Forum, with the guidance of Chairperson and Co-chairperson.
4. A Chairperson and Co-chairperson of the Forum will be selected by the Steering Committee who will convene and chair the General Assembly. This will be a revolving position for maximum of three years and a minimum of two years.
5. The Secretariat shall be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Forum, organisation of the national meetings, coordination of the national activities, under the guidance of the Steering Committee. The Secretariat will be hosted by Climate Parliament staff with representation from the USAID-SAREP Team. It will also support the Steering Committee and the General Assembly through technical expertise on energy transition and energy cooperation.

6. The Steering Committee will guide the strategies and processes undertaken by the Secretariat. The Steering Committee will consist of one parliamentarian from each member nation. The steering committee meetings and discussions will be led by a Convenor.
7. The convenor will be responsible for the coordination of the Steering Committee with support from the Secretariat.
8. Specialized subcommittees may be established by the General Assembly to address specific areas of concern related to energy cooperation as and when needed.

Article VI: Language

The medium language of the Forum will be English.

Article VII: Founding principles

The founding principles of the Forum have been detailed in Appendix A. The Secretariat, Steering Committee, and the General Assembly will ensure that the Forum upholds these principles throughout its conduct.

Article VIII: Meetings and Sessions

1. The General Assembly shall meet at least once a year offline/online, with the option for special sessions as required.
2. The Steering Committee shall meet regularly to ensure the proper functioning of the Forum.
3. Specialized subcommittees/Task Force may meet as necessary to fulfil their designated roles and responsibilities.

Article IX: Partner Organisation

Partner organisation status may be granted by the General Assembly to the organisations that have the potential to significantly support South Asian Regional Parliamentary Forum for Energy Cooperation in achieve its vision, mission, and objectives.

Article X: Observer Status

Observer status may be granted may be granted by the General Assembly to the applications for membership whose application is pending or to any other organisation which can further

the interest and objective of South Asian Regional Parliamentary Forum for Energy Cooperation.

Article X: Technical support

From time to time, the General Assembly will invite or consult expert organisations to support the Forum through reports, presentations, advice and research analyses on regional energy cooperation and clean energy technologies.

Article XI: Decision-Making

1. Decisions in the General Assembly shall be made by a simple majority vote of parliamentarians present and voting.
2. Decisions in the Steering Committee and specialized subcommittees shall be made by consensus or, where consensus is not achievable, by a simple majority vote.

Article XII: Funding

1. The Forum Secretariat will raise the resources in consultation with the Steering Committee, for the running of the Forum.

Article XIII: Cooperation with Other Organizations

1. The Forum may cooperate with other regional and international organizations with similar objectives and principles as passed by the General Assembly and suggested by the Steering Committee.

Article XIV: Amendments

1. Amendments to this Charter may be proposed by any member parliamentarian and shall be placed in the General Assembly for approval.

Article XV: Entry into Force

1. This Charter shall enter into force upon ratification by the member parliamentarians during the launch of the SARPF-EC.

Article XVI: Withdrawal of members

Any member parliamentarian and/or legislator can voluntarily leave the Forum by informing the secretariat.

Article XVII: Dissolution

The General Assembly can decide to dissolve the Forum by the consensus of the General Assembly or special declaration of the Steering Committee.

The following parliamentarians have consented to this Charter of the South Asian Regional Parliamentary Forum for Energy Cooperation on this ____ day of _____, in the year _____, in the city of _____.

Appendix A

Founding principles of South Asian Regional Parliamentary Forum for Energy Cooperation

- **Multi-party**

The SARPF-EC (Forum) will be multi-party in its membership as well as approach. Forum membership will represent national and regional interests rather than the interests of any specific political ideology. The Forum will always strive to maintain its cross-party nature in close coordination with the Secretariat.

- **Democratic**

Decision-making by the Forum will take place through democratic means. All key policy decisions will be taken by the General Assembly through consensus building and/or voting. Operational decisions will be taken by Steering Committee comprising MPs from all member countries.

- **Action oriented**

The Forum will strive to not just deliberate upon important issues related to regional energy cooperation but also work towards implementing the policy resolutions in their individual countries and international fora. This could range from dialogues with key policymakers, raising awareness, oversight on policy progress, forming alliances.

- **Science-based**

SARPF members will base their interventions and discussions on updated scientific research. They will seek support from established international, regional, and national energy experts and reports whenever needed. The secretariat will strive to create knowledge repository of latest research from the sources representing highest academic integrity.

- **Inclusive**

The Forum will always welcome and represent all communities in the region, particularly the marginalised communities. The inclusive principle of the Forum will be extended to all MPs, guest experts, and secretarial staff members.

- **Equitable and just transition**

The SARPF-EC will make decisions that benefit all nations involved equally. Moreover, Members will strive towards policy resolutions and consensus that will preclude undue negative implications for any particular community. Wherever such effects are deemed inevitable, immediate steps will be suggested to alleviate the near and long-term negative consequences for such communities.

- **Grounded in regional context**

Policy actions adopted by the Forum will remain firmly rooted in the regional context. The South Asian regional interests and priorities will be upheld when technological and financial solutions are assessed.