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| **Minutes of the South Asia Foundation Governing Council Meeting 17th January 2017, Colombo, Sri Lanka** | **Report, if any, on action taken** |
| The following were present   1. Madam Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga–Chair, Sri Lanka   Chapter   1. Mr N Ram - President – Principal Trustee, Madanjeet Singh   Foundation   1. Madam France Marquet – Principal Trustee, Madanjeet Singh   Foundation (MSF)   1. Dr Syeda Hameed – Trustee MSF & Vice Chair – SAF India Chapter 2. Dr Kamal Hossain – Trustee MSF –& Chair – Bangladesh Chapter 3. Dr Nischal Nath Pandey – Trustee – MSF & Chair – SAF Nepal   Chapter   1. Prof Salima Hashmi – Trustee MSF & Chair, SAF Pakistan Chapter 2. Mr Armin Dobler – Trustee MSF 3. Mr Navin Chawla – Advisor – MSF 4. Prof Veena Sikri – Vice Chair – SAF India Chapter 5. Dr Omara Khan Masoudi – Chair – SAF Afghanistan Chapter 6. Dr Jamilur Reza Chaudhury – Vice Chair – Bangladesh Chapter 7. Ms Nim Dem – Secretary – SAF – Bhutan Chapter 8. Mr Hamidullah Arefi – Secretary, SAF Afghanistan Chapter   Regret was received from Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, Chairperson, SAF-Bhutan  By Invitation- Ms Swinitha Perera – Secretary SAF Sri Lanka Chapter  Ms Kumari Wijyarathne – Assistant Secretary – SAF Sri Lanka Chapter   1. **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**    1. Issues related to matters arising out of Minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd November 2015 in Dhaka, Bangladesh were discussed and the Minutes confirmed prior to the official commencement of the meeting.    2. Mr N Ram welcomed Madame Chandrika Kumaratunga – Chairperson, SAF Sri Lanka Chapter and called upon her to chair the meeting.    3. Madame Kumaratunga welcomed the participants and she hoped that all arrangements for the meeting were to everybody’s satisfaction.    4. Madame Kumaratunga called upon the Chairperson of SAF to present their Reports in alphabetical order. The SAF Afghanistan Chapter - Dr Masoudi was invited to present his report. 2. **SAF-AFGHANISTAN**     1. Prof Masoudi, Chair - SAF Afghanistan Chapter greatly appreciated the guidance and support given to them and were committed to carry the vision of SAF forward. He said that the setting up of the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Centre for Preservation of Afghanistan’s Cultural Heritage (UMCPACH) is helping to instil a sense of the cultural heritage and the strength of national identity in the people through its work.    2. Programmes are on for training capacity building and cultural heritage to secondary school teachers and students. These programmes were very successful. A documentary film on the work of the Centre and the training programme was shown.    3. Mr Arefi – Secretary – Afghanistan Chapter spoke further at the request of Dr Masoudi. He stated that the public awareness programme on heritage and culture were going very well. A majority of the participants were women. Gender equality was met by the Chapter when selecting recipients for scholarships. A SAF Alumni unit has been formed. A joint programme is in place with the Bamiyan University. They faced a problem when applying for visas for the selected students as a letter from their Chapter was requested by the authorities, but as the Chapter is not registered it was not possible to issue an official letter. 3. **SAF-BANGLADESH** 4. Dr. Kamal Hossain, Chair, SAF Bangladesh Chapter, requested Dr Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Vice Chair to report on major activities of the Chapter. 5. One of the major activities of the Chapter at present was related to the selection of students for the SAF scholarships -- advertising, processing of applications and selection. A large number of students have benefitted from the SAF scholarships. The Chapter has been successful in selecting scholars for study in various UNESCO-Madanjeet Centres of Excellence in India. Many of these scholars have returned home after successful completion of the studies leading to Masters as well PhD studies. However, the Chapter has not been successful in finding students for the Post Graduate Degree in Water Management at the Moratuwa University. There are two main reasons, which are mentioned below:   - Master’s degree programmes in Water Resources Management of a high standard were offered by a number of universities in the home country;  - The second reason was the requirement of a minimum of one year work experience after graduating. This posed a problem for young engineers who have just found employment to obtain leave for the course of study.   1. A data base of SAF scholars was being put in place to form an Alumni unit with the intention of using the young people as ambassadors in carrying forward and spreading the vision of SAF. 2. The foundation laying for the building to house SAILS (UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Institute of Human Rights and South Asian Common Law (UMCHRSACL)) took place during the last SAF Governing Council meeting held in Dacca in November 2015. The obtaining of additional land has been approved and funds are being raised to meet the additional expenses. The MA programme syllabus for one year duration has been approved. An issue has arisen in that according to the Universities Act, Independent Institutes cannot affiliate with Public Universities. This problem was being looked into in order to find a solution. 3. **SAF-BHUTAN** 4. Ms Nim Dem, Secretary, SAF-Bhutan Chapter represented the Chapter as the Chairperson was unable to attend due to unavoidable circumstances. 5. Since the MOU was signed, the process to obtain NGO status has been ongoing. This was the biggest challenge faced by SAF-Bhutan. The registration of SAF-Bhutan with the civil society is proving difficult due to “South Asia” being part of the name of the Chapter. As per the laws of Bhutan, it needs to be registered as a foreign NGO. In order to register as a civil society organization (foreign NGO) the Chapter needed to show a minimum of US$ 300,000.00 in the accounts. It needed to be shown in currency form and value of scholarships etc. could not be counted. Another issue was the need to acquire office space for the Chapter and a Programme Officer to be placed in order to register the organization. Funds for additional expenditure can be raised only once the organization is registered. The only alternative is to have a local name and also a change in the logo. The members agreed to the proposed change of name and also logo for registration as a local organization. The SAF- Bhutan Chapter needs to send an office memo about the change in the name as also the logo to SAF for record. However, while dealing with SAF the Chapter would still continue using SAF. 6. As regards the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Centre for South Asia Forestry Studies (UMCSAFS), it was stated that since the Government auditors take a long time to submit the audit report it was suggested about the possibility to release the funds for the year ahead based on the *on line* accounts submitted. On the selection of students, the need to assess their ability to study in the English language was an important requirement. 7. A documentary film was shown on the progress of the UMCSAFS. It was stated that seven students have graduated and nine were studying at present. 69 students in all had graduated from the different Institutions and they were now employed. 8. **SAF-INDIA**    1. Under each of the Institutions of Excellence, Prof. Sikri emphasized that the focus should be on strict criteria in the selection of scholars, including educational qualifications, knowledge of English and suitability for the course of studies. The support and cooperation of all the SAF Chapters is requested in this, including through Skype interviews and even written tests for the prospective students, if considered necessary (by the receiving institution). This is vital to ensure that the selected student is able to keep up with the studies.    2. During the SAF Governing Council meeting in Dhaka In November 2015, a suggestion had been made about short-term visiting faculty from SAARC countries being placed in the Institutions of Excellence, keeping in mind financial constraints. Very often, eminent individuals do travel to other South Asian countries, and coinciding with such visits, series of talks can be arranged at very little cost. This will facilitate interaction with students and cross-generational exchange of ideas and opinions among the countries of South Asia.   **5A UMISARC (UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Institute for South Asia Regional Cooperation), Pondicherry University**  5A.1 With the exception of students from Pakistan, UMISARC has been admitting the full quota of 14 students (two per country on the basis of gender equality) for the last two years. Over the last nine years (since 2008, when the programme was first instituted), UMISARC has utilized 99 scholarships against the full number of 144 scholarships (69%). UMISARC has its own building, and has the lowest (in India) per capita expenditure per MSG scholar of Rs 1.74 lakhs or US $ 2560 (1US$ is Rs 68.12). The last meeting of the UMISARC Governing Council was held (on Skype) in April 2016, with the participation of Ms France Marquet. From academic year 2016-17, the new revised syllabus has been introduced. Since 2016, UMISARC has instituted the Madanjeet Singh Memorial Lecture. Professor Rehman Sobhan from Bangladesh has been requested to deliver the Second Madanjeet Singh Memorial Lecture in 2017.  **5B UNESCO Madanjeet Singh School for Green Energy Technology (UMSGET), University of Pondicherry**  5B.1 UMSGET has established a good reputation for its two-year M Tech programme. UMSGET started accepting SAARC students from the 2010-11 academic year (a maximum of eight each year). UMSGET now attracts between 6 and eight students each year. They have accepted 39 students against the total of 56 seats (70%). Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh have been particularly regular in sending students to UMSGET. The UMSGET building (inaugurated in April 2014, fully operational by 2016) is state-of-the-art, with excellent facilities, including a Solar Energy Laboratory. UMSGET maintains good financial discipline, with a per capita expenditure of Rs 2.36 lakhs or US $ 3466 (approx.) per MSG scholar. However, they need to be more regular with the statutory meetings of the UMSGET Advisory Council.  **5C UMCSAJ (UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Centre of South Asian**  **Journalism), Asian College of Journalism (ACJ), Chennai**  5C.1 ACJ offers Madanjeet Singh Group scholarships for a one-year post-graduate diploma course in any one of four media disciplines: print, television, radio, new media. The post graduate diploma brings with it a high degree of certainty in access to employment on completion of the course. UMCSAJ has taken in 12 students in 2016-17, 9 students in 2015-16, with 13 in 2014-15, and 9 in 2013-14. This is consistently more than the eight MSG scholarships indicated in the MOU. Since 2002, ACJ has taken in 145 students against the specified 112. ACJ is disciplined in presenting its accounts, and is the only one among the four Institutions of Excellence in India that submits vouchers in verification of the expenditure incurred.  **5D UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Institute for Kashmir Studies (UMIKS), University of Kashmir, Srinagar**  5D.1 The Madanjeet Singh Foundation (MSF) has decided to cease the scholarship programme at UMIKS with effect from the 2017-18 academic year. A total of 29 students from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal will have received MA degrees when this programme ends in May 2017.  **5E Activities of SWAN (South Asia Women’s Network)**  5E.1 The South Asia Women’s Network (SWAN) was established in March 2009 at the Conference on “Women of South Asia: Partners in Development" convened at Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. Professor Veena Sikri, Founder and Convener of SWAN, provided a brief background of its activities.  5E.2 SWAN brings together women leaders, parliamentarians, academics, experts, activists and media representatives from nine countries of South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SWAN emphasises the importance of gender empowerment as the key to sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability in South Asia through an integrated approach incorporating the centrality of women's agency, voice, participation and leadership. At its Fifth Annual Conference in Colombo in August 2013, SWAN finalized its implementation strategy by agreeing upon and adopting the "Roadmap for Sustainable Development for the Women of South Asia". This comprehensive document outlines priority areas for the women of South Asia in three broad sectors: economic issues, environmental issues and socio-political issues.  5E.3 In May 2010, a MOU of Cooperation was signed between Jamia Millia Islamia University and South Asia Foundation (SAF-India). Under this MOU, SAF-India funds SWAN’s Annual Conferences, to be organised by rotation in the capitals of the participating South Asian nations. Since April 2012, after the SAF Governing Council Meeting in Beaulieu-sur-Mer, SWAN is a programme of SAF-India, with the terms of the MoU continuing to be followed. SAF-India has funded six SWAN Annual Conferences, in Dhaka (2011), Kathmandu (2012), Colombo (2013), Thimphu (2014), Maldives (2015) and Yangon (2016). SWAN deeply appreciates the continued support of the Madanjeet Singh Foundation and the South Asia Foundation.   1. **SAF-NEPAL** 2. Dr Nishcal Nath Pandey, Chair - SAF Nepal Chapter gave a brief report on the UMCDSRC:  * UMCDSRC has been functioning smoothly * SAF Scholars from Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka returned after 4 years of successful completion of bachelors degree education. * SAF-Nepal has also been inviting Heads of various UNESCO SAF Institutions to Nepal. * SAF-Nepal coordinates with the SAARC Secretariat and the Various   Directors.   * It is in this connection it was stated   that the Apex Body status demands SAF  keeps them abreast of its activities.   * Nepali Scholars are also in all the other   UNESCO SAF Institutions.   1. SAF alumni unit has been formed. Arrangements are on to set up a PhD programme coupled with a PhD from Germany. National College, Kathmandu is planning to provide part of a building to house the UMCDSRC. SAARC Secretariat is kept informed of all SAF activities. A documentary film done by the students themselves was shown covering all aspects of their life at the institute. Mr Pandey was also happy to inform that there were 3 SAF scholar couples, 3 Scholars married their fellow colleagues, though this had not been a part of the programme. 2. **SAF-PAKISTAN** 3. The Chairperson SAF Pakistan, Prof Salima Hashmi made an illustrated presentation highlighting various aspects of the activities and achievements of the UMISAA at the School of Visual Art and Design at Beaconhouse National University. The presentation built on the previous report from January 2016. It posted out that currently 36 students were receiving scholarships to study at the UMISAA. 4. Prof Hashmi showed examples of work currently being done by students.  It was mentioned that Mr. Moonis Ahmed Shah from Srinagar, India, was awarded the gold medal for highest achievement in the School by the Chairman of the Board, Mrs Nasrin Kasuri at the Convocation held on December 30, 2016. Mr. Samyukta Bandar from Nepal and Mr. Mahmud ul Hassan from Bangladesh were the flag bearers at the Convocation. 5. Prof. Hashmi also made a presentation of the achievements of alumni and faculty:  * Prof Salima Hashmi was honoured by an honorary doctorate by the University of Bath Spa, UK, for services to Art and Education. * Mr. Rashid Rana, Dean of School of Visual Art and Design, was selected Artistic Director of the Lahore Biennale, and lectured at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. * Mr. Ghulam Mohammad from Pakistan won the prestigious Jameel Art Prize awarded at the Pera Museum, Istanbul. * Mr. Moonis Ahmed Shah from India was awarded an Australian Government scholarship to do his MFA in Melbourne. * Ms. Hanifa Alizada from Afghanistan exhibited her work at the Gallerie Des Etable, France * Ms. Kubra Khademi from Afghanistan has been awarded 'Knight of the Order of Art and Letters’ by the Ministry of Culture, France.  1. In response to a query from Bhutan delegation, Prof Hashmi pointed out that the scholarships awarded to Bhutan exceeded its quota, since three students instead of two had been awarded scholarships. Nepal also had three scholarships at the moment and Afghanistan had four.  She stated that the courses being of a longer duration [4 years for BFA and 2 years for MA] the scholarships could only be filled after these students had completed their studies. 2. **SAF-SRI LANKA** 3. Madame ChandrikaBandaranaike Kumaratunga, Chair, SAF - Sri Lanka, said that she did not wish to elaborate the ongoing work of the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Centre for South Asia Water Management as a half day programme was arranged by the Institute for all present on the following day, but was happy to say that the programme was progressing well. 4. This year too SAF - Sri Lanka sent seven SAF scholars to the different institutes. Though there was a drop in the number of applications, the Chapter was able to send up students for the yearly intakes. She was happy to say that after a lapse of a five year, two students from Jaffna (North of the country) were selected to the course in Art studies at BNU University. 5. She also noted that Mr Prasad Dharmasena, a SAF PhD student who completed studies at the University of Kashmir, has been appointed CEO/Director of the National Institute of Plantation Management. 6. Madame Kumaratunga invited all to attend the programme at Moratuwa University the following day. 7. One major factor of a wider selection of students not being available is the lack of proficiency of the English language. There is a need to target the less privileged to benefit from the scholarships whenever possible, but such students face the problem with the language. The English educated students target to travel to the West in the hope of getting employment in these countries. 8. **ANY OTHER MATTERS** 9. **Prof Veena Sikri** said that it was very important that the students are briefed about the country they are travelling to. There is a need to orient them as to what they should expect at the other end. 10. **Mr Navin Chawla** said all intended scholars should be apprised of University/ College rules which need to be followed at the respective places of learning. A document should be signed by the scholars binding them to observe the rules of attendance as well as stay in their respective hostels. It is also important to sensitize students of different cultures and practices of the country of study including dietary matters, climatic conditions etc. Regarding Pondicherry University – it has been useful to strengthen the practice of inviting visiting lecturers in order that the courses of study should benefit from an all SAARC perspective. 11. **Prof Salima Hashmi** – It was important to realize the global context in which the Institutes are working. Extremism is at its height in all parts of the world. SAF is going against this by being committed to the ideals of SAF in investing in the future. 12. The Chair brought to the attention of those present a note that was given to her by a member of SAF Sri Lanka Chapter Board on Climate Diplomacy, which will be of importance in the future to face a very important issue affecting countries as a result of climate change.   “CLIMATE DIPLOMACY” - Over the coming decades, climate change has the potential to cause significant and highly uncertain impacts on societies, undermining human security and increasing the risks of conflict and instability. South Asia extends across Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The region – in particular the glacial areas of the Himalayas – will be significantly affected by climate change. Decreased availability of natural resources and an increasing number and intensity of natural disasters will be the main challenges. In the Himalayan sub-region, food, energy and water are closely interlinked. The sub-region is most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, in particular due to the effects on wetlands. Countries of the region will face problems for want of water, food, and energy to meet the needs of their people.  **“Options”**- sustainable trans boundary natural resource management (TBNRM) as an opportunity for regional economic development and integration. Cooperation in wildlife and Bio diversity management by establishing trans boundary parks, to mountain conservation areas, to integrated management frameworks for shared marine ecosystems, to spatial development initiatives is a must.  “Persons with special needs in Sri Lanka” –  **Options-**Data for six types attached. Options-Assess for their needs by competent persons with sensitivity, Each is supported to realize their maximum potential whilst recognize any social constraints, National competency standards and   qualifications which support avenues for livelihood and therapeutic support, Every such person is provided options to study from homes, study over longer periods to acquire qualifications.”   1. **Madam France Marquet** - The importance of a creation of a UNESCO Chair for UMCSAWM and spoke of the ground work done by her in this regard.   Thanked Mme Chandrika Kumaratunga for graciously making time to Chair this important meeting. She also thanked all the participants for their active participation and their valuable contributions. She spoke about the Chair named after Madanjeet Singh at the Metropolitan University of Educational Sciences in Chile.  --------- | Noted.  Noted.  Noted.  Noted.  Noted.  The Chair, SAF-Bangladesh may please inform the steps taken in this direction.  Noted.  Any solution found for this problem ? SAF-Bangladesh chair may please clarify.  Noted.  SAF-Bhutan may please appraise the Governing council about the steps taken as a follow-up in this regard.  Noted.  Noted.  Noted. Some of these points were raised by the Advisory Council of UMCSAJ, Chennai – Please see Agenda Item No. 3  Noted.  Noted.  Prof. Rehman Sobhan delivered the Memorial Lecture on 17th April, 2017.  Noted.  Noted with appreciation.  The Scholarship programme at UMIKS ceased from 2017-18 academic year. The scholars have since received their MA degree certification.  Noted.  Noted.  Noted.  SWAN ceased to be a SAF-India programme from 2017.  Noted.  Noted.  Noted.  Noted with appreciation.  Noted with appreciation.  Noted.  Noted. The Group visited UMCSAWM at Moratuwa University the following day.  Noted.  Noted with appreciation.  Noted.  Noted. Please also see Agenda Item No. 3    Noted.  Noted.  Noted.  Noted.    The proposal is agreed to in principle and the matter is with UNESCO.  Noted. |