

## **Trade Policies of South Asian Countries and Regional Integration**

South Asia is home to almost 1.67 billion people (Prasai and Surie 2015) and host to multiple problems like poverty, food insecurity, health, education, sanitation and drinking water etc. Climate change has introduced new disasters and livelihood challenges. These problems call for stronger co-operation among regional countries. Unfortunately, however, South Asia is one of the least integrated regions on all fronts (Mahbub ul-Haq 1997). Blame game and conflicts are prevalent in the region, and non-state actors are benefiting from it at the cost of ordinary citizens.

It is perceived that trade can lead the process of regional integration and ensure cordial relations among all the countries. In this context, this panel will investigate the status of regional integration and future opportunities to specifically:

1. Review trade policies of South Asian countries through the lens of regional integration.
2. Investigate the status of regional integration.
3. Analyse the potential for regional integration.
4. Explore the impact of regional integration on peace and poverty.

### **References**

Mahbub ul-Haq 1997, *Human Development in South Asia*, Oxford University Press-Karachi and the Human Development Centre-Islamabad, Pakistan.

Prasai, S. and Surie, M.D. 2015, 'From the World Water Forum: A Look at South Asia's Regional Co-operation on Water', 15 April, *Notes from the Field, Weekly Insight and Analysis in Asia*, The Asia Foundation, <<http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2015/04/15/from-the-world-water-forum-a-look-at-south-asias-regional-cooperation-on-water/>>, accessed 16 October 2015.

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