

**Information Hand-out for the Media on South Asian Speakers' Summit
on Achieving Sustainable Development Goals
in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, 18 to 20 February 2017**

Indore, 16 February 2017: Lok Sabha Speaker Smt. Sumitra Mahajan will inaugurate the South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Indore, Madhya Pradesh in Hotel Radisson Blu at 1000 hrs on 18 February 2017.

The Parliament of India and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) are jointly organizing the meeting of the South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at Indore, Madhya Pradesh from 18 to 20 February 2017.

The Presiding officers of Parliament from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka are attending the Summit.

The Summit will discuss the following subjects relevant to South Asia region during the two-day deliberations: (i) Identifying Resources for SDGs Implementation in South Asia: Opportunities for Parliamentary Cooperation; (ii) Gender Equality as a critical factor for Sustainable Development; (iii) Dealing Effectively with the Challenge of Climate Change and Natural Disasters: Opportunities for Regional Parliamentary Cooperation.

Sustainable Development refers to a pattern of social and structured economic transformations that optimize the economic and societal benefits available in the present, without jeopardizing the likely potential for similar benefits in the future.

In September 2015, the Member States of United Nations adopted a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. Earlier, in 2000, the Member States of United Nations had adopted 8 Millennium – Development Goals (MDGs). The present SDGs are more comprehensive and ambitious as compared to MDGs.

The South Asian region, being the most densely populated region of the world with less than four per cent of the world's land, is home to about 25 per cent of the world's population. South Asia shares a common history, culture and ethnicity which binds the region together. The region faces similar developmental problems and the unique

bonding shared among the countries would help them work collectively to realize the dream of building a better world for people of the Region. This Summit will deliberate on key issues of development having a bearing on SDGs in this region.

Earlier in January 2016, Speakers of Parliament from South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka) had met for the first time in Dhaka, Bangladesh and discussed ways and concrete action for the Parliaments of the region to help implement the SDGs. The Dhaka Declaration highlighted the importance of strong Parliamentary action on the SDGs and established the South Asian Speakers's Forum on Achieving the SDGs. It was decided that the Forum should meet once a year to discuss progress and implementation of the SDGs.

This 2017 Summit in Indore is being held following this Declaration taken at Dhaka.

India has, for a long time, been endeavouring to proceed on the path of sustainable development by mainstreaming its core elements into its various developmental policies and programmes. Our Parliament has also been proactively functioning to support the Government to give an added impetus to the implementation of its policies and programmes in consonance with the SDGs.

The Parliament of India has been making consistent efforts to mainstream the role of women legislators in policy formulation and programme implementation in the development sphere. Last year in August, Parliament hosted the first meeting of BRICS Women Parliamentarian Forum in Jaipur, wherein women Parliamentarians from the BRICS countries discussed ways and means of realizing the SDGs targets. Earlier in March 2016, a two-day National Women Legislators Conference was held in New Delhi to dwell on many important issues and challenges concerning women with a special thrust on how women legislators could proactively contribute towards nation building. The Indore Summit provides an international platform to the parliamentarians of the South Asian Region to collectively discuss the developmental concerns of the Region.