

**‘NO DEVELOPMENT IS POSSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE UNLESS IT HAS A HUMAN FACE’, SAYS LOK SABHA SPEAKER**

**Indore, 18 February 2017:** Inaugurating the South Asian Speakers’ Summit in Hotel Radisson Blu at Indore today, Lok Sabha Speaker Smt. Sumitra Mahajan said that no development is possible and sustainable unless it has a human face. In this context, she quoted Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya who once said that “Integral humanism is the basis for development as it espouses indigenous economic model that puts the human being at the center stage.” She also felt that that development at the cost of our culture is not sustainable and that the past tells us how civilizational strengths had steered us through the contemporary challenges.

Smt. Mahajan said the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have set global priorities for progress of humanity and they strive to achieve a balance between the three pillars of economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Lauding the salutary philosophy behind these goals, she stressed that the first and foremost should be the citizen and accordingly inclusive and broad based economic growth has to be promoted to reduce the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

Observing that countries in South Asia have not only a shared history and contiguous geography but also a shared destiny, Smt. Mahajan emphasized that they should work in tandem to achieve the goals for peace and prosperity of their people. In this context, she referred to some calculations, which mention that the estimated expenditure for achieving of SDGs globally is about 5 to 7 trillion USD per annum of which the developing countries need about 3.9 trillion USD per annum. She informed that India plans an expenditure of about 565 billion dollars per annum approximately in the next 15 years to achieve SDGs, which will shape its developmental priorities in times to come.

Smt. Mahajan said that India is committed to working with international community to craft an ambitious, comprehensive and equitable development agenda with poverty eradication at its core. She said that parliamentarians, who are the bridge between peoples and their governments, have a great role to play

in achieving these targets. She urged them to focus on issues related to inter-generational equity; inequitable nature of development between nations; requirement of financial assistance and technology transfer from developed countries to developing countries; enabling more equitable growth versus environmental concerns. Smt. Mahajan was happy to note that in the Indore Summit, an effort has been made to capture three themes - resources for implementation of SDGs, gender equity, climate change and disaster management.

Recalling the legacy of Devi Ahilyabai Holkar whose contributions for women's upliftment was remarkable, Smt. Mahjan said that she was the queen of hearts of people. She is fondly remembered and worshipped for her great administrative qualities and dispensing justice without fear or favour. She said that she felt privileged to represent this constituency for the last 28 years which was once ruled by this legendary woman.

Earlier, the President of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Mr. Saber Chowdhury said that Madhya Pradesh, in which the historic and dynamic city of Indore is situated, is the heart of democracy in India. Smt. Mahajan, he said, has been elected from Indore for 8 consecutive terms and it shows the tremendous faith and trust that the people of Indore have been reposing in her. Normally the vote share of politicians go down with successive elections, however it is laudable that Smt. Mahajan's vote share has increased from 50% in her first election to 65% in the last election held in 2014. He felt that the imperative of SDGs for the countries of South Asia is very critical because if South Asia fails, the SDGs will also fail. He said that it is a daunting task to achieve the targets of SDGs as almost 31% of the total population of this region is under poverty. In this backdrop, parliamentarians have to play a critical role in shaping the national priorities of their countries. He informed that Sri Lanka has agreed to hold the next South Asian Speakers' Summit in 2018.

The Speaker of Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha Dr. Seetasaran Sharma said that regional cooperation and integration can fruitfully complement the national actions achieving SDGs in South Asia in several ways like trade liberalization, strengthening transport connectivity and facilitation of cross border transport and trade. He said that regional cooperation is vital for strengthening energy security and sustainability in South Asia. He hoped that the delegates would have fruitful discussions and significant and progressive steps would be taken in the direction of achievement of SDGs.

Besides Smt. Mahajan, the Summit is being attended by Mr. Saber Chowdhury, President, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); Mr. Abdul Raouf Ibrahimi, Speaker of National Assembly of Afghanistan; Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of Parliament of Bangladesh; Mr. Jigme Zangpo, Speaker of National Assembly of Bhutan; Mr. Tshering Dorji, Deputy Chairperson of National Council of Bhutan; Mr. Karu Jayasuriya, Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka; Mr. Abdulla Maseeh Mohamed, Speaker of Parliament of Maldives; Ms. Onasari Gharti, Speaker of Parliament of Nepal, and Members of Parliaments from the participating countries.

Earlier, the Guard of Honour was presented to Smt. Mahajan at Hotel Radisson Blu.

The Closing Session of the Summit will be held between 1200 hrs to 1300 hrs on 19 February 2017.