

# Regional Cooperation and the SDGs in South Asia

Md. Nasir Uddin

Research Associate, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh

&

PhD Candidate, School of Development Economics,

National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand.

# Contents

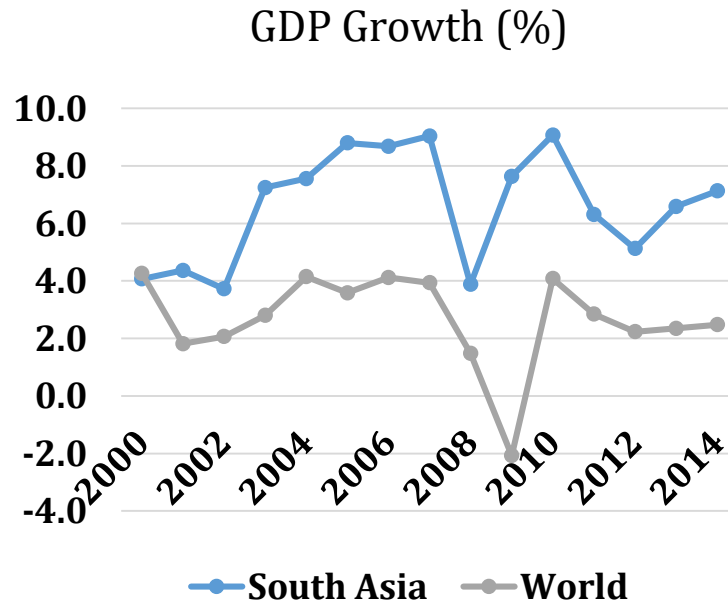
- I. Benchmarking SDGs in South Asia for Moving Forward
- II. Governance, Peace & Security: An Area of Special Focus for South Asia
- III. Convening Role of Private Sector in SDGs: New Issue



# I. Benchmarking SDGs in South Asia for Moving Forward

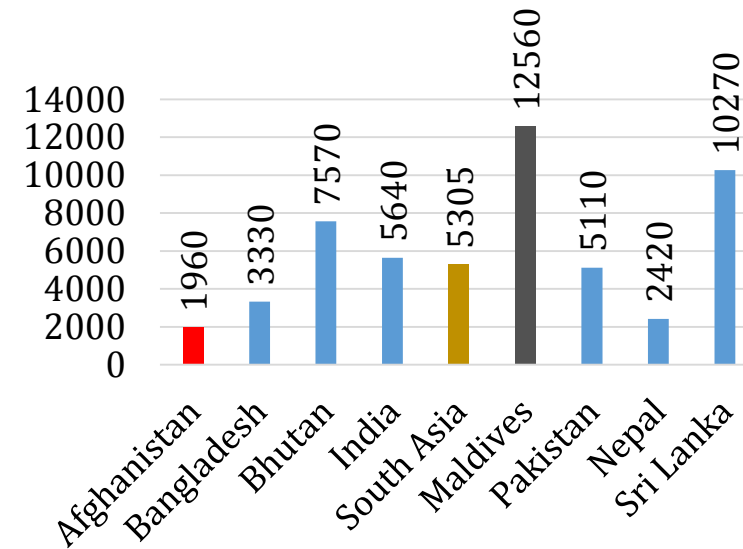
## a. Growth

- Compared with other sub-regions, **South** and South-West Asia **has been slow** in leveraging regional economic integration. Full potential of sub-regional cooperation arrangements, SAARC, remains untapped (ESCAP 2013)



- GDP Growth (annual%) of South Asia is upward moving **but fluctuating**

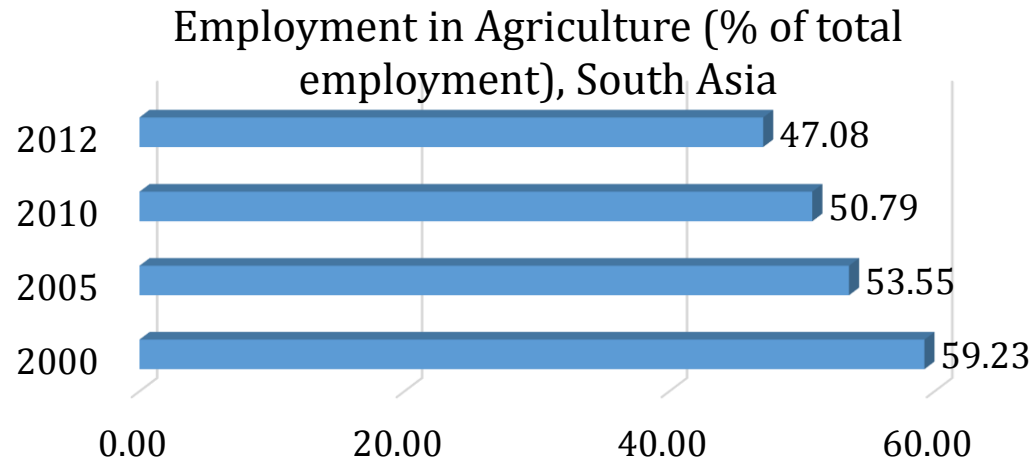
GNI Per capita (In PPP) 2014



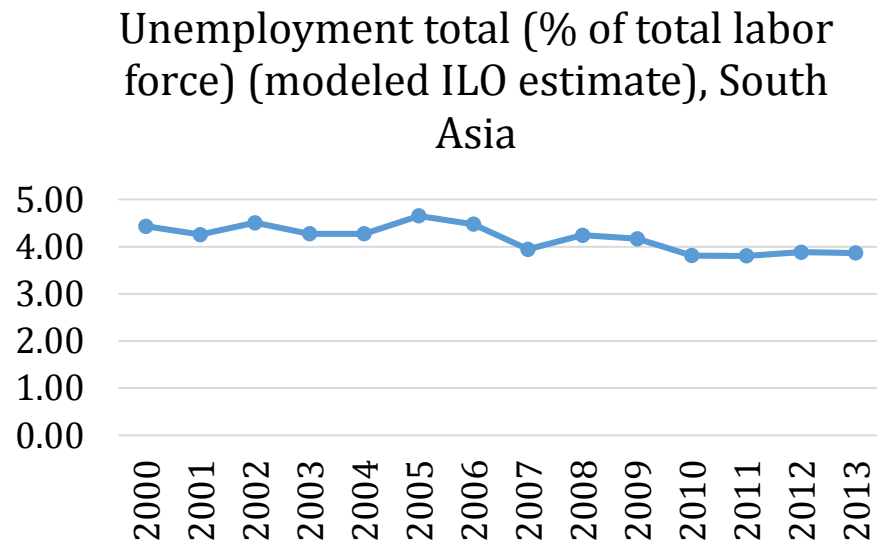
- Maldives: **Highest**
- Afghanistan: **Lowest**

# I. Benchmarking SDGs in South Asia for Moving Forward

## C. Employment



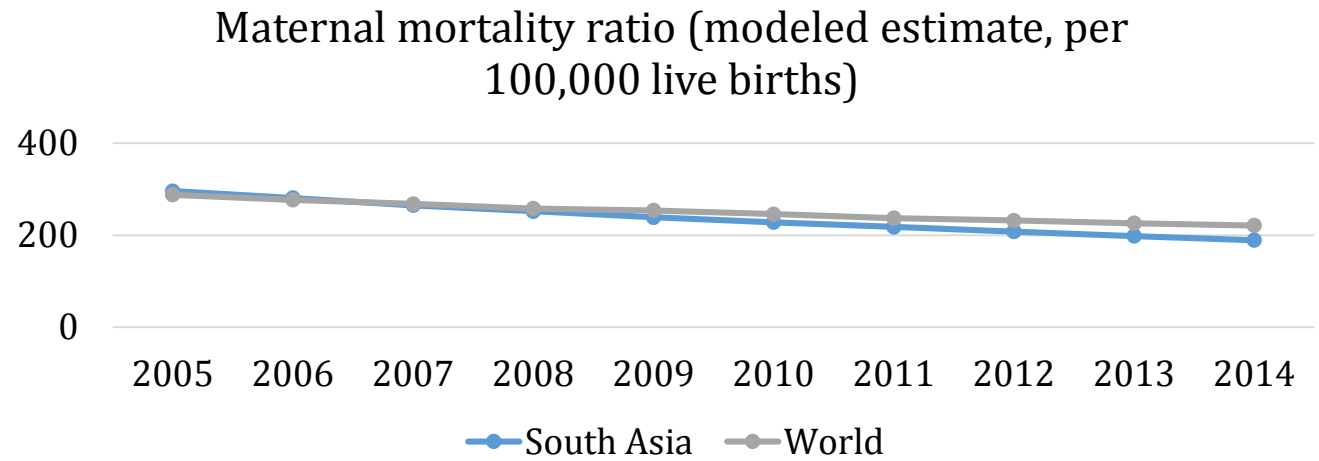
- Share of agriculture in total employment is declining
- However, the sector still generates about half of the total employment
- More than corresponding GDP share indicating low productivity



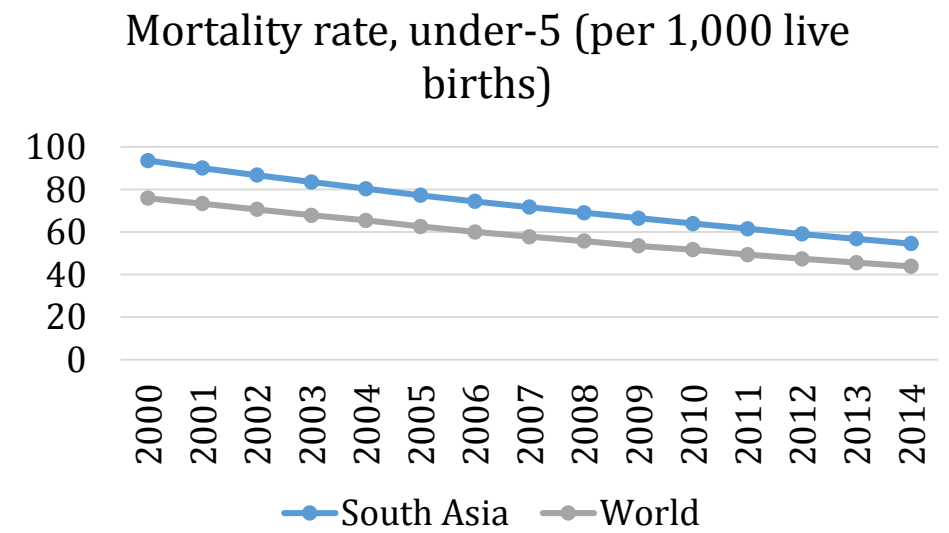
- Open “unemployment” in South Asia is low and declining –
- Underemployment, generally, has been high

# I. Benchmarking SDGs in South Asia for Moving Forward

## d. Social



■ Maternal mortality rate and Child mortality rate are gradually declining



Source: Millennium Development Goals, WDI

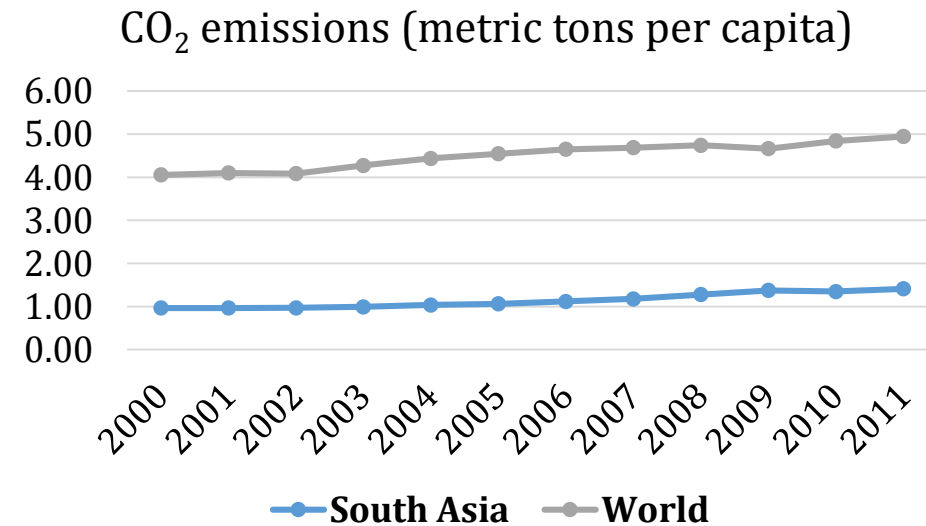
# I. Benchmarking SDGs in South Asia for Moving Forward

## e. Environment

Forest area (% of land area)

Country Name	2005	2013
<b>South Asia</b>	16.94	17.42
Afghanistan	2.07	<b>2.07</b>
<b>Bangladesh</b>	11.18	<b>11.02</b>
Bhutan	69.67	71.75
India	22.77	23.65
Maldives	3.33	<b>3.33</b>
Nepal	25.36	25.36
<b>Pakistan</b>	2.47	<b>2.02</b>
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	33.77	<b>33.22</b>

- South Asia as region has improved its forest area coverage (as % of land area) – but not all countries managed to do attain the feat



Source: World Development Indicators

## II. Governance, Peace & Security: An Area of Special Focus for South Asia

- **Linkage between Peace, Security and Development**

## II. Governance, Peace & Security: An Area of Special Focus for South Asia

- **Peace and Security threads**
  - Human Created
  - Natural Disaster



## II. Governance, Peace & Security: An Area of Special Focus for South Asia

9

Country	Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism		
	2004	2009	2014
Afghanistan	<b>-2.30</b>	<b>-2.70</b>	<b>-2.46</b>
Bangladesh	-1.38	-1.54	-0.88
Bhutan	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>1.00</b>
India	-1.22	-1.33	-0.96
Maldives	0.54	-0.22	0.88
Nepal	-2.12	-1.62	-0.70
Pakistan	<b>-1.56</b>	<b>-2.63</b>	<b>-2.44</b>
Sri Lanka	-1.06	-1.35	-0.25

- **Bhutan is strongest in Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism and Government Effectiveness**

\*Note: Governance score ranging from - (weak) to + (strong)  
Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators

## II. Governance, Peace & Security: An Area of Special Focus for South Asia <sup>10</sup>

Country	Rule of Law		
	2004	2009	2014
Afghanistan	<b>-1.71</b>	<b>-1.91</b>	<b>-1.53</b>
Bangladesh	-1.00	-0.77	-0.72
Bhutan	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.35</b>
India	0.04	0.02	-0.09
Maldives	0.08	-0.17	-0.49
Nepal	-0.76	-0.90	-0.68
Pakistan	-0.83	-0.84	-0.78
Sri Lanka	0.20	-0.07	-0.15

Note: Governance score ranging from -2.5 (weak) to +2.5 (strong)

Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators

- Bhutan is **strongest** in rule of law, However, it is second weakest in regulatory quality

## II. Governance, Peace & Security: An Area of Special Focus for South Asia <sup>11</sup>

### **Multidimensional conflict scenarios in South Asia (Wagner, 2014)**

- **Conventional** boundary and territorial conflicts (between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, and between Pakistan and Afghanistan on the recognition of the Durand Line)
- **Non-conventional** security threats, for instance,
  - **Ethnic and separatist movements** (from Baluchistan in Pakistan to India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, up to the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh)
  - **Refugees** in the region due to Civil strife and natural disasters (Rohingya Issue)
  - **Violent clashes** abusing religious identities
- **More than 4200 people died in 2015** (till November 29) in South Asia due to various conflicts (South Asia Terrorism Portal, [www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org))

## II. Governance, Peace & Security: An Area of Special Focus for South Asia

- **However, peace and security challenges are not only man-made; natural disasters also pose threats to peace in South Asia**
- Since 1970, sudden-onset hazards have displaced more than 300 million people in South Asia.
- **In 2013 alone**, Cyclone Mahasen, Cyclone Phailin and India's monsoon flooding each **displaced more than a million people** (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre-IDMC, 2014)
- **According to the** Climate Change Vulnerability Index, **Bangladesh** would feel the economic impacts of climate change most intensely and **Dhaka** would be **one of the five most climate vulnerable cities** in the world (CCVI, 2015 Maplecroft)

### III. Convening Role of Private Sector in implementing SDGs: New Issue

- **Partnerships within the private sector has recently been focused (Kolk et al., 2017), especially with the participants in supply chain.**
- **As business are connected internationally, there is increasing call for cooperation, whether sub-regional, regional and global for convening the role of private sector.**