



## **Media Release**

### **SDF Achieves New Milestone with Project Grant Disbursement Crossing USD 50 million**

**Thimphu Bhutan, 26 March 2021** – The SAARC Development Fund this week achieved a new milestone with total grants disbursement crossing USD 50 million for projects in the eight SAARC Member States under SDF Social Window.

In this current fiscal year alone, **close to USD 1 million has already been disbursed** for Social Window projects being implemented in all the SAARC Member States. With the COVID-19 projects under final documentation, the SDF Secretariat will also be speeding up disbursements in the coming months further enhancing its total grant disbursement figures.

“The increase in our project disbursement figures reflect our strong commitment to improving the lives of the region’s people. Going beyond these numbers, we increasingly understand how critical these regional projects are and genuinely hope to see continued results on the ground,” said Officer-In-Charge of SDF, and Director-Social Window Mr. Anuj Goel.

Currently, SDF has 97 projects (in 16 thematic areas) approved under the Social Window with a total fund commitment of over USD 92 million. About 79 of these projects have been operationalized and some have even completed.

The regional projects include strengthening the livelihood of home-based workers, addressing the needs of farmers, setting up zero energy cold storage facilities, reducing the mother and child mortality, delivering connectivity and content of e-governance to rural folks, promoting bamboo-based enterprise development, ending violence against children and women, and improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene in the SAARC region. All these projects have been successfully implemented under the SDF’s Social Window. New projects on COVID-19, improving nutrition and supporting climate smart agriculture are also underway.

SDF Secretariat was set up by the Heads of States/Governments of the eight SAARC Member States - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka - during the Sixteenth SAARC Summit held in Thimphu Bhutan on 28-29 April 2010.

“Over the years, we are honoured to continue our fruitful collaboration with the project implementing agencies in the eight SAARC Member States,” Mr. Goel said. He added that SDF considers its partnership with the governments and the people of the eight SAARC Member States and the support of all our partners an immense privilege in traversing this journey of promoting the welfare of the people of SAARC region and promoting regional integration through project collaboration.