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The Heads of State and Government rise to acknowledge applause after signing

Summit manifests spirit of

By Raquib Siddiqi

The seven South Asian leaders in a declaration issued at the end of their two-day summit that it manifested their determination to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding to find solutions to their common problems.

Called the Dhaka Declaration which Pakistan President Ziaul Haq proposed for adoption, said that the regional co-operation would be on firm foundation to play an important role for accelerated pace of economic and social development of their respective countries.

They stressed the historic importance of the summit reiterating their conviction that periodic meetings at their level could promote mutual trust, confidence and co-operation among their countries and decided to take steps to create awareness among the people to strengthen the regional co-operation.

The leaders acknowledged that the countries of South Asia, who constituted one-fifth of humanity were faced with the formidable challenges of combating poverty, economic backwardness, low levels of production, unemployment and pressure of population compounded by exploitation of the past and other adverse legacies.

The leaders of South Asian countries expressed their confidence that with effective regional co-operation, they could make optimum use of their capacities for the benefit of their peoples and collective self-reliance.

The Heads of State and government welcomed the progress already made in the implementation of the Integrated Programme of Action in the nine mutually agreed areas and were convinced that only in atmosphere of peace and security the individual & collective objectives of improving the quality of life was possible.

The leaders also expressed deep concern at the continuing crisis in the global economy affecting economic and social conditions that retarded

South Asia and other developing countries.

The declaration said that the development prospects in these had been compounded by natural disasters and precarious world food security situation. They noted with concern the diminishing capacity of international financial and technical institutions to respond effectively to the needs of the

disadvantaged and poorer countries and regretted that the spirit of multilateral co-operation had begun to falter and weaken.

The leaders of the South Asian countries reaffirmed their commitment to the UN Charter and the principles governing sovereign equality of states, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in in-

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