**SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO)**

1. The Agreement for Establishment of SAARC Arbitration Council was signed during the Thirteenth SAARC Summit (Dhaka, 12-13 November 2005).
2. SAARC Arbitration Council commenced its operations in Islamabad with the appointment of the first Director General with effect from 1 September 2010. Seven Meetings of the Governing Board of SARCO have been held so far. SARCO is in the process of expanding the panel of arbitrators.
3. As per Article II of the Agreement for Establishment of SAARC Arbitration Council, its objectives and functions are as follows:

(a) provide a legal framework within the region for fair and efficient settlement through conciliation and arbitration of commercial, investment and such other disputes as may be referred to the Council by agreement;

(b) promote the growth and effective functioning of national arbitration institutions within the region;

(c) provide fair, inexpensive and expeditious arbitration in the region;

(d)    promote international conciliation and arbitration in the region;

(e) provide facilities for conciliation and arbitration;

 (f)  act as a co-ordinating agency in the SAARC dispute resolution system;

 (g)    coordinate the activities of and assist existing institutions concerned with arbitration, particularly those in the region;

 (h)   render assistance in the conduct of ad hoc arbitration proceedings;

 (i)     assist in the enforcement of arbitral awards;

 (j)    maintain registers/panels of:

(i) expert witnesses, and

(ii) suitably qualified persons to act as arbitrators as and when required; and

 (k)    carry out such other activities as are conducive or incidental to its functions.

1. Mr. Thusantha Wijemanna from Sri Lanka joined SARCO as the second Director-General with effect from 13 October 2014 for a period of three years.