

**IATRC/ICAE Pre-Conference Workshop Agenda  
New Delhi, August 2, 2024**

**REGIONAL INTEGRATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA**

Dr. Gopinath Munisamy (University of Georgia)  
Dr. Poornima Varma (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)  
Dr. Sandro Steinbach (North Dakota State University)

South Asia (seven constituent countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) is home to about one-fourth of the world's population.

- Food security remains a challenge in this region since GDP per capita averaged US\$ 2,273 in 2022, the second-lowest among all regions as per the World Bank's World Development Indicators. Moreover, South Asia holds the largest number of undernourished people (314 million or 15.6 percent of the population in 2022) according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.
- Simultaneously, sustainability of agricultural production with a changing climate has emerged as an additional challenge in recent times. For instance, South Asia's renewable internal freshwater resource per capita has fallen from over 3000 to about 1000 cubic meters between 1961 and 2020, accompanied by a 68 percent decline in arable land (hectares) per person (World Development Indicators).
- Collectively, this region has high average tariffs on agricultural and non-agricultural goods (World Trade Organization). Economic integration, regionally and globally, has been limited, affecting a key pathway to efficiency and productivity growth with implications for both food security and sustainability.



Summary: The proposed Pre-Conference Workshop will explore the important role of economic integration, regionally and globally, to South Asian food security on a sustainable basis. Intra-regional economic integration has been evolving, but progress on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been limited by geopolitical tensions. Globally, multilateralism and free trade agreements have become less popular in the high-income countries (Brexit, U.S.-China trade war), additionally constraining these economies from integrating further with the developed world. Simultaneously, the need to sustain resources - land, air and water - has become critical with NASA recording 2023 as the hottest year ever for the planet. The confluence of these factors is the key focus of this Workshop, i.e., exploring pathways for efficiency gains and growth of South Asian economies which ensure food security on a sustainable basis. In doing so, the workshop will provide insights on the sustainability outcomes and inclusivity of such pathways given the sensitivities associated with employment in agricultural and allied segments of these economies.



**IATRC**  
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**IATRC/ICAE Pre-Conference Workshop Agenda  
NASC Complex, New Delhi, August 2, 2024**

**9:30 am** Arrival & Registration

**9:50 – 10:00 am** Welcome & Opening Remarks  
Gopinath Munisamy (University of Georgia)  
Amanda Countryman (Colorado State University/IATRC Chair)

**Session 1: Economic Integration and Food Security in South Asia**

**10:00 – 10:50 am** Keynote Speaker: David Laborde, Director, Agrifood Economics Division,  
Food and Agriculture Organization  
Moderator: Amanda Countryman, Colorado State University

**10:50 – 11:05 am** **Short Break**

**11:05 am – 12:45 pm** Contributed Papers

Moderator & Discussion Lead: Poornima Varma (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

- *Spatial Impact of Trade Liberalization: The Case of Edible Oils*
  - Bharat Ramaswami (Ashoka University) and Sutirtha Bandopadhyay (Indian Institute of Management Indore):
- *Sustainable Food Systems and India's Trade Agreements*
  - Arpita Mukherjee (Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations)
- *Economic Integration Options for SAARC*
  - Erwin Corong (Purdue University) and Gopinath Munisamy (University of Georgia)
- *Political Economy of Indian Agricultural Trade Policy*
  - Badri Narayanan (Fellow, NITI Aayog) and Kannan Kumar (Indian Institute of Foreign Trade)

**Lunch Break: 12:45 – 1:40 pm (NASC Complex Cafeteria)**

**Session 2: Sustainable Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security in South Asia**

**1:40 – 2:30 pm** Keynote Speaker: Uma Lele, Independent Scholar  
Moderator: Titus Awokuse, Michigan State University

**2:30 – 3:45 pm** Contributed Papers

Moderator & Discussion Lead: Hanho Kim, Seoul National University

- *Relationships among Nutritional Status, Climate, Health Expenditure, and Health: Evidence from South Asia*
  - Sangeeta Bansal (Jawaharlal Nehru University) and David Zilberman (University of California Berkeley)



- *Trade Openness and Nutritional Security in India: An Analysis at Sub-National Level*
  - Vidya Vemireddy and Poornima Varma (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)
- *Impact of Climate Heterogeneity on India's Agricultural GDP: Food Security Implications*
  - R. Sendhil (Pondicherry University) and S. J. Balaji (ICAR-National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy)

**3:45 – 4:00 pm                      Short Break**

**4:00 - 5:15 pm                      Panel Discussion**

Moderator: Dr. Gopinath Munisamy (University of Georgia)

- Dr. David Laborde, Division Director, FAO
- Uma Lele, Independent Scholar
- Pratap Birthal, Director, ICAR-National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy
- Abhijit Das, Professor & Head (Former), Center for WTO Studies, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

