



South Asian
Network for
Secularism and
Democracy

www.sansad.org

May 26, 2019

To:
Mayor Doug McCallum and City Council
City of Surrey

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council,

I have the greatest pleasure in extending the whole-hearted support of South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD) to the proposal for "Sundar": South Asian International Expo to be held at Bear Creek Park in Surrey.

SANSAD is dedicated to developing a secular democratic South Asian diaspora in Canada. We try to bring the diverse South Asian diaspora together through education and engagement in the struggle for peace, social justice, human rights, democratic rights, and a sustainable world. Our concerns embrace our homelands, our adopted land, and other lands where people share our interests.

The project of bringing a South Asian International Expo to Surrey fits perfectly within what we have been trying to do for many years. Firstly, the name and the concept affirm a South Asian identity, which only the diaspora can construct since our homelands are bound within their national identities. Most people in the diaspora remain bound by this and are further divided into sub-national identities since South Asia is a very diverse space. Our being in Canada offers this opportunity of crossing these boundaries. And since Surrey is the place where this diversity is most manifest in BC, it is the appropriate location for celebrating our new identity as South Asians, one people rich in our cultural diversity.

Secondly, we are aware that the concentration of South Asians in Surrey also has created some negative effects. One of them is the negative aura the city has for many in the Vancouver area that expresses both the persistence of racism in Canada and the image the city has in media representation. The Expo would be a wonderful way to counter this by affirming the positive aspects of the rich South Asian culture and projecting Surrey's internationalist image. And, of course, it would be a great contribution to affirming Canada as an inclusive space where diversity is celebrated.



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And finally, the event would perform a valuable service toward promoting peace in a region of the world riven by bitter conflicts, where two nuclear-armed neighbors are locked in national-chauvinist hostility and pose an enormous threat to peace and the very existence of more than a billion people.

We urge you to support this project and offer our fullest co-operation toward its success.

Sincerely,

Chnmoy Banerjee (PhD)

President, South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD)

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