

**National Statement by H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin,  
Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of  
Myanmar at the 14<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting  
(3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014, MICC II, Nay Pyi Taw)**

Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Your Excellencies for your presence here today.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the SOM leaders and all delegates who have contributed to the works of BIMSTEC.

Excellencies,

Since the establishment of BIMSTEC, we have seen considerable progress in most of the 14 Priority Areas. I would like to highlight some of them as follows:-

Trade and Investment

BIMSTEC Free Trade Area plays a vital role in the regional economy. As such, we should further discuss issues pertaining to trade and investment and the framework on the cooperation of trade and investment at an opportune time. In this connection, I would like to highlight the importance of early convening of the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of Trade Negotiation Committee which is essential to facilitate the fulfillment of the aims and objectives of BIMSTEC member states through accelerating trade and economic cooperation among them.

Technology

Technology is also a key to the development of the region. Cooperating in the field of technology will provide us with enormous potential for joint collaborative action. Needless to say, early finalization and adoption of the Memorandum of Association on the establishment of the BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Exchange Facility will improve overall technology landscape of our region.

## Energy

Excellencies,

The quest for power is rising rapidly across the globe, and our region is no exception. The population growth and changes in lifestyle are also putting pressure on our energy needs. Alternative energy is one of the options, we must look at carefully.

Myanmar is the lead country of the energy sector since the inception of BIMSTEC. Not only as the lead country but also as a land endowed with vast deposits of carbon fuels, Myanmar will play its role for energy security in the region. I believe that we need to speed up the phased realization of BIMSTEC Energy Centre to combine our energy potentials.

## Transport and Communication

Excellencies,

Connectivity is also an important factor in advancing the socio-economic development of our region. Updating of the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS) is being undertaken by ADB. In order to follow up further steps of the BTILS, we have to continue working closely with ADB in identifying concrete projects for enhancement of intra-regional transport infrastructure.

## Agriculture

The Government of Myanmar is focusing on the development of the agricultural sector. Our priorities are building of a modern industrialized country, narrowing the development gap between States and Regions as well as between urban and rural areas, establishing an accurate and reliable statistical data base, and improving the statistical data collection system.

As the lead country of BIMSTEC Agriculture Sector, Myanmar is prepared to further cooperate and coordinate with member states for enhancing agricultural productivity and food security, encouraging the research and transfer of technology.

It is essential to realize the identified projects in agriculture sector. We should be proactive in securing funding for these projects of BIMSTEC.

### People-to-People Contact

Connectivity and People-to-People Contact play an important role in promoting understanding and deepening friendship among peoples of BIMSTEC member states. The aims and purposes of BIMSTEC will be materialized sooner rather than later if grassroots people join their hands in implementing the policy makers' decisions. Advocacy, therefore, for the general population is always warranted. As some of us were able to undertake a few activities, I would encourage all member states to join in such a path.

### Poverty Alleviation

Improving the socio-economic life of the rural people and alleviating poverty have always been high on the agenda of the Government of Myanmar. To this end, we organized the National Level Workshop on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in 2011. In accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals, we are targeting to reduce the poverty rate to 16% by the year 2015.

We must not forget the challenge of poverty alleviation. The BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action adopted at the Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation in 2012 has to be implemented vigorously.

### Counter Terrorism and Trans-national Crime

Terrorism and Trans-national Crime are threatening daily lives of our peoples. Myanmar has already ratified 11 out of 13 international instruments relating to Counter Terrorism.

As the BIMSTEC Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking has already been signed, we need to work for its early ratification. We were able to convene numerous Sub-group meetings on Combating the Financing of Terrorism and Sub-group meetings on Legal and Law Enforcement.

### Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat

Excellencies,

Establishing the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka is a historic milestone of BIMSTEC. I believe that the Secretariat will help us coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the BIMSTEC activities. I would like to express my appreciations to the Government of Bangladesh for providing the premises of BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat. We need to work together for early operationalization of the Secretariat.

As we all are aware, Mr. Sumith Nakandala, a veteran diplomat from the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, will be heading the Secretariat as the first Secretary-General of BIMSTEC.

Thank you.