

## **REPORT OF THE SECOND SENIOR TRADE/ECONOMIC OFFICIALS' MEETING OF BIMST-EC**

**Yangon, Myanmar  
14<sup>th</sup> February 2001**

1. The Second Meeting of the Senior Trade/Economic Officials of BIMST-EC was held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2001 in Yangon, Myanmar.
2. The Meeting was attended by the delegates from the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republic of India, the Union of Myanmar, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the Kingdom of Thailand. The delegates from the Kingdom of Nepal attended the meeting as an observer. The list of delegates appears as Annex I.
3. The Meeting was chaired by U Maung Maung Yi, Director General, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Myanmar. In his opening remarks, he welcomed the delegates and stated that although BIMST-EC is just three years old, the activities undertaken by the member countries are quite extensive and satisfactory. He appreciated the work done by the Inter-Governmental Group (IGG) in preparing a Concept Paper on possible approaches towards the establishment of a preferential trading arrangement, leading to a Free Trade Area (FTA), and expressed his confidence that it is in line with the global trends. He thanked the members of the IGG for preparing the concept paper. The Chairman's opening remarks appear as Annex II.
4. The Meeting adopted the Agenda which appears as Annex III.
5. It was decided to conduct the meeting as per the programme circulated by the host country.

### **Progress Reports of the Lead Countries on Six Major Sectors**

6. Progress reports on the six Sectors identified for co-operation were presented by the respective lead countries as follows :-
  - (i) Bangladesh, the lead country for Trade and Investment gave an account of the activities undertaken in this Sector. The first sectoral meeting was held in Dhaka in November 1999. In the meeting it was decided that steps should be taken to hold meetings in the sub-sectors of textile and clothing, drugs and pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, horticultural and floricultural products, processed food, automotive industry and parts, rubber, tea & coffee and coconut and spices. In the sectoral meeting of trade & investment, the concept paper on formation of BIMST-EC Economic Forum was approved. It was noted that the activities in the sub sectors will be considered separately under separate agenda item and also that first meeting of Economic Forum was held in New Delhi on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2000.
  - (ii) India, the lead country for Technology Sector, highlighted the need and the possibilities of sharing indigenously developed technologies amongst BIMST-EC countries. It was stressed that technology exchanges were an important aspect of BIMST-EC activities and that an effort should be made to pool the resources and to share the technologies available in the member countries. India informed that the first BIMST-EC Experts Meeting on Technology Co-operation was held in New Delhi in 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2000. The meeting

adopted an "Agreed Statement" on co-operation in the Technology Sector and agreed on an Action Plan for co-operation in this sector for the period 2001-2005. The Meeting resolved to develop S&T co-operation within BIMST-EC countries which is synergistic and has the active participation of the private sector. The members also recognized the need to enhance the technological capabilities of BIMST-EC countries through regional projects, and by strengthening the technology transfer capabilities in the BIMST-EC to develop interaction between R&D and industry for commercial benefit.

- (iii) India being the lead country for cooperation in the sector of Transport and Communication proposed to convene the first meeting of the Expert Group for this Sector in New Delhi on March 19-20, 2001. India informed the meeting about the preparation of a concept paper that will identify the issues to be covered for cooperation in this sector. The member countries agreed to provide their confirmation by the end of February 2001 on the suggested dates for convening this meeting.
- (iv) Progress in the Energy Sector was presented by Myanmar as the lead country for this sector. Myanmar mentioned that the Energy Sector Committee of Experts/Officials Meeting was held in Yangon in June 2000 which produced two Plans of Action on 'New and Renewable Sources of Energy' and 'Energy Infrastructure Development (Natural Gas)'. Both Plans of Action suggested the formation of Task Forces for the implementation and establishment of an Information Centre in Myanmar. The second Energy Sector Experts/Officials Meeting was held in January 2001 in Yangon, which discussed and agreed on the following:-
  - (a) Approval of Terms of References (TOR) for the two Task Forces;
  - (b) Review on the status of the establishment of the Energy Information Centre; and
  - (c) Preparation of Terms of Reference (TOR) for BIMST-EC Energy Sector Committee.
- (v) The second meeting had also identified the following programmes to be taken up in the ensuing months:-
  - (a) Thailand to host the first Task Force Meeting for Energy Infrastructure Development Project (Natural Gas) in March 2001, with the objective of exploring and establishing the mode of implementation for the Trans-BIMST-EC Gas Pipeline Project;
  - (b) India to host the first Task Force Meeting for New and Renewable Sources of Energy Project in May 2001, with the objective of reviewing the needs of member countries and identifying specific projects in this sector and