

# **Secretary General Tenzin Lekphell concludes official introductory visit to Bhutan**

The Secretary General of BIMSTEC H.E. Tenzin Lekphell paid an official introductory visit to Bhutan from 01-02 September 2022 at the invitation of the Government of Bhutan.

The Secretary General's programme included meetings with the Prime Minister of Bhutan His Excellency Dr. Lotey Tshering, the Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji, the Minister for Home and Cultural Affairs H.E. Ugyen Dorji, the Minister for Economic Affairs H.E. Loknath Sharma, and the Secretary to the National Commission for Environment Secretariat Mr. Sonam P. Wangdi.

The Secretary General held extensive discussions with the Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Lotey Tshering and the Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Lyonpo Tandi Dorji on a range of issues relating to BIMSTEC including matters related to connectivity and trade. The Prime Minister assured the Secretary General of Bhutan's firm commitment to the pursuit of the BIMSTEC regional cooperation agenda.

As Bhutan is the lead country coordinating BIMSTEC cooperation in the Environment and Climate Change sector following the rationalization of the sectors of cooperation during the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit held in Colombo on 30 March 2022, the Secretary General held discussions with the relevant authorities in Bhutan regarding the initiation of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group in this sector, as well as the drawing up of the Regional Action Plan. The Secretary to the National Commission for Environment Secretariat informed the Secretary General that Bhutan looks forward to convening the first meeting of the Joint Working Group at a time convenient to all

Member States, either virtually or in-person.

The Minister for Home and Cultural Affairs H.E. Ugyen Dorji assured the Secretary General that the Government of Bhutan is committed to the establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) in Thimphu and informed that the relevant officials will be in contact with the Secretariat in this connection.

The Minister for Economic Affairs H.E. Loknath Sharma reaffirmed that Bhutan looks forward to convening the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meeting at the earliest, at a time that all Member States consider convenient, given that matters relating to trade are an essential component of the BIMSTEC regional cooperation agenda.



