

**Special Remarks by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC at the Sixth Meeting
of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in
Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals,
28-29 Oct2021, Sri Lanka (virtual)**

- Dr. Ajith Rohana, Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police, Government of Sri Lanka;
- Distinguished Delegates;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning

At the outset, I would like to express my pleasure to see the Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on, Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals is happening today after a break of almost more than 3 years.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for hosting this Meeting, and the participants - from all member states for attending this important meeting.

Distinguished delegates;

Drug trafficking flows have global dimensions linking regions and continents. Like in other parts of the world, the issue of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, and Psychotropic Substances has also become a growing concern in our region.

Therefore, the BIMSTEC Member States felt the necessity of creating a mechanism under the Security Sector to cooperate in combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in the region.

This Sub-Group, under the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime was thus formed with a mandate to enhance cooperation in preventing Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals.

So far, the Sub Group has met five times and one of the significant progresses that have been made is the finalization and approval of its Terms of Reference.

Another progress made, is the publication of BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report that contains comprehensive information on the illicit drug situation of BIMSTEC Region.

The 5th Meeting of the Sub-Group held in Nepal in 2018 decided to publish the first BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report of 2019.

Myanmar as the Lead Shepherd of this Sub Group is taking lead to publish this BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report for which we would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation.

We hope that this initiative by Myanmar will be continued in the publication of Second Edition of this Report.

Distinguished delegates;

In **Article 5** of the BIMSTEC Convention, on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking, the Member States, have agreed to cooperate in their joint fight against drug trafficking through sharing of information and enhancing cooperation between the law enforcement agencies among others.

In this respect, I am happy to inform you that this Convention has been ratified by all member states and has now entered into force from **16th March 2021**.

Before I conclude, I would like to inform you that, The Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs held in March 2019 in Thailand has tasked the Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs&, Psychotropic Substances to finalize a common Action Plan, so that, programs such as research, capacity development, legal frameworks and institutional development can begin for implementation in the region.

Therefore, I hope this Meeting will be able to decide and finalize the template of the proposed Common Action Plan.

Lastly,I would like to assure that the Secretariat is at the disposal of the Member States and the Meeting today.

We look forward to a fruitful deliberation and a pragmatic outcome.

My Colleague Mr. Mosharaf Hossain, Director in-charge of the Security Division at the BIMSTEC Secretariat will be there to provide all necessary help and support.

With this, I wish today's Meeting - a success.Thank you.
