



BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND
ECONOMIC COOPERATION

REPORT OF
THE 15TH SESSION OF BIMSTEC SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING
21 JANUARY 2011, NAY PYI TAW

I. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Fifteenth BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 21 January 2011. Delegates from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand attended the Meeting. The list of participants is at **Annex-I**.
2. The Senior Official's Meeting was chaired by Myanmar SOM leader U Maung Wai, Director-General, International Organizations and Economic Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar. The Chairman delivered a welcoming address to the BIMSTEC Senior Officials.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

3. The agenda as adopted by SOM is at **Annex-II**.

III. Business Arrangements

4. The Senior Officials took note of the programme and business arrangements for the 15th SOM.

IV. Report of the Chairperson of the BIMSTEC Working Group (BWG)

5. The Report of the BIMSTEC Working Group (BWG) was presented by Chairperson of the Working Group, H.E. U Aung Thein, Ambassador of Myanmar to Thailand and is at **Annex-III**.

6. The Meeting took note of the report of the BIMSTEC Working Group. It also accorded recognition to the BIMSTEC Working Group for the efficient manner in which it coordinated and moved forward the work of BIMSTEC. It also expressed appreciation to the Chairperson for his able leadership and to Thailand for its invaluable support to the work of the BIMSTEC Working Group.
7. In reference to paragraph 2 of page 12 of the Report of the Chair of the BWG as contained in Document No. 2. Agenda Item No.4, the Meeting noted that the 3rd JWG discussed and agreed that a combination of equal and assessed contribution may be applied. The Meeting further agreed that the percentage point for the equal contribution from Member Countries would be between 3 and 9 percent.

V. Report of the Lead Countries of the Fourteen Priority Areas

8. The Meeting noted with appreciation the reports submitted by Lead Countries of the (14) Priority Areas. SOM urged the Lead Countries to continue their efforts for furthering the work of BIMSTEC in their respective focus areas. BIMSTEC has on its agenda the following work programmes for future cooperation and coordination among Member Countries.

Areas of Cooperation	Lead Country
1. Trade and Investment	Bangladesh
2. Technology	Sri Lanka
3. Energy	Myanmar
4. Transport and Communications	India
5. Tourism	India
6. Fisheries	Thailand
7. Agriculture	Myanmar
8. Cultural Cooperation	Bhutan
9. Environment and Disaster Management	India
10. Public Health	Thailand
11. People-to-People-Contact	Thailand
12. Poverty Alleviation	Nepal
13. Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime	India

Trade and Investment

9. The SOM welcomed Thailand's offer to host the 6th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Business Forum, the 6th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Economic Forum and the 19th Meeting of the BIMSTEC TNC, and urged for early completion of the negotiations on the Agreement on Trade in Goods and acceleration of negotiations on the Agreement on Trade in Services and Investment.

Technology

10. The SOM noted with appreciation the revised Concept Paper circulated by Sri Lanka for the establishment of the Centre/Facility to promote enhanced cooperation in advance areas of fundamental and applied scientific and technological research among the Member Countries. It also urged Member Countries to move forward through collaborative and cooperative efforts for the realization of the Centre for Technology Transfer / Exchange Facility. SOM welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host the 3rd Expert Group Meeting on Science and Technology in April 2011 in Colombo.

Energy

11. The SOM welcomed the Joint Ministerial Statement of "the Second BIMSTEC Ministers on Energy's Meeting" held in Bangkok in March 2010 and noted the decisions taken to hold the Energy SOM once a year and Ministerial Meeting every two years.

Transport and Communications

12. The SOM noted with satisfaction the follow-up progress made in implementation of the recommendation of the BTILS Report particularly with regard to setting up of the five Technical Expert Groups.

Tourism

13. The SOM noted that the 1st Meeting of the BIMSTEC Tourism Working Group would be held in India.

Fisheries

14. The SOM conveyed its appreciation to Thailand for conducting the BIMSTEC International Training Programme on Ornamental Aquatic Plants Propagation from 1-28 August 2010.

Agriculture

15. The SOM conveyed its appreciation to Sri Lanka for hosting the 3rd Expert Group Meeting on Agriculture Cooperation in Kandy from 22-23 November 2010. SOM also welcomed the offer of Nepal to host the 4th Expert Group Meeting on Agriculture Cooperation.

Cultural Cooperation

16. The SOM requested the Member Countries to complete their internal process for early signing of the MoU on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory in Bhutan.

Environment and Disaster Management

17. The SOM requested Member Countries to complete their internal process for early signing of the Memorandum of Association (MoA) for the establishment of the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate.

Public Health

18. The SOM thanked Thailand for hosting the 2nd BIMSTEC Meeting on the Network of National Centers of Coordination in Traditional Medicine in August 2010.
19. The SOM also took note of India's ongoing programme of granting AYUSH scholarships to candidates of BIMSTEC countries to study in India in undergraduate, post-graduate and doctorate programs.

20. The SOM noted Sri Lanka's offer to invite experts from BIMSTEC Member Countries the Symposium on Traditional Medicine to be held in Sri Lanka in July 2011.

People-to-People Contact

21. The SOM took note of the 2nd BIMSTEC Summit declaration to establish BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks.
22. The SOM also expressed the appreciation to India for hosting the 1st Meeting of the Network of Think Tanks in February 2010 and recommended that the dialogue process to continue.

Poverty Alleviation

23. The SOM noted the comments of the Member Countries on the draft Poverty Plan of Action (PPA) had been received by Nepal and look forward to convening of the 2nd BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation in Nepal in the first half of 2011.

Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

24. The SOM requested Member Countries for early ratification of the Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking. SOM recommended that the Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues should begin negotiations on the Draft Agreement for Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters.

Climate Change

25. The SOM welcomed the offer of Bangladesh to circulate a Concept Paper reflecting possible regional initiatives and programmes and to host a Workshop in 2011 to discuss the Concept Paper.

VI. Private Sector Cooperation with BIMSTEC (Presentation by the UMFCCI of Myanmar)

26. The SOM appreciated the presentation made by the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

VII. Status of signing of Document finalized at the 2nd BIMSTEC Summit

The Memorandum of Association (MoA) for the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre

27. The SOM noted with satisfaction that the Memorandum of Association (MoA) for the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre was ready for signing at the 13th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

VIII. Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat

28. The SOM appreciated the efforts of the BIMSTEC Chair, the BIMSTEC Working Group and the Joint Working Group for their contribution and effective coordination towards the establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat.
29. The SOM took note of the Special SOM held in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 January 2011 and endorsed its recommendation that the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat shall be located in Dhaka, Bangladesh and that the first Secretary General of BIMSTEC shall be nominated by Sri Lanka.

IX. Discussion on the next BIMSTEC Chairmanship

30. The SOM appreciated the kind offer of Nepal to assume the next BIMSTEC Chairmanship. SOM decided that the Chairmanship, henceforth, will rotate in alphabetical order.

X. BIMSTEC Official Website

31. The BIMSTEC website (www.bimstec.org) shall continue to be maintained by Sri Lankan webmaster until the Permanent Secretariat is operationalized. In the interim, the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Bangkok will coordinate with BIMSTEC Working Group in obtaining the required materials to be uploaded. The SOM welcomed this offer.

XI. Finalization of draft Joint Ministerial statement

32. The SOM finalized the draft Joint Statement of the 13th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

XII. Other Matters

33. The SOM welcomed the offer made by Bangladesh to host the 4th JWG Meeting in March 2011 in Dhaka. It agreed that Bangladesh would circulate a detailed working paper on the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat and related issues.
34. The SOM also agreed that the BWG meetings would continue to be held in Bangkok until decided otherwise.

XIII. Consideration and adoption of the SOM Report

35. The SOM considered and approved by consensus the above report of the 15th BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 January 2011.
36. Heads of SOM Delegation expressed their deep appreciation to the Government of the Union of Myanmar for the warm reception and gracious hospitality extended to the delegations and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. They also conveyed their deepest appreciation to the Chair for his able stewardship and the efficient manner in which he successfully conducted the deliberations of the meeting.

* * * * *

21 January 2011.

Nay Pyi Taw.