

Document Number: BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/22  
Distribution: For Delegates Only  
Date: 28 March 2022



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

**Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (Hybrid)  
28 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting**

**Agenda Item 01: Opening of the Meeting**

01. The Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in hybrid mode from & in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022.

02. Delegations from the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of India, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Kingdom of Thailand participated in the Meeting. The list of the participants is at **Annex I**.

03. In his Opening Remarks, **H. E. Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage**, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka cordially welcomed all distinguished delegates to Sri Lanka and thanked them for their participation at the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting. He mentioned that Sri Lanka, as one of the founding members of BIMSTEC, remained deeply committed to the objectives and principles of the organisation. He also mentioned that the adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter during the forthcoming Summit in Colombo would be a major milestone for the organization, marking a new chapter in its onward journey. He wished all success for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of BIMSTEC SOM as well as for the 18<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting. He was confident that the collective efforts of the Member States would bear fruit in successfully conducting the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The full text of the Opening Remarks is at **Annex II**.

04. In his brief Initial Special Remarks, **H.E. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell**, Secretary General of BIMSTEC welcomed the distinguished delegates to the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting. He expressed his gratitude to Sri Lanka, for making all the necessary arrangements in holding the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit virtually and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the BIMSTEC SOM and 18<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting in person. He sincerely hoped that this meeting would mark the re-commencement of in-person meetings in BIMSTEC. He also extended his sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the delegates from other Member States for their kind cooperation and support in keeping the work of the Organisation moving ahead.

**Agenda Item 02: Election of the Chairperson**

05. As per the existing practice, **H.E. Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage**, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and Head of Delegation of the Chair country of BIMSTEC, was elected as the Chair of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of BIMSTEC SOM by acclamation. The Chair thanked all the delegates for their participation in the Meeting and briefed the delegations on issues pertaining to the conduct of the Meeting.

**Agenda Item 03: Adoption of the Agenda**

06. The Meeting considered and adopted the Agenda, which is at **Annex III**.

**Agenda Item 04: Report by the Secretary General on the progress of BIMSTEC activities**

07. The Meeting considered and took note of the Secretary General's Report on progress of BIMSTEC activities as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/02/Rev.1.

08. Upon deliberation, the Meeting felt the necessity to hold regular meetings of the BIMSTEC mechanisms, preparation of plans of action by the Lead Countries in their respective Sectors and Sub-sectors and tasked the next Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) to examine the recommendations of the Secretary General's progress report, which is at **Annex IV**.

**Agenda Item 05: Review of the progress on decisions taken by the Special Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 31 March 2021**

09. The Meeting considered and took note of the progress on decisions taken by the Special Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 31 March 2021, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/03.

**Agenda Item 06: Consideration of the Reports of the Meetings held/approved since Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

**06.01 Report of the Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs held in Bangkok, Thailand on 21 March 2019**

10. The Meeting took note of the approval of all the Member States on the Report of the Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs held in Bangkok, Thailand on 21 March 2019 as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/04 for submission to the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

**06.02 Report of the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime held virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan on 25 November 2021**

11. The Meeting considered and endorsed the Report of the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC) held virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan on 25 November 2021 as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/05 along with the recommendations contained therein.

**06.03 Report of the Twentieth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO) held virtually in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 10-11 January 2022**

12. The Meeting considered and endorsed the Report of the Twentieth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO) held virtually in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 10-11 January 2022 as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/06, along with the recommendations contained therein.

13. Under this item, the Delegation of Bangladesh informed that Bangladesh has proposed to host the Twenty First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO) virtually in Dhaka on 26-27 April 2022 and requested the remaining Member States to convey their concurrences and nominations for the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of BIMSTEC WG-ROO at the earliest.

**06.04 Report of the Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka 20 January 2022**

14. The Meeting considered and endorsed the Report of the Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka 20 January 2022 as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/07, along with the recommendations contained therein.

15. Under this Item, the Delegation of Bhutan suggested to study the possibility of floating a Concept Paper for setting up a funding mechanism for implementing various initiatives under the cooperation of Traditional Medicine. The Meeting requested the Lead Country to prepare the draft of the Concept Paper for consideration of the Member States.

**Agenda Item 07: Status of BIMSTEC Convention/MoU/MoA other important documents envisaged to be adopted/signed at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit**

**07.01 BIMSTEC Charter**

**07.02 BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters**

**07.03 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States**

**07.04 Memorandum of Association (MoA) on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**07.05 Rationalization and reorganization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC**

**07.06 BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity**

16. The Meeting recommended the BIMSTEC Charter for signature at the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit (**Annex V**). The Meeting agreed on the proposed modalities of signing the BIMSTEC Charter (**Annex VI**).

17. The Meeting reiterated the decision of the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting to sign the aforesaid BIMSTEC Convention/MoU/MoA at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit (**Annex VII-IX**). The Meeting also agreed on the proposed modalities of signing the BIMSTEC Convention/MoU/MoA (**Annex X**).

18. The Meeting also took note of the following important documents that will be adopted at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit:

- (a) Rationalization and reorganization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC;
- (b) BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity.

**Agenda Item 08: Finalization of the draft Provisional Agenda and the draft Report of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

19. After extensive deliberations, the Meeting finalized the draft Provisional Agenda and the draft Report of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, which are at **Annex XI** and **Annex XII** respectively for consideration of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting to be held in hybrid mode from & in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 29 March 2022.

**Agenda Item 09: Discussion on the finalized draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration**

20. The Meeting extensively deliberated on the draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration as contained in the Secretariat's Documents Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/16 and BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/17 respectively. The Meeting finalized the draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration, which are at **Annex XIII** and **Annex XIV** respectively, for consideration of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and subsequent adoption by the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

**Agenda Item 10: Consideration of the Secretariat's revised budget for FY 2021**

21. The Meeting considered and endorsed the Secretariat's revised budget/actual expenditure of US\$ 9,00,884.42 for FY 2021 (**Annex XV**) for approval by the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

**Agenda Item 11: Discussion and consideration of the Secretariat's estimated budget for FY 2022**

22. The Meeting took note of the concurrences provided through correspondence by all Member States, except Myanmar, to the Secretariat's estimated budget of US\$ 1,759,810.50 for FY 2022 (**Annex XVI**) and provisionally approved the estimated Budget for FY 2022 pending Myanmar's concurrence. Myanmar will convey its concurrence soon.

**Agenda Item 12: Discussion on the fixation of a date for convening the Annual BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

23. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the fixation of a date for convening the Annual BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting as contained in the **Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/20**. The Meeting tasked the next BPWC Meeting to discuss and recommend a fixed time-frame for holding the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting annually that will be hosted by the Chair of BIMSTEC, for consideration of the next Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting.

**Agenda Item 13: Discussion on the Celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIMSTEC**

24. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIMSTEC as contained in the **Document Number BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/21**. The Meeting recommended that the Member States and the BIMSTEC Secretariat will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIMSTEC in a befitting manner.

25. During the Meeting, the Delegation of Bangladesh informed that Bangladesh as the Lead Country of Trade, Investment and Development Sector, will organize an event on Trade and Investment with Public-Private Partnership in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIMSTEC, the particulars of which will be communicated in due course.

26. As suggested by India, the Meeting tasked the BPWC Meeting to discuss and decide on the programmes to be organized by the Member States for the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIMSTEC. The Meeting also requested the host of next BPWC, *i.e.*, Thailand to hold the next round of BPWC Meeting at the soonest possible time, while Thailand informed that they will explore the possibility to host the 5<sup>th</sup> BPWC Meeting in June 2022. The exact date will be communicated in due course.

**Agenda Item 14: Any Other Matters**

27. Under this agenda item, no matter was raised.

**Agenda Item 15: Date and Venue of the Twenty Third Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting**

28. The Delegation of Thailand informed that Thailand will host the Twenty Third Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in the third quarter of 2022. The Meeting noted Thailand's ideas on the work of BIMSTEC as the next BIMSTEC Chair, which are as follows:

- i. Thailand as the Lead Country of the Connectivity Sector looks forward to putting the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity into action.
- ii. Implementing the rationalization and reorganization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC will increase the dynamism and tangibility of our cooperation.
- iii. Strengthening BIMSTEC's visibility towards outside of and the sense of community within the region, Thailand looks forward to deepening discussions with all Member States on way and approaches to increase our peoples' awareness and participation in BIMSTEC and to place BIMSTEC at the driver's seat in the regional architecture when it comes to peace, prosperity and progress of the Bay of Bengal region.

**Agenda Item 16: Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting**

29. The Meeting considered and adopted the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting for submission to the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting to be held hybrid mode in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 29 March 2022 for consideration.

**Agenda Item 17: Closing of the Meeting**

30. The Heads of Delegations of the Member States conveyed their deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for hosting the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting. The Chair thanked the Delegations for their valuable contributions and active participation. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Chair for his able stewardship in steering the Meeting.

31. The Meeting also expressed sincere thanks to the Secretary General and his team for their hard work and efforts in facilitating the Meeting to a successful conclusion.

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## Annex I



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

**Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (Hybrid)**  
**28 March 2022**  
**Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**List of Participants**

**Bangladesh**

- |     |                                                                                                                                      |             |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 01. | <b>H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen</b><br>Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary)<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>Dhaka, Bangladesh          | - In Person |
| 02. | <b>Ms. Mashfee Binte Shams</b><br>Secretary (East)<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>Dhaka, Bangladesh                               | - In Person |
| 03. | <b>Mr. Md. Shamsul Haque</b><br>Additional Foreign Secretary (SAARC and BIMSTEC)<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>Dhaka, Bangladesh | - In Person |
| 04. | <b>Mr. Tareq Md Ariful Islam</b><br>High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka<br>Colombo, Sri Lanka                               | - In Person |
| 05. | <b>Mr. Md. Aminul Islam Khan</b><br>Director (SAARC and BIMSTEC)<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>Dhaka, Bangladesh                 | -In Person  |
| 06. | <b>Ms. Arsuda Khan</b><br>Director (SA-2)<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>Dhaka, Bangladesh                                        | -In Person  |
| 07. | <b>Mr. Molla Ahmad Qutubud Deen</b><br>Senior Assistant Secretary (BIMSTEC)<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs<br>Dhaka, Bangladesh      | -In Person  |



08. **Mr. Md. Shoaib-Ul-Islam Tarafder** -In Person  
Assistant Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Dhaka, Bangladesh
09. **Ms. Ashifa Ashraf** -In Person  
Assistant Secretary (BIMSTEC)  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

### **Bhutan**

10. **H.E. Ambassador Rinchen Kuentsyl** -In Person  
Ambassador-designate of Bhutan to Sri Lanka
11. **Ms. Tshering Lhadn** -In Person  
Chief of Division  
Department of Regional Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Thimphu, Bhutan
12. **Mr. Kinga Singye** -In Person  
Senior Desk Officer  
Department of Regional Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Thimphu, Bhutan
13. **Mr. Jamyang Chopel** -In Person  
Assistant Desk Officer  
Public Diplomacy Division  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Thimphu, Bhutan

### **India**

14. **H.E. Mr. Saurabh Kumar** -In Person  
Secretary (East)  
Ministry of External Affairs  
New Delhi, India
15. **Mr. Gopal Baglay** -In Person  
High Commissioner  
High Commission of India  
Colombo, Sri Lanka
16. **Mr. Dipin P.R.** -In Person  
Consul General  
Consulate General of India  
Colombo, Sri Lanka

17. **Ms. Banu Prakash** -In Person  
Counsellor and Head  
High Commission of India  
Colombo, Sri Lanka
18. **Mr. Rakesh Tiwari** -In Person  
Under Secretary  
Ministry of External Affairs  
New Delhi, India

### **Myanmar**

19. **U Win Zeyar Tun** -Virtual  
Deputy Director General  
International Organizations and Economic Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
20. **Ms. Chaw Su Mya** - In Person  
Minister Counselor/Deputy Chief of Mission  
Embassy of Myanmar  
Colombo, Sri Lanka
21. **U Han Thein Kyaw** -Virtual  
Director  
International Organizations and Economic Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
22. **Daw Nwe Ni Aye** -Virtual  
Assistant Director  
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23. **Mr. Thet Zaw Toe** - In Person  
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**Nepal**

25. **Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari** -In Person  
Joint Secretary  
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Kathmandu, Nepal
26. **Mr. Kiran Shakya** -In Person  
Under Secretary  
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27. **Mr. Biswash Bhatta** -In Person  
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Embassy of Nepal  
Colombo, Sri Lanka
28. **Mr. Binod Mukhiya** -In Person  
Section Officer  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Kathmandu, Nepal
29. **Mr. Balakrishna Bhandari** -In Person  
Attache  
Embassy of Nepal  
Colombo, Sri Lanka

**Sri Lanka**

30. **H.E. Admiral (Prof.) Jayanath Colombage** -In Person  
Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Colombo, Sri Lanka
31. **Mr. Sabarullah Khan** -In Person  
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32. **Ms. Deepa Liyanage** -In Person  
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Colombo, Sri Lanka

34. **Prof. Saj U Mendis** **-In Person**  
 Additional Secretary (State Ministry of Regional Cooperation)  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Colombo, Sri Lanka
  
35. **Mr. Ravindra Pathmapriya** **-In Person**  
 Additional Secretary (Development and Innovation)  
 State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovation  
 Colombo, Sri Lanka
  
36. **Ms. Himali Athaudage** **-In Person**  
 Additional Secretary (Skill Sector Development)  
 State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovation  
 Colombo, Sri Lanka
  
37. **Mrs. Piyumanthi Peiris** **-In Person**  
 Additional Secretary (Legal)  
 Ministry Justice  
 Colombo, Sri Lanka
  
38. **Prof. Ajith de Alwis** **-In Person**  
 Chief Innovation Officer  
 National Innovation Agency  
 Colombo, Sri Lanka
  
39. **Mr. Chandana Weerasena** **-In Person**  
 Acting Director General (Bilateral)  
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 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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40. **Ms. Manorie Mallikaratchy** **-In Person**  
 Acting Director General (Multilateral and Technical Cooperation)  
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 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Colombo, Sri Lanka
  
41. **Ms. T. H. R. Silva** **-In Person**  
 Deputy Legal Advisor  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Colombo, Sri Lanka
  
42. **Ms. Hashini Jayasekera** **-In Person**  
 Director (Development)  
 State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovation  
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43. **Ms. Imali Kotalawela** **-In Person**  
 Assistant Secretary (Legal)  
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44. **Ms. M.K. Mallikaratchy** -In Person  
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45. **Mr. Chandana Weerasena** -In Person  
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### **Thailand**

46. **Mr. Cherdchai Chaivaivid** - In Person  
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Royal Thai Embassy in Colombo
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52. **Mr. Peerapat Tongrod** - In Person  
First Secretary  
Member of the Delegation

53. **Ms. Preeyanit Lumjiak** - In Person  
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54. **Ms. Mathina Boonpramote** - In Person  
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55. **Ms. Kanjanaporn Busabong** - In Person  
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56. **Mr. Phuchanin Chirawirakun** - In Person  
Staff
57. **Mr. Nuttawit Wonggositkul** - In Person  
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**BIMSEC Secretariat**

58. **H.E. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell** - In Person  
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## Annex II

### **22<sup>nd</sup> Senior Officials' Meeting of the Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Initiative for Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Opening Statement by the Secretary/Foreign Affairs**

Your Excellencies  
Secretary General of the BIMSTEC  
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen  
Good Morning.

At the outset, I wish to extend a very warm and cordial welcome to you to Sri Lanka and wish to place on record our deep appreciation for taking time off from your hectic schedules to be present in Colombo today. As the current and outgoing Chair of BIMSTEC, it is indeed a singular honour and a privilege for Sri Lanka to host the 22<sup>nd</sup> Senior Officials' Meeting in Colombo, as the forerunner to the Ministerial Meeting and the subsequent Summit Meeting of BIMSTEC that will be held later this month.

I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary General, His Excellency Tenzin Lekphell and the staff of the BIMSTEC Secretariat for the great support and cooperation extended to Sri Lanka during our tenure as the Chair of the BIMSTEC. I also wish to thank the Secretariat for the excellent work in the preparation of the documentation and invaluable assistance in organising this Meeting, as well as the Ministerial Meeting and the Summit. I assure you that Sri Lanka will continue to remain engaged on matters relating to the BIMSTEC agenda beyond our meetings in Colombo.

Excellencies,

The Bay of Bengal has today taken centre stage in international politics due to its economic and geo-strategic importance. It is the largest body of water called a 'bay' in the world, with a surface area of 2.6 million square kilometres, occupying the northeastern part of the Indian Ocean, bounded on the west and northwest by India, on the north by Bangladesh, and on the east by Myanmar and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India. Its southern limit is a line between Sangaman Kanda in Sri Lanka and the north westernmost point of Sumatra, Indonesia. As you are probably aware, the busiest international shipping route in the world lies in the Indian Ocean just South of Sri Lanka. About 40,000 ships ply this route each year and half of the global traffic in containerized cargo and 75 % of fossil fuels traverse this sea route.

The ports dotting the shores of the Bay of Bengal bear the imprint of political, religious and economic tensions and rivalries over the centuries. From ancient times to the Middle Ages, Arab traders and seafarers flocked to these ports across the Arabian Sea. The 15<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama's initial voyage to India via the Cape of Good Hope in 1497–1499 was the first to link Europe and Asia by a maritime



route, connecting the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and therefore, the Occident and the Orient. This is widely considered a milestone in world history, as it heralded the advent of a sea-based phase of globalization and multiculturalism.

Da Gama's discovery of a maritime route to India opened the way for an age of global imperialism and enabled Portugal to establish a long-lasting colonial empire stretching from Africa to Asia. Portugal maintained a commercial monopoly of the spices and commodities produced by its colonies for several decades. It was not until a century later that other European powers, first Holland and England, later France and Denmark, were able to challenge Portugal's monopoly and naval supremacy in the Cape route.

The ancient trade links of the Bay of Bengal have created a synergy among all Member States of the BIMSTEC. We share a common cultural ethos, inspired by all the great religions of the world, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Our civilizations dating back to thousands of years remain connected. Therefore, countries in the BIMSTEC are natural partners in progress. This is the reason why BIMSTEC as an organisation has been able to flourish and to expand over the 25 years of its existence. Sri Lanka, as one of the founding members of the BIMSTEC remains deeply committed to the objectives and principles of the organisation. I am confident that through our collective efforts, we can build this organisation to become one of the important regional blocs in the world. Our deliberations today will be a catalyst for sharing ideas and views for the organisation to rededicate itself to deliver a prosperous future for all our peoples of the Member States of the BIMSTEC. The adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter during the forthcoming Summit in Colombo will be a major milestone for the organisation and mark a new chapter in its onward journey.

Excellencies,

Asia is increasingly the centre of the world economy. By 2040, the continent is projected to account for more than half of the global GDP and about 40 percent of global consumption. Global cross-border flows are shifting towards Asia on a number of fronts, and the region's growth is becoming more broad-based and sustainable as its constituent economies increasingly integrate with each other.

This is a diverse region, but its different parts have complementary characteristics, and powerful networks are developing within Asia. Patterns of globalization are shifting, and these shifts are occurring faster in Asia than elsewhere, suggesting that more than any other continent, Asia could shape the way globalization unfolds in the years ahead. BIMSTEC Member States account for a significant part of the world economy. With economic powerhouses such as India and Thailand as well as emerging and growing economies such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and of course Sri Lanka, this region has shown a huge potential for growth over the past decades. The economic disruption caused by the COVID -19 pandemic has shown that resilience matters more than ever. Although the pandemic has bruised and in the case of some, even battered our

economies and challenged our growth patterns, the BIMSTEC region has remained relatively resilient and opportunities for economic growth are promising. I propose that the BIMSTEC must seize the opportunities of new growth patterns and accelerate activities of trade and investment within our region. To this end, I would like to emphasize that the Secretariat should take stock of the current impasse in the trade and investment work in the BIMSTEC and ensure that this agenda item remains at the forefront of this organisation.

Excellencies,

BIMSTEC as an organisation cannot and should not operate alone. It has to build networks with other regional blocs as well. Dialogue and cooperation with emerging and established regional groupings will bring much needed expertise and a wealth of knowledge to BIMSTEC. I would like to see that BIMSTEC is open for dialogue and partnership with other regional blocs that are especially that are focused on economic empowerment.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the success of any regional bloc would be based on its contribution to the well-being of the peoples of its Member States. I am certain that with our deliberations today, we could steer the organisation towards this noble objective. I wish all success for the meeting today as well as the Ministerial Meeting tomorrow. I am confident that our collective efforts will bear fruit in successfully conducting the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> March.

Once again, let me thank you most sincerely for your esteemed presence and I wish you a pleasant stay in Sri Lanka.

Thank you.

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Annex III



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

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**Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting [Hybrid]  
28 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Agenda<sup>1</sup>**

***ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS***

01. Opening of the Meeting
02. Election of the Chairperson
03. Adoption of the Agenda
04. Report by the Secretary General on the progress of BIMSTEC activities

***PROGRESS ON DECISIONS OF THE SPECIAL SOM***

05. Review of the progress on decisions taken by the Special Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 31 March 2021

***REPORTING ITEMS***

06. Consideration of the Reports of the Meetings held/approved since Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting
  - 06.01 Report of the Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs held in Bangkok, Thailand on 21 March 2019
  - 06.02 Report of the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime held virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan on 25 November 2021
  - 06.03 Report of the Twentieth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO) held virtually in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 10-11 January 2022

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<sup>1</sup>As adopted by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the BIMSTEC SOM held on 28 March 2022

- 06.04 Report of the Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka 20 January 2022.

***PREPARATION FOR THE 5<sup>TH</sup> BIMSTEC SUMMIT***

07. Status of BIMSTEC Convention/ MoU/MoA/other important documents envisaged to be adopted/signed at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit
- 07.01 BIMSTEC Charter
- 07.02 BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
- 07.03 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States
- 07.04 Memorandum of Association (MoA) on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka
- 07.05 Rationalization and reorganization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC
- 07.06 BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity
08. Finalization of the draft Provisional Agenda and the draft Report of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting
09. Discussion on the finalized draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration

***ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ISSUES***

10. Consideration of the Secretariat's revised budget for FY 2021
11. Discussion and consideration of the Secretariat's estimated budget for FY 2022

***OTHER ISSUES***

12. Discussion on the fixation of a date for convening the Annual BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting
13. Discussion on the Celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIMSTEC
14. Any Other Matters
15. Date and Venue of the Twenty Third Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting

***REPORT ADOPTION***

16. Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting

***CLOSING OF THE MEETING***

17. Closing of the Meeting

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**Annex IV**

Document Number: BIMSTEC/SOM/22/2022/02/Rev.1  
Distribution: For Delegates Only  
Date: 22 March 2022



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

**Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (Hybrid)  
28 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Agenda Item 04: Report by the Secretary General on the progress of BIMSTEC activities**

**INTRODUCTION**

01. BIMSTEC was founded with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration in 1997 by four Member States (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand), with the objective of pursuing common action to promote regional cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, technological exchange and other interrelated areas in a spirit of equality and partnership, contributing to peace, progress and prosperity in the region. Starting with six priority areas, cooperation was later expanded to fourteen priority areas in 2008. Over the last two-and-a-half decades, its membership expanded to seven with Myanmar joining BIMSTEC in 1997, and Bhutan and Nepal in 2004. The institutional framework of the Organisation too, has gradually evolved. In 2021, following a process of review, restructuring and rationalization, it was decided by the Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting that BIMSTEC cooperation would be organized under seven (07) Sectors with each Member State taking the lead in driving and coordinating cooperation in one of the seven sectors aimed at achieving tangible results for the peoples of the region. Over the years, BIMSTEC has succeeded in making strides in terms of creating the necessary institutional and legal frameworks to promote regional cooperation. The establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka in July 2014, and the finalization of the BIMSTEC Charter to be adopted at the Fifth Summit in Colombo are two significant achievements.

02. In accordance with Article 5(6) of the Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat, the Secretary General shall “report periodically to the Senior Officials' Meeting, Ministerial Meeting and the Summit.”

03. The Report by the Secretary General will provide a brief account of the progress made on the decisions and directives emanating from BIMSTEC Summits and key decisions in BIMSTEC Meetings. This Report presents progress in sectoral activities in the reconstituted

seven (07) Sectors as well as Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC cooperation that was approved by the Seventeenth (17<sup>th</sup>) Ministerial Meeting, Institutional Reform, Meetings and Events, Collaboration with External Partners, Administrative and Budgetary Matters, and Observations and Recommendations of the Secretariat with a view to advancing the BIMSTEC Agenda. As the present Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) is being held as the preparatory meeting to the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit, this Report will cover briefly, the progress made in sectoral cooperation since the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit (Kathmandu, Nepal, 2018).

04. While BIMSTEC has made substantial progress following the Fourth Summit (Kathmandu, Nepal, 2018), the pace of the Organization's work has been severely impaired for the last two years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, in early 2020. The people of all seven Member States became victims of the pandemic which has taken a heavy toll on the health systems, economies and societies of all countries. The pandemic related lockdowns and travel restrictions resulted in the postponement of BIMSTEC meetings including the Fifth Summit which was expected to take place in late 2020. The staff of the BIMSTEC Secretariat and their families too was impacted by the pandemic, leading to disruption of the Secretariat's regular functioning. Nevertheless, the Secretariat has done its best, amidst challenges, to adapt and carry out its functions including the servicing and coordination of meetings in virtual and hybrid formats since March 2020. Although virtual meetings have helped advancing the work of the Organisation during the last two years, it is the Secretariat's observation that meetings in this format cannot provide the intimacy that in-person meetings do in facilitating the sharing of ideas, discussion, and resolution of issues through negotiation and interaction between persons that is necessary in advancing regional cooperation.

## **INSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

05. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit was significant in the context of providing direction for institutional reform. The Leaders, at the Fourth Summit, emphasized the importance of robust institutional arrangements to advance BIMSTEC Cooperation including deciding to task the BIMSTEC Secretariat to prepare a preliminary draft of the Charter for the organization. The Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 01 April 2021 reiterated its commitment to intensify efforts to implement and realize the directives given by the Leaders at the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit. Progress made pursuant to the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit and the Seventeenth Ministerial Meeting is as follows:

### **a. BIMSTEC Charter**

Following the decision of the Fourth Summit, the Secretariat prepared a preliminary draft of the BIMSTEC Charter. It was first discussed during the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) (Colombo, Sri Lanka, January 2019). After several rounds of discussion by the BPWC as well as Meetings of Senior Officials, the finalized draft text of the BIMSTEC Charter was endorsed by the Twenty First Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (Colombo, Sri

Lanka–virtual, 02 September 2020). The Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, expressing deep appreciation to the Member States that had completed internal procedures required for the signature of the BIMSTEC Charter, recommended the remaining Member States to complete their internal procedures for adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter at the BIMSTEC Summit.

All Member States have completed their respective internal procedures and conveyed their readiness to sign the BIMSTEC Charter during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

#### **b. Rules of Procedure**

As directed by the Leaders at the Fourth Summit, the Secretariat drafted the Rules of Procedure (RoP) for BIMSTEC Mechanisms and circulated among the Member States. The First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) (Colombo, Sri Lanka, January 2019) recommended that the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms shall be discussed after the finalization of the text of the BIMSTEC Charter. Subsequently, the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) instructed the SOM to formulate the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms in conformity with the provisions of the BIMSTEC Charter once it is adopted by the BIMSTEC Leaders at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit. Accordingly, the BPWC, at its next Meeting following the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit, may resume discussions to finalize the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms.

#### **c. BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC)**

The BIMSTEC Leaders, at the Fourth Summit, decided to establish a BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) to deal with administrative and financial matters of the Secretariat and the BIMSTEC Centres and Entities, as well as to prepare schedule of meetings, and prioritize and rationalize the organization's activities. In keeping with this decision, the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) has been established. As at date, Sri Lanka, as Chair of BIMSTEC, has convened four Meetings of the BPWC (January 2019; October 2019; March 2020 and August 2020), during which the Committee has dealt with a number of important administrative and financial matters relating to the Secretariat, including budgetary matters, auditing procedures, preparation of the schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings, and collaboration with other like-minded regional/ international organizations. The Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) agreed to expand the mandate of the BPWC enabling it to act as the Preparatory Meeting to the SOM dealing with all issues that would be placed before the SOM. The next Meeting of the BPWC is expected to be held in Thailand immediately following Thailand's assumption of the Chair of BIMSTEC during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.



#### **d. BIMSTEC Development Fund (BDF)**

As directed by the Fourth Summit to explore the possibility of establishing a BIMSTEC Development Fund (BDF), the modalities for the establishment of the BDF was first discussed during the First BPWC Meeting held in Sri Lanka in January 2019. Based on the decisions of the First BPWC, the Secretariat prepared and circulated the draft Concept Paper on BDF among the Member States for comments and observations.

The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually on 01 April 2021 in Sri Lanka approved the establishment of an *ad-hoc* Expert Group on the Establishment of the BDF comprising financial experts from the Member States with the mandate to finalize the modalities for the establishment of BDF, which will be utilized for research and planning of BIMSTEC and financing of projects, programmes and other activities of BIMSTEC centres and entities as agreed upon by the Member States. The Ministers also instructed the Secretariat to hold the First Meeting of the Expert Group at a date of convenience for the Member States.

In line with this decision, the Secretariat has requested Member States for nominations to constitute the *ad-hoc* Expert Group. As at date, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand have forwarded their nominations. The Secretariat will host the First Meeting of the Expert Group upon receipt of all nominations and at the convenience of all Member States.

#### **e. Institutional Capacity of the BIMSTEC Secretariat**

The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit agreed to enhance the institutional capacity of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, including through financial and human resources, in order to coordinate, monitor and facilitate implementation of BIMSTEC activities and programmes; and initiate project proposals as agreed by the Member States as well as fulfil any other responsibility entrusted to it in an effective and efficient manner and agree to raise the number of Directors to seven, one from each Member State, in a staggered manner.

Accordingly, the First Meeting of the BPWC (Colombo, Sri Lanka, January 2019) established a formula for the staggered increase of Directors at the Secretariat from 3 to 7, with each Member State appointing one Director in keeping with the Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat. Accordingly, Directors from all Member States were deputed to the Secretariat. However, at present, there are six Directors at the Secretariat from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand respectively, while the Director from India succeeding the previous Director who has returned upon completion of his term, is expected to join the Secretariat shortly.

The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) approved the Organogram of the BIMSTEC Secretariat that was endorsed by the 21<sup>st</sup> SOM (Colombo, Sri Lanka - virtual, 02 September 2020), with a view to enhancing the institutional capacity of the Secretariat, in line with the directive of the 4<sup>th</sup> Summit. Accordingly, at present the Secretariat is staffed by the Secretary General, 06 Directors from the Member States and 26 General Services Staff (02 GSS-I, 12 GSS-II, 04 GSS-III, 02 GSS-IV, 04 GSS-V and 02 outsource staff).

#### **f. Review, restructure and rationalization of sectors of cooperation**

During the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit, the Leaders emphasized the need to accelerate progress in the core areas of cooperation and to review, restructure and rationalize the existing areas of BIMSTEC cooperation and streamline the operational modalities for activities, implementation of programmes and projects under BIMSTEC for bringing out tangible results. Following the directive of the Leaders at the Fourth Summit, the matter was discussed in detail during the First, Second and Third Meetings of BPWC.

Thereafter, the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the BIMSTEC SOM (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 03 March 2020) and the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) recommended the rationalization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC, as follows, for adoption by the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit:

#	Lead Member State	Areas of Cooperation as revised by the 20 <sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC SOM on 03 March 2020	
		Sectors	Sub-sectors
1.	Bangladesh	Trade, Investment and Development	-
2.	Bhutan	Environment & Climate Change	-
3.	India	Security	(i) Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) (ii) Disaster Management (iii) Energy
4.	Myanmar	Agriculture and Food Security	(i) Agriculture (ii) Fisheries & Livestock
5.	Nepal	People-to-People Contact	(i) Culture (ii) Tourism (iii) People-to-People Contact (forums of Think Tanks, Media etc.)
6.	Sri Lanka	Science, Technology & Innovation	(i) Technology (ii) Health (iii) Human Resource Development
7.	Thailand	Connectivity	-

## NORM-SETTING ROLE

06. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit agreed to take up on a priority basis the legal documents and instruments that are pending for internal approval process for finalization and ratification:

### **BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking:**

As specified in the Convention, all the Member States deposited their Instruments of Ratification in respect of the BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking with the Secretary General of BIMSTEC. Accordingly, the Convention entered into force on 16 March 2021.

07. As per the directives of the Leaders at the Fourth Summit, the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) agreed to expedite conclusion of pending agreements, sign the agreements whose texts are ready, and ratify the agreements that have already been signed. The Ministers also **recommended the signing of the following legal instruments during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit:**

#### **a. BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters**

The text of the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was finalized during the Seventh Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (Bangkok, Thailand, 04-05 August 2015). All the Member States have completed their respective internal procedures and the Convention is ready to be signed during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

#### **b. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States**

The 20<sup>th</sup> SOM (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 03 March 2020) endorsed the draft text of the MOU on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States for approval by the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting. Accordingly, the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) agreed to recommend the signing of the MOU at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit. Meantime, all the Member States have conveyed their readiness to sign the MOU during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

#### **c. Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 21-22 November

2017) finalized the draft text of the MOA on the establishment of the TTF. Accordingly, the text of the MOA was considered and approved by the 19<sup>th</sup> SOM (Kathmandu, Nepal, 28 August 2018) and the 16<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Kathmandu, Nepal, 29 August 2018). All the Member States have now completed their respective internal procedures, and have conveyed their readiness to sign the MOA during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

08. Additionally, the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) approved the following:

**a. Template of the Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Centres/Entities**

The template of the MOA on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Centres/Entities was approved with a view to harmonizing the rules and procedures governing the establishment, functioning and financing of all BIMSTEC Centres/Entities, as finalized by the 21<sup>st</sup> SOM (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 02 September 2020).

**b. BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity**

The Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Working Group (BTCWG) (New Delhi, India – virtual, 08 December 2020) finalized the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, and the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) recommended the Master Plan for adoption during the Fifth Summit.

## **SECTORAL ACTIVITIES**

09. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit commended the role of Lead Countries for the progress made in the respective sectors and encouraged them to accelerate their efforts to make further progress. Subsequently, the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) encouraged (i) the Lead Countries of the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors of cooperation (07 Sectors and Sub-sectors) to develop their respective Plan of Action/Work Programme either by updating the old ones or by establishing new ones as soon as possible; (ii) simple and effective institutional mechanisms for all reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors with provision to adapt to requirements of specific sector, typically consisting of Joint Working Group (JWG) at the Sectoral level and Expert Group at the Sub-sectoral level; (iii) reiterated the practice of constituting *ad-hoc* Expert Group to deal with a particular subject whose term will expire with the completion of its task; and (iv) agreed to strengthen the concept of Lead Country by introducing the practice of Annual Report on Sectoral activities being presented at the SOM by the representative of the Lead Country concerned.

10. A summary of progress and achievements in the reconstituted seven (07) Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC cooperation since the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit is annexed to this Report (**Annex-A**).

## MEETINGS AND EVENTS

11. During the 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit, the Leaders of the BIMSTEC Member States reiterated commitment to timely holding of Summit and other meetings of the BIMSTEC mechanisms to intensify the process of regional cooperation.

12. Subsequently, the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka - virtual, 01 April 2021) reiterated the BIMSTEC Leaders' commitment to timely holding of Meetings of all BIMSTEC mechanisms as per the Calendar of Events established by the BPWC. They also noted with satisfaction that the Meetings of BIMSTEC's policy making bodies including Summit, Ministerial Meeting, Senior Officials' Meeting and BPWC have attained a high degree of regularity in recent years and encouraged the Sectoral Ministerial and institutional mechanisms to hold regular Meetings at all levels.

13. After assuming the chairmanship of BIMSTEC in August 2018, the current Chair, *i.e.* Sri Lanka, convened meetings of the core decision-making mechanisms of BIMSTEC at regular intervals - four (04) meetings of the BPWC (January 2019; October 2019; March 2020 and August 2020), three (03) Senior Officials' Meetings (March 2020; September 2020 and March 2021) and one (01) Ministerial Meeting (April 2021). However, despite the best efforts of the Chair, challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the postponement of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit which was expected to be held in 2020. All Member States have now agreed to attend the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and its preceding Meetings in hybrid mode from 28-30 March 2022, as proposed by the Chair.

14. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) also encouraged the Member States and the Secretariat to take advantage of the advances in information technology in carrying out the work of BIMSTEC by holding BIMSTEC Meetings and events virtually as and when possible. The Member States and the Secretariat has been following this advice in the context of COVID-19 related restrictions. However, as stated previously in this Report as well, the Secretariat observes that meetings in virtual format do not always provide the necessary atmosphere that in-person meetings provide, to facilitate the sharing of ideas, discussion, networking and resolution of issues through negotiation and interaction between persons that is often an asset in creating the necessary understanding, trust and confidence building for advancing regional cooperation.

15. A list of meetings and events related to BIMSTEC held since the 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit is attached at **Annex-B**.

## COLLABORATION WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

16. One of the aims and purposes of BIMSTEC enshrined in the Bangkok Declaration (06 June 1997) establishing the Organisation, is to maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes. A number of BIMSTEC Ministerial Meetings have deliberated and recognised the necessity for vibrant and collaborative external linkages with regional and international organizations with similar objectives in order to promote regional cooperation and integration in the Bay of Bengal region.

17. This issue was discussed in several Meetings aimed at reaching consensus and clarity on collaboration with other regional and international organizations with similar aims and purposes. The Special SOM (Kathmandu, Nepal, 11 August 2018) recommended that the Secretariat prepares a Concept Note on the subject, on a case-by-case basis and circulate it to the Member States for comments, and that, based on the consent of the Member States, the Secretariat will prepare a draft MOU and circulate it to the Member States for approval. Once formalized, the Secretariat would submit an annual report to the Member States regarding its engagements with various regional and international organizations. This recommendation was approved by the 16<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Kathmandu, 29 August 2018). As per these guidelines, the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) approved the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the BIMSTEC Secretariat and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), as endorsed by the 20<sup>th</sup> SOM (Colombo, 03 March 2020). Accordingly, the Secretary General of BIMSTEC signed the MOU with ADB on 24 February 2022 in a virtual signing ceremony. With the consent of the Member States, the Secretariat has been engaged with the ADB on the following issues:

#### **a. Cooperation with the Asian Development Bank**

##### **-BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity**

The BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity that has been prepared with technical support from the ADB, was finalized by the Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Working Group (BTCWG) held virtually in New Delhi, India on 08 December 2020. Subsequently, the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting recommended it to the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit for adoption.

##### **-BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study**

The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) instructed the Secretariat to establish a partnership with appropriate regional and international organization for undertaking the long overdue BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study. Accordingly, the Secretariat explored possibilities with development partners, and the ADB has recently expressed its willingness to undertake the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study.

##### **-Other engagements with the ADB**

The Secretariat is currently working on three additional studies, namely, BIMSTEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework 2030, Leveraging Thematic Circuits for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Tourism Development, and Transport Connectivity Infrastructure Financing with Technical Assistance from the ADB amounting to USD 1.5 million.

##### **-Capacity Development**

The ADB has also been supporting the BIMSTEC Secretariat on capacity development programs.

18. In addition, the Secretariat has received partnership proposals/technical assistance offers from several regional and international organizations:

- b. **The United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT)** has shared a draft proposal for a Technical Partnership Framework between BIMSTEC and the UNOCT. The draft proposal was circulated by the Secretariat *vide* Note Number BIMSTEC/SEC/49/01-2019/167 dated 18 December 2019 among the Member States seeking concurrence/comments. All the Member States have conveyed concurrence/views/comments on the draft proposal which have been shared with the UNOCT. The Secretariat awaits receipt of the revised proposal from UNOCT incorporating comments/ views from the Member States.
- c. **The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** has shared two study proposals: (i) Support for Investment Policy Cooperation in the BIMSTEC Region and (ii) Support for Enterprise Policy Cooperation in the BIMSTEC Region. These proposals were circulated among the Member States *vide* the Secretariat's Note Number BIMSTEC/SEC/49/01-2020/346 dated 09 June 2020 for approval/comments. Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand have conveyed their comments on the draft proposals. Comments from Bhutan and India are awaited.
- d. **The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)** has submitted a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IFPRI and BIMSTEC to support BIMSTEC Agricultural cooperation, which has been circulated *vide* the Secretariat's Note Number BIMSTEC/SEC/10/02-2020/447 dated 25 August 2020 among the Member States, with a request to convey their concurrence/comments. Accordingly, the Secretariat received the inputs/concurrence/observations from all the Member States. In this regard, the Secretariat *vide* Note Number BIMSTEC/SEC/10/02-2021/775 dated 23 December 2021 circulated the draft Concept Note on Cooperation between BIMSTEC and IFPRI as well as the revised draft MoU incorporating inputs received from the Member States and requested to convey concurrence/further comments, if any. However, after receiving observations from the Member State as well as based on the decision of the Special SOM held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 11 August 2018, the Secretariat *vide* Note Number BIMSTEC/SEC/10/02-2022/141 dated 01 March 2022 requested the Member States to convey comments/concurrences on the Draft Concept Note. As of 22 March 2022, concurrence/comments on the draft Concept Note have been received from Bhutan, Myanmar, India and Thailand. The Secretariat will follow up with the Member States regarding the MoU after receiving concurrences on the Draft Concept Note from all Member States.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

19. Following the signature of the Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat (Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 04 March 2014), the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat started functioning officially in Dhaka on 13 September 2014. The 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka - virtual, 01 April 2021) welcomed the decision of the Government of Bangladesh to expand the existing office space of the Secretariat by constructing a modern building with appropriate facilities at the same location, in view of the need of the Secretariat to have adequate space to discharge its responsibilities.

20. As per Article 9 of the MOA on the establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat, the Financial Rules and Regulations of the BIMSTEC Secretariat as well as the Service Rules and Regulations of the BIMSTEC Secretariat were endorsed and approved by the Member States during 17<sup>th</sup> SOM (February 2017) and 15<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (August 2017) respectively. Further, the following documents have been developed since the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit for smooth and effective functioning of the Secretariat:

### a. **BIMSTEC Procurement Procedure**

The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) approved the BIMSTEC Procurement Procedure (BPP), which shall act as a guideline for procurement of goods, services including outsourcing and technologies for smooth functioning of the Secretariat as endorsed by the 21<sup>st</sup> SOM (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 02 September 2020) upon the recommendation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BPWC (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 31 August 2020).

### b. **Administrative and Disciplinary Rules of the Secretariat**

The Secretariat re-circulated the revised draft Administrative and Disciplinary Rules of the Secretariat reflecting the comments/views of the Member States, as decided by the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BPWC (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 31 August 2020) seeking further comments. As at date, the Secretariat has received concurrence/comments from **Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka** on the revised draft text of the Administrative and Disciplinary Rules of the Secretariat. The Secretariat awaits the receipt of concurrence/ comments from **Bhutan and Thailand**.

21. The Secretariat is operated through the contributions received from the Member States. The Secretary General submits the Annual Budget to the Senior Officials' Meeting for its consideration, and approval by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting. The scale of assessed contribution of Member States has been established as follows: Bangladesh (14.50%), Bhutan (6.00%), India (32.00%), Myanmar (9.00%), Nepal (7.50%), Sri Lanka (13.75%), and Thailand (17.25%).



22. The budget expenditure scenario of the BIMSTEC Secretariat since its establishment in 2014:

#	Fiscal Year	Actual Expenditures in USD
01.	2014	1,44,597.14
02.	2015	3,42,984.48
03.	2016	4,56,369.01
04.	2017	6,47,533.36
05.	2018	7,91,759.35
06.	2019	9,16,116.73
07.	2020	8,66,237.86
08.	2021	9,00,884.42

23. The BPWC is mandated to deal with administrative and financial matters of the Secretariat. Accordingly, the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) approved the budgets of the Secretariat for FY2018, 2019, 2020 as endorsed and recommended by the respective Meetings of the Senior Officials and the BPWC. Further, the Special SOM (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 31 March 2021) took note of the concurrences through correspondence by all Member States for the Secretariat's estimated budget for FY 2021. The Secretariat has also received actual contributions from all Member States to the Secretariat's estimated budget for FY 2021.

24. As the next Meeting of the BPWC will be held after Thailand assumes the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC, the actual expenditure for the FY 2021 and estimated budget of FY 2022 for the BIMSTEC Secretariat were circulated among the Member States for consideration and approval through correspondence and seeking that they make their actual respective contributions towards the BIMSTEC Secretariat's Budget for FY 2022. Accordingly, as at 22 March 2022, the Secretariat has received concurrence through correspondence from all Member States except Myanmar to the proposed Budget of the BIMSTEC Secretariat for FY 2022, and contributions to the proposed Budget for FY 2022 have been received from Bhutan, India, Nepal and Thailand.

## OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

25. The BIMSTEC Charter reaffirms strong commitment by the Leaders of the Member States to make BIMSTEC a dynamic, effective, and result-oriented regional organization for promoting a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable Bay of Bengal region. In pursuance of the solemn commitment of the Leaders to strengthen BIMSTEC through collective efforts, meaningful cooperation and deeper integration, the Secretariat proposes for the consideration of the Member States, the following recommendations:

### **I. Eminent Persons Group (EPG):**

The year 2022 is an important year for BIMSTEC. It marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Bangkok Declaration and the founding of the Organisation and it is also the year of the adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter. The Secretariat is of the view that this presents an invaluable opportunity to reflect on the 25 years of BIMSTEC and carry out a brainstorming exercise that will dissect its bottlenecks/challenges including its working methods and identify opportunities to accelerate regional cooperation as envisaged in the Bangkok Declaration, Summit Declarations and the BIMSTEC Charter. Therefore, as approved by the 20<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials' Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 03 March 2020), the Secretariat proposes that Member States consider nominating two high-level personalities from each Member State to form an *ad-hoc* Eminent Persons Group (EPG). The Eminent Persons Group may be tasked with providing a set of recommendations that would be presented to the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting and Ministerial Meeting for consideration.

### **II. Lead Country and Plans of Action**

The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, Sri Lanka – virtual, 01 April 2021) approved the reconstitution of Sectors and Sub-sectors and encouraged the Lead Countries of the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors to develop their respective Plans of Action/ Work Programme either by updating old ones or by establishing new ones as soon as possible. Further, the Ministers encouraged simple and effective institutional mechanisms for all reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors with provision to adapt to requirements of specific sector, typically consisting of Joint Working Group (JWG) at the Sectoral level and Expert Group at Sub-sectoral level. The Ministers also agreed to strengthen the concept of Lead Country by introducing the practice of Annual Report on Sectoral activities being presented at the SOM by the representative of the Lead Country concerned. Accordingly, it is necessary that the Lead Countries work towards forming the relevant institutional mechanisms for the respective Sectors and Sub-sectors, constituting and convening the relevant Expert Groups and Joint Working Groups, and formulates the respective Plans of Action/ Work Programmes as early as possible, and take due note of the practice approved by the 17<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting whereby future annual reports to the Meetings of the Senior Officials on Sectoral activities would be presented by the representatives of the respective Lead Countries concerned.

### III. BIMSTEC Centres

Recognizing the importance of establishing BIMTEC Centres, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 2011 to establish the BIMSTEC Energy Centre in India. In 2014, the BIMSTEC Cultural Ministers signed MOU to set up the BIMSTEC Cultural Observatory Centre in Bhutan. However, even after 8-11 years since the signing of these Instruments, the Centres have not yet been established/operationalized. It is therefore recommended that the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC), at its next meeting takes up for discussion, ways and means to ensure the early establishment of these two Centres. Additionally, it is recommended that the BPWC, at its next meeting also develops guidelines for the operational structure and financing of the BIMSTEC Centres.

As the Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of the Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) will be signed during the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit, and the entry into force of the MOA requires the completion of individual internal formalities by all Member States, the Secretariat urges all Member States to consider completing their respective internal formalities at the earliest possible this year (2022), and the Lead Country, Sri Lanka, to expedite matters in connection with the establishment of the TTF.

### IV. BIMSTEC Free Trade Area and Rules of Origin

Despite the efforts of the Lead Country and the Member States on the creation of a BIMSTEC Free Trade Area, and despite acceleration of economic growth being one of the primary aims and purposes of BIMSTEC, enshrined in the Bangkok Declaration, progress in this connection has been slow. Discussions on the Rules of Origin have taken more than 15 years with the Working Group meeting 20 times. Agreement on finalisation of the document is still distant. Therefore, the Secretariat urges the Member States to consider expediting efforts to complete the ongoing negotiations in this connection and finalise all the related Agreements of BIMSTEC FTA at the earliest possible preferably in BIMSTEC's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, 2022.

### V. Enhancing the Visibility and Stature of BIMSTEC

During the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit (Kathmandu, Nepal, 2018), the Leaders acknowledged the importance of enhancing the visibility and stature of BIMSTEC in international fora by, *inter alia*, forging common positions, as appropriate, on issues of common interest and seeking group recognition in various multilateral organisations, institutions and processes. As the BIMSTEC Charter is being signed during the Fifth Summit, BIMSTEC would be especially well-placed to seek group recognition in multilateral organisations, institutions and processes.

Therefore, the Secretariat urges Member States, under the Chairmanship of Thailand, in BIMSTEC's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, to:

- (i) explore the possibility of obtaining recognition/ partnership/ observer status for BIMSTEC with the UN and other multilateral organisations;
- (ii) explore the possibility of creating a platform for informal interaction for the BIMSTEC Ministers of Foreign/ External Affairs, on the sidelines of the annual UNGA and other similar multilateral fora, with the participation of the BIMSTEC Secretary General.

Further, the Secretariat urges Member States to consider prioritising efforts to achieve the following in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Organisation:

- (a) Establish the BIMSTEC Parliamentarians' Forum;
- (b) Introduce the BIMSTEC Business Visa Scheme & BIMSTEC Visa Exemption Scheme at least for a limited category/ categories as an initial step.

## **VI. Recommendations on project-based cooperation and financing of BIMSTEC activities**

Considering that the aims and purposes of BIMSTEC as enshrined in the Bangkok Declaration of 1997 envisaged cooperation in projects that can be dealt with most productively on a sub-regional basis and that make the best use of available synergies, the Secretariat recommends that Member States may consider:

- a. Prioritising the identification and implementation of development projects in such areas as agriculture, fisheries, technology, public health, tourism, climate change etc., backed by financial resources, for early completion involving, if necessary, a few Member States as opposed to the entire membership;
- b. Expediting the establishment of the BIMSTEC Development Fund; maintaining partnership with the existing regional/international organizations and exploring new partnerships to mobilize expertise and resources for implementation of BIMSTEC projects and activities;
- c. Develop guidelines for financing studies/projects with BIMSTEC's own resources pledged by Member States;
- d. Develop guidelines for funding project-based cooperation with external funding.

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## ANNEX-A



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

**Summary of progress in the BIMSTEC Sectors and Sub-sectors**  
**since Fourth BIMSTEC Summit**

**A. TRADE, INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**(Lead Member State: Bangladesh)**

01. At the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit (Kathmandu, 30-31 August 2018), the Leaders renewed the commitment to an early conclusion of the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations, and directed the BIMSTEC Trade and Economic Ministerial Meeting (TEMM) and its subsidiary bodies including the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) to expedite finalization of all related Agreements of the BIMSTEC FTA as early as possible; and expressed the satisfaction on the progress of negotiation on the Agreement on Trade in Goods and the Agreement on Customs Cooperation and also directed the respective Ministries/Agencies to participate regularly in TNC Meetings.

02. Pursuant to the directives given by the Leaders at the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit, the FTA negotiation resumed after a gap of three years with the holding of the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 18-19 November 2018. The 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of BIMSTEC TNC was able to resolve a number of outstanding issues with regard to the text of the **Agreement on Trade in Goods of the BIMSTEC FTA**. The Base Rates of Tariff Elimination/Reduction has been fixed at MFN tariff applied on 01 August 2017. The list of 147 tariff lines subject to Product Specific Rules (PSR) has been transposed from HS 2007 to HS 2017 by Bangladesh. Member States agreed to exchange the Schedule of Tariff Concessions in HS 2017 version. However, as of now, the Schedule of Tariff Concessions has been received from Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar while the same is still awaited from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

03. Also, there are still unresolved issues with regard to the Rules for Determination of Origin of Goods and Operational Certification Procedures as well as transposition of BIMSTEC Product Specific Rules (PSR) from HS2007 to HS2017, which are integral parts of the Agreement on Trade in Goods of the BIMSTEC FTA. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Meetings of the Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO) held in New Delhi, India on 21-22 January 2019 and in Dhaka, Bangladesh (virtual) on 10-11 January 2022 the participants deliberated and updated the pending issues relating to Rules for Determination of Origin of Goods and Operational Certification Procedures as well as transposition of BIMSTEC Product Specific Rules (PSR) from HS2007 to HS2017. Bangladesh, as the Lead Member State of the Trade, Investment and Development Sector has proposed to host the 21<sup>st</sup>

Meeting of the WG-ROO virtually on 26-27 April 2022 to discuss the pending issues relating to the Agreement on Trade in Goods of the BIMSTEC FTA for early finalization.

04. It is necessary to complete the exchange of Schedule of Tariff Concessions expeditiously and hold the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of TNC and its Working Groups with particular focus on Rules of Origin to iron out the remaining issues in order to sign the Agreement on Trade in Goods of the BIMSTEC FTA soon.

05. The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Customs Cooperation (concurrently held with the 21<sup>st</sup> TNC Meeting) deliberated and updated the finalized draft text of the **Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters for BIMSTEC Free Trade Area**. The Meeting decided that India and Thailand will revert back as soon as possible on the amended Article-8 and related Articles 10(2) and 14(2). However, Thailand has made amendments to Articles 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 of the finalized draft text of the said Agreement in order to ensure the operability and effective implementation of the Agreement by the Royal Thai Customs. However, comments from India on the amended Article-8 and related Articles 10(2) and 14(2) of the said Agreement are still awaited. The updated draft text of the said Agreement upon reflecting proposed amendments by Thailand was circulated among the Member States for comments/views. As of now, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka have conveyed their concurrence/views on the said Agreement while the same is awaited from other Member States.

06. The texts of the **Agreement on Dispute Settlement Procedures and Mechanism of the Framework Agreement on BIMSTEC FTA** and the **2<sup>nd</sup> Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on BIMSTEC FTA** are ready to be submitted for endorsement of the Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Trade and Economic Officials. However, the Member States are also negotiating the draft texts of the **Agreement on Trade in Services, Agreement on Investment and Trade Facilitation Agreement**.

07. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) presented the Final Draft Report of the BIMSTEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework 2030 (March 2021) and shared findings of the study through the Virtual Workshop held on 14 September 2021. Based on the feedback gathered from the Workshop and subsequent inputs received from the Member States on the Final Draft Report, ADB has prepared the Final Report of the BIMSTEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework 2030 (November 2021). The Final Report was circulated among the Member States on 30 November 2021 for concurrences/final approval for enabling ADB to publish the Final Report of the BIMSTEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework 2030 at the earliest. As of now, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand have conveyed their concurrence/comments/observations/amendments on the said Final Report, while the same is awaited from Nepal.

## **B. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **(Lead Member State: Bhutan)**

01. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held on 01 April 2021 agreed to establish a Joint Working Group on Environment and Climate Change to develop a Plan of Action for a collective response to climate change for the region.

02. Subsequently, the Secretariat has received nominations from all Member States for the Joint Working Group on Environment and Climate Change. The Secretariat requested the Lead Country, Bhutan, to propose a date for the First Meeting of the Joint Working Group. Accordingly, Bhutan has proposed to host the First Meeting of the Joint Working Group virtually in the last week of May 2022.

03. The BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (BCWC) has been established in Noida, India. As of now, India is running the operation of the BCWC with its own resources and staff.

04. Myanmar hosted a Workshop on Climate Change and Disaster Management for BIMSTEC Countries in Yangon on 18 June 2019.

## **C. SECURITY**

### **(Lead Member State: India)**

#### **(i) Sub-Sector: Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC)**

01. The **BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking** has entered into force on 16 March 2021 upon ratification by all the Member States. According to **Article 7 (Notification of Nodal Authorities)** of the said Convention, Member States have shared/exchanged, with each other through the Secretariat, the contact details of the focal points of respective nodal authorities responsible for cooperation and exchange of information in international terrorism, transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances including their precursor chemicals with a view to providing each other the widest possible measure of mutual assistance in the prevention, investigation, prosecution and suppression of such crimes.

02. All the Member States have completed their internal procedure and conveyed their readiness to sign the **BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters**. The Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 01 April 2021 welcomed the readiness of the Member States to sign the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

03. The 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 30-31 August 2018 expressed determination to strengthen cooperation and coordination among the law enforcement, intelligence and security agencies and decided to continue with the BIMSTEC

National Security Chiefs meetings as part of promoting cooperation and coordination on counter terrorism and transnational crimes. As such, Thailand hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs (NSC) on 21 March 2019. According to the decision of the Meeting, all Member States have conveyed their final approval to the Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of NSC. The Government of Myanmar is currently in the process of domestic preparation to hold the Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs.

04. The 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit decided to hold meetings at the level of BIMSTEC Home Ministers. Accordingly, the Secretariat drafted and circulated the Concept Note on "Modalities of holding BIMSTEC Home Ministers Meeting" among the Member States for comments and observations in May 2019. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 01 April 2021 encouraged the early holding of the 1<sup>st</sup> BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting. In this regard, the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC) held virtually in Bhutan on 25 November 2021 deliberated the Concept Note and tasked the Secretariat to revise and circulate the Concept Note on Modalities of holding BIMSTEC Home Ministers Meeting in line with the comments of the Member States and the proposed Flow Chart of CTTC cooperation. The Secretariat is in the process of revising the Concept Paper on the Institutional Mechanism for CTTC Cooperation in line with the finalized BIMSTEC Charter and it will be circulated shortly so that the Member States can examine the proposed Flow-Chart in the Concept Paper and convey their concurrence/views/comments and observations on the Flow-Chart of the Home Ministers and National Security Chiefs reporting mechanism under CTTC.

05. At the Nineteenth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 28 August 2018, the delegation of Bangladesh reiterated its reservation that the title of the "BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration" need to be reconsidered as "BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Human Trafficking and Irregular Migration" with the consensus of the Member States. The Chair of the Meeting stated that the Member States are examining the issue and efforts will be made to develop consensus on the subject. Accordingly, the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC) held virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan on 25 November 2021 recommended the nomenclature of the Sub-Group as "***BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Human Trafficking***" and the matter of 'Illegal Migration' to be deliberated for inclusion in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Sub-Group during its First Meeting. The Ninth Meeting of JWG-CTTC welcomed the offer of Bangladesh as the Lead Shepherd of the Sub-Group, to host the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Human Trafficking. The Meeting also welcomed the offer of Sri Lanka to host the Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Intelligence Sharing in 2022 preceded by the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert-Group on Establishment of Database for Information Sharing System. The Meeting further welcomed the offer of India to host the Tenth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime in 2022.

06. The Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 29-30 October 2018 extensively deliberated the Draft Text of the BIMSTEC Convention Against Trafficking in Persons and agreed to convey



comments, observations and views of the Member States on the new proposals as well as on the deliberated Draft Text of the Convention. So far, the Secretariat has received comments from Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka on the negotiated Draft Text of the Convention. The Ninth Meeting of JWG-CTTC held virtually in Bhutan on 25 November 2021 tasked the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues to finalize the said Convention.

07. The Tenth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (SGAML-CFT) held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 19-20 November 2018 decided that Thailand as the Lead Shepherd of the Sub Group will draft a Concept Paper on a Action Plan to prevent the Illicit Flow of Funds (IFF) among the BIMSTEC Member States after obtaining suggestions/inputs from all the Member States. Further, the Eleventh Meeting of SGAML-CFT held in Bangkok, Thailand on 03-04 September 2019 decided that Thailand will finalise the Concept Paper after receiving inputs from the other Member States. Accordingly, all Member States have conveyed their inputs for drafting the Concept Paper which were forwarded to Thailand for necessary action. In the meantime, Thailand has conveyed its willingness to host the Twelfth Meeting of SGAML-CFT virtually in 2022.

08. The Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 01 April 2021 noted with appreciation that Myanmar had compiled and circulated the '*BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report-2019*'. The Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals (SG-NDPSPC) held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28-29 October 2021 agreed to continue publishing (print/e-version) the BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report regularly. The Sixth Meeting of SG-NDPSPC also agreed in developing the *BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Drug Control* based on the approved Terms of Reference of the Sub-Group. The Meeting of SG-NDPSPC recommended setting up a hotline to be used by the Focal Points for prevention, investigation, prosecution and suppression of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances including their precursor chemicals and setting up an Electronic BIMSTEC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (BDOMD) in order to facilitate sharing intelligence and information on matters relating to drug trafficking. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting appreciated India for hosting a Two-Day Conference on Combating Drug-Trafficking for BIMSTEC Countries on 13-14 February 2020.

09. The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on the Cooperation on Countering Radicalization and Terrorism held virtually in New Delhi, India on 02 December 2021, in principle, agreed on the Concept Note on Cooperation on Countering Radicalization and Terrorism among the BIMSTEC Member States and encouraged Member States to convey their comments and observations on the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Cooperation on Countering Radicalization and Terrorism. It may be noted that the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Cooperation on Countering Radicalization and Terrorism was held in New Delhi, India on 11 June 2019.

10. The First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Himalayan Science Council held virtually in New Delhi, India on 12 October 2021 decided that, after approval of the

*Concept Paper on 'Proposal for the Himalayan Science Council (HSC) under the BIMSTEC'* by the Fourth Meeting of BIMSTEC NSC, India will submit a draft Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Himalayan Science Council for circulation among the Member States, based on the finalized Concept Paper and "Template of the Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Centres/Entities".

11. The Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs (NSC) held in Bangkok, Thailand on 21 March 2019 welcomed the recommendations of the First Dialogue of BIMSTEC Think Tanks on Regional Security held in New Delhi, India on 13-14 November 2018 and agreed for holding the annual meetings of Think Tanks. Accordingly, the Second Dialogue of BIMSTEC Think Tanks on Regional Security was held in New Delhi, India on 27-29 November 2019. As proposed by India, the Secretariat has requested the Member States to offer their willingness to host the Third Meeting of BIMSTEC Think Tanks Dialogue. However, response from the Member States is yet to be received in this regard.

12. Bangladesh organized the Second Meeting of the Track 1.5 BIMSTEC Security Dialogue Forum on 30-31 July 2019. Thailand has proposed the time-frame of the Third Meeting of the Track 1.5 BIMSTEC Security Dialogue Forum to be held virtually on 09-10 May 2022.

13. India has offered a Training Programme for Law Enforcement Officers from BIMSTEC Countries on issues pertaining to Cyber Security, Counter Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crimes, De-radicalization and other Law Enforcement Challenges to be conducted by Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel National Police Academy (SVP NPA) in Hyderabad, India on 04-15 July 2022. Earlier, India organized a Workshop on Regional Cyber Security Cooperation held in New Delhi, India on 05-07 December 2018. Furthermore, India provided the Course on Counter Terrorism, Cyber Terrorism, Cyber Security, Counter Trans-National Crimes for National Security Officers of BIMSTEC Member States at Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel National Police Academy (SVP NPA), Hyderabad, India on 18 February 2019 to 01 March 2019.

14. India submitted a draft Concept Paper on Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal. All Member States have conveyed their comments on the said Concept Paper. According to the decision of the 3<sup>rd</sup> NSC Meeting, the Secretariat requested India to hold the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Maritime Security Cooperation for consideration of the proposals and comments of the Member States on the said Concept Paper. Additionally, India hosted the Coastal Security Workshop for BIMSTEC Countries in Gurugram on 20-22 November 2019 and the Workshop on Himalaya Science Council in Goa on 05-06 December 2019. Furthermore, India organized the First BIMSTEC Conclave of Ports in Visakhapatnam Port Trust, India on 07-09 November 2019 wherein the Member States recommended having a BIMSTEC Conclave of Ports annually. As proposed by India, the Secretariat has requested the Member States to offer their willingness to host the Second BIMSTEC Conclave of Ports. However, response from the Member States is yet to be received in this regard.

15. India drafted the Concept Note titled '*Harnessing Emerging Space Technologies for Addressing Security Challenges*' which was circulated among the Member States for their comments and observations. Accordingly, as of now, all Member States except Nepal have conveyed their comments and observation on the Concept Note. Further, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) prepared a Concept Note on Datacube for BIMSTEC Countries to enable Space Technology Applications to build a Datacube by organizing multi-temporal satellite data, and adding value to same by developing and integrating specific thematic data products, like Vegetation and Water, which was circulated among the Member States for their views. All Member States have conveyed their concurrence/views on the Concept Note. Additionally, the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), India provided a Short term Training Course for Capacity Building in Space Application on “Earth Observation Applications and Research: Fundamentals, Emerging Technological Tools and Services” for the BIMSTEC Member States from 06-17 January 2020 in Shillong, Meghalaya. Recently, India organized an Online Training for BIMSTEC Countries on “Geospatial Technologies for Disaster Risk Reduction” on 03-07 January 2022.

16. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) submitted a Draft Proposal for a Technical Partnership Framework between BIMSTEC and UNOCT in December 2019, which was circulated among the Member States for concurrences/comments. Accordingly, all Member States have conveyed their concurrence/views/comments on the Draft Proposal. The Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC) held virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan on 25 November 2021 tasked the Secretariat to liaise with UNOCT to obtain the revised proposal for Comprehensive Technical Partnership Framework (CTPF) between BIMSTEC and UNOCT incorporating comments of the Member States. Accordingly, the Secretariat requested UNOCT to forward the revised proposal at the earliest.

## (ii) Sub-Sector: Disaster Management

01. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 30-31 August 2018 decided to establish an **inter-governmental Expert Group on Disaster Management Cooperation** to develop a plan of action to improve preparedness and coordination for responding to natural disasters in the Bay of Bengal Region. Accordingly, India, as the Lead Country for this sector, has proposed to host the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Disaster Management Cooperation to be held virtually in New Delhi, India on 12 May 2022. Earlier, this Meeting was scheduled for 14 February 2020, but it could not be held.

02. The Ministers at the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, 01 April 2021) thanked India for convening the Second BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise held in Puri, India on 11-13 February 2020. Recently, India conducted the **Third Exercise** as “**Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief Exercise: PANEX-21**” for the BIMSTEC Member States with a view to fostering joint planning and preparation to institutionalize regional cooperation and intergovernmental efforts amongst the BIMSTEC Member States to respond dynamically to a natural disaster in the backdrop of a viral pandemic.

03. Earlier, India provided the Training on Risk Informed Urban Planning on 17-20 December 2019 for the urban planning professionals in the BIMSTEC Member Countries aimed at understanding the fundamentals of disaster risk management and how the principles of disaster risk reduction and resilience can be incorporated into urban planning decisions. Recently, India organized a "02 Days Virtual Workshop on Disaster Risk Governance in COVID-19: Discussion on lessons learnt and way forward" in Gujarat on 07-08 September 2021 with a view to strengthening the understanding and implementation of disaster risk governance by learning from the experiences of the Member States.

**(iii) Sub-Sector: Energy**

01. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection was signed on 31 August 2018 during the 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit and it entered into force on 07 April 2019. The MOU provides for the establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee (BGICC) to coordinate implementation of grid interconnection. Accordingly, the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee was held virtually in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 30 June 2021. The Meeting encouraged the Member States to initiate the preparatory works in the formulation of a BIMSTEC policy for transmission of electricity and a BIMSTEC policy for trade, exchange of electricity and tariff mechanism in accordance with the TOR of the BGICC. In this regard, Bangladesh conveyed its willingness to take lead in developing the BIMSTEC policy for transmission of electricity and a BIMSTEC policy for trade, exchange of electricity and tariff mechanism.

02. The Leaders at the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit decided to constitute an intergovernmental group of experts to enhance energy cooperation including in hydro-power and other sources of renewable energy and agreed to expedite their efforts to develop a comprehensive plan for energy cooperation by working closely with each other within the region. Accordingly, the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Energy (EGME) was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 28-29 March 2019. The Ministers at the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, 01 April 2021) noted with satisfaction that the draft ToR of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee (BGICC) has been finalized by the First Meeting of EGME. The First Meeting of EGME agreed the Flow Chart of the reporting and decision-making mechanisms of the BIMSTEC Energy Cooperation.

03. The Leaders at the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit called for an early operationalization of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) in order to strengthen energy cooperation in the region. In this regard, all Member States have conveyed their nominations for the Governing Board of BEC. India has proposed to host the First Meeting of the Governing Board of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre virtually on 06 April 2022 in order to finalize the Administrative and Financial Matters of BEC. It may be noted that the Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) was signed on 22 January 2011 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The Government of India indentified to house the BIMSTEC Energy Centre in Bengaluru.

04. At the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, 01 April 2021), the Ministers instructed the Secretariat to establish partnership with appropriate regional and international organizations for undertaking the long overdue BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study. In this regard, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) expressed its willingness to provide technical support to the BIMSTEC Member States in undertaking the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study aiming to provide technically and economically viable power interconnection across the BIMSTEC region. The Concept Paper on BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study and its ToR will be circulated soon upon receipt from ADB.

05. Recently, the Government of Nepal has proposed to hold the Third BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Meeting on 20 April 2022 and its preceding Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Energy on 19 April 2022.

#### **D. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY** **(Lead Member State: Myanmar)**

##### **(i) Sub-Sector: Agriculture**

01. The Seventh Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Agricultural Cooperation (7<sup>th</sup> EGMAC) was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 24-25 April 2019. The Meeting decided to reduce the common projects for implementation in BIMSTEC Agricultural Cooperation from nine to seven.

02. The First BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture (1<sup>st</sup> BAMB) was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 12 July 2019 preceded by the First BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting on Agriculture (1<sup>st</sup> SOM-A) on 11 July 2019. The Ministerial Meeting tasked the Expert Group on Agricultural Cooperation (EGMAC) for speeding up the implementation of common projects and to develop new proposals for beneficial projects in line with current issues in local, regional and global contexts. The Ministers hoped that the BIMSTEC Development Fund would be established soon for expediting implementation of the common projects. The Ministers also agreed to convene the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture once in two years. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held in April 2021 endorsed the decision of convening the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture once in two years.

03. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting encouraged the Secretariat to establish meaningful partnership with appropriate regional and international organizations to strengthen project-based cooperation under Agriculture and Food Security Sector. The Member States are now examining the proposal of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to support BIMSTEC Agricultural cooperation.

04. The Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Agricultural Cooperation (8<sup>th</sup> EGMAC) was virtually held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 31 August 2021. The Meeting followed up on the decisions made by the First BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and discussed the current status of the implementation of the common projects and the challenges faced in the implementation of the common projects due to lack of

funding. The Member States updated the Meeting regarding their action plan to be undertaken against their respective common projects. The Meeting also looked at deepening cooperation in the Agricultural sector among the Member States through sharing of available agricultural information, joint research programmes, sharing of germplasm/ genetic resources/ material transfer, regional BIMSTEC seminar on food security, exchange programmes of faculty and students, cooperation in fertilizer among the Member States etc.

05. India offered to provide fully-funded BIMSTEC Scholarships (6 slots for Masters and 6 slots for Ph.D. programme in Agriculture). The Secretariat has circulated the Guidelines, Procedures of Application, Financial Assistance and other relevant information of the BIMSTEC Scholarship programme for the academic session (2021-2022) among the Member States, as received from India. Nominations from Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal for the Scholarship programme were received and forwarded to India.

06. Myanmar hosted the Third Workshop on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) on 15 December 2021 virtually in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The Workshop came up with recommendations to develop a comprehensive paper on the GAP experiences and to hold the GAP Workshop by the Member States in every two years.

07. Sri Lanka proposed to host a Workshop on Encouraging Private Sector Participation especially in Value-Chain Management for Agricultural Products in hybrid mode in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August 2022. As of now, Bhutan, India, Myanmar Nepal and Thailand have conveyed their concurrences on the proposed time frame of the workshop.

08. India proposed to host the Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture (2<sup>nd</sup> BAMB) on 10 May 2022 preceded by the Second BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting on Agriculture (2<sup>nd</sup> SOM-A) on 09 May 2022 virtually in New Delhi. As of 22 March 2022, Myanmar has conveyed concurrence to the proposed dates of the said Meetings, while the same is awaited from the remaining Member States.

## **(ii) Sub-Sector: Fisheries**

01. The BIMSTEC Leaders at the 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit agreed to deepen cooperation in fisheries to ensure food security and improve livelihoods of people in the region and tasked the relevant national agencies to explore the possibility of meaningful collaboration to promote sustainable marine fisheries and directed the relevant authorities to explore how the landlocked Member States can benefit from inland fisheries.

02. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting agreed to establish an Expert Group on Fisheries and Livestock to deal with issues pertaining to the Sub-Sector, including preparation of Plan of Action/Work Program and generation of concrete project-based activities for the promotion of fisheries and livestock.

03. Accordingly, the Secretariat has sought nominations from the Member States to set up an Expert Group on Fisheries and Livestock. As of now, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka have conveyed their nominations for the Expert Group.

## **E. PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACT**

### **(Lead Member State: Nepal)**

#### **(i) Sub-Sector: Culture**

01. The Memorandum of Understanding on Establishment of BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO) was signed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> BIMSTEC Summit in March 2014. Upon receipt of nominations from all the Member States, Bhutan hosted the First Meeting of BCIC virtually on 20 September 2021, which finalized the draft text of the Procedures and Rules of BCIC and recommended it for submission to the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) through the BIMSTEC Secretariat and for approval by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Culture. The Meeting also recommended to prepare a draft Organogram of the BCIO including the Terms of References (TOR) for appointing Director of the Observatory, Professional and General Service Staff as well as other administrative and financial matters. Accordingly, Bhutan is taking preparatory actions to establish the Observatory.

02. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting recalled the BIMSTEC Leaders' decision to hold Meetings of BIMSTEC Cultural Ministers and BIMSTEC Cultural Festival at regular intervals, and called upon the Lead Country to take initiatives in this regard. It may be noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Culture, proposed to be hosted by Bangladesh, was postponed a number of times due to inconvenience of some of the Member States.

#### **(ii) Sub-Sector: Tourism**

01. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit agreed to take concrete steps to promote intra-BIMSTEC tourism and tasked the relevant authorities to devise strategies considering the emerging opportunities and building on the past initiatives including the "Plan of Action for Tourism Development and Promotion for the BIMSTEC Region" adopted in Kolkata in 2005 and reinforced by the 2<sup>nd</sup> BIMSTEC Tourism Ministers Round Table and Workshop in Kathmandu in 2006.

02. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting encouraged the holding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Tourism, the 3<sup>rd</sup> BIMSTEC Tourism Ministers' Roundtable soon. Bangladesh proposed to virtually host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Tourism on 30 May 2021, the 3<sup>rd</sup> BIMSTEC Tourism Ministers' Roundtable on 31 May 2021 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators on 26 August 2021, which were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

03. All the Member States reported to the Secretariat of their contribution of USD 10,000.00 each for the creation of the BIMSTEC Tourism Fund to be placed at the disposal of the proposed Tourism Information Centre. The Secretariat requested India to convey the current status of the BIMSTEC Tourism Fund, which is still pending.

04. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators held virtually in Sri Lanka on 08-09 December 2020 decided that a committee be formed, with the chairmanship

of India, and prepare the draft Action Plan on BIMSTEC Brand of Tourism and the modalities of utilization of the BIMSTEC Tourism Fund within six months of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting and circulate it through the Secretariat for consideration of the Member States. The Secretariat has received nominations of two nodal officers for the Committee on BIMSTEC Brand of Tourism from all Member States and requested India to propose a date for the meeting of the committee.

05. The 1<sup>st</sup> Roundtable and Workshop of Tourism Ministers decided to establish a BIMSTEC Tourism Information Centre in India. Later on, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators recommended setting up a Virtual Tourism Information Centre in India.

06. India, Sri Lanka and Thailand have initiated implementation of the Parity in Entrance Fee at Archaeological Sites as stipulated in point 7 of the Plan of Action for Tourism Development and Promotion for the BIMSTEC Region. The Secretariat requested the remaining Member States to convey their status on Parity in Entrance Fee at Archaeological Sites.

07. Regarding the two possible destinations to include in the five BIMSTEC tourism circuits, as of now, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand have identified their destinations for the five Circuits, namely BIMSTEC Buddhist Circuits, BIMSTEC Temple Circuits, BIMSTEC Eco-Tourism Circuits, BIMSTEC Cruise Circuits, and BIMSTEC Adventure Circuits, while the same is awaited from India and Nepal.

08. ADB prepared the Inception Report titled, “Regional Cooperation for Tourism Development in the BIMSTEC Region” which was circulated among the Member States on 02 April 2020. Based on the comments and observations received on the Report, ADB prepared a new version of the study, which was circulated among the Member States on 13 September 2020. The findings of the Study Report on, “Leveraging Thematic Circuits for a BIMSTEC 2030 Tourism Strategy” were presented through the Virtual Workshop held on 25 November 2020. Thereafter, the Member States conveyed their observations on the Initial Draft Report. Accordingly the updated Report was circulated on 04 January 2021 and based on subsequent inputs received, ADB prepared the Final Report titled, “Leveraging Thematic Circuits for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Tourism Development” which has been shared with the Member States through BIMSTEC/SEC/22/04-2921/742 dated 12 December 2021. The Secretariat has already received concurrence from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

**(iii) Sub-Sector: People-to-People Contacts (forums of Think Tanks, Media, etc.)**

01. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit directed the relevant agencies to finalize the Terms of Reference (ToR) of BNPTT. Accordingly, the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) was finalized by the First BPWC Meeting in January 2019. All the Member States concurred on the finalized draft ToR. Subsequently, the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting noted with satisfaction the finalization of the ToR for the BNPTT.



02. As decided by the Special Session of BIMSTEC SOM held in Nepal on 11 August 2018, the Secretariat requested the Member States to share the information on best practices followed by the respective Member States on visa matters for submission to the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Visa Matters for deliberation. The Secretariat has received information from all the Member States and subsequently requested Sri Lanka to host the 4<sup>th</sup> Expert Group Meeting on Visa Matters. The response from Sri Lanka is still awaited.

03. The Leaders at the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit also agreed to explore the possibility of establishing appropriate BIMSTEC forums for parliamentarians, universities, academia, research institutes, cultural organizations and media community to expand the scope of people-to-people contacts. Accordingly, the Secretariat circulated the “Draft Charter of the Association of BIMSTEC Speakers and Parliamentarians” prepared by India with the objective of establishing a BIMSTEC Parliamentary Forum for comments and observations of the Member States. As of now, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand conveyed their comments on the draft Charter.

04. The 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) held in India on 21-22 December 2020 recommended the future roadmap for BIMSTEC Cooperation in three categories, *i.e.*, BIMSTEC Leaders, BIMSTEC Secretariat, BNPTT Members, for consideration of the Member States.

05. The Research and Information for Developing Countries (RIS), a member of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) from India, proposed to conduct a research study on “Regional Food Chains in BIMSTEC: Prospects for Food Processing Sector” in collaboration with partner institutions in the BIMSTEC Member States. So far, the Secretariat has received concurrence from Nepal on the proposal to conduct the collaborative research.

## **F. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION** **(Lead Member State: Sri Lanka)**

### **(i) Sub-Sector: Technology**

01. The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on the **Establishment of the BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF)** held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 21-22 November 2017 finalized the draft text of the Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the establishment of the TTF. All Member States have conveyed their concurrence and readiness to sign the MOA on the establishment of the BIMSTEC TTF at the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit. Work on establishing the BIMSTEC TTF in Colombo, Sri Lanka, as per the provisions of the MOA, is expected to commence upon signature of the MOA during the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit. The MOA will enter into force on completion of all necessary internal formalities by all Member States and upon issuance of the notification thereof by the Secretary General.

02. The BIMSTEC Leaders, at the 4<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit, welcomed the offer of India to host a **BIMSTEC Startup Conclave** in December 2018, and encouraged all Member States to participate in it. Accordingly, India hosted the BIMSTEC Startup Conclave on 15-16

January 2021 as part of the Startup India International Summit, virtually, in New Delhi on 15-16 January 2021. As of now, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar have conveyed their concurrence/views on the four key recommendations emerging from the BIMSTEC Startup Conclave, while the same is awaited from Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

03. As agreed by the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, it is expected that an **Expert Group** to prepare a Plan of Action/Work Programme to strengthen cooperation under this sector will be constituted after the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit.

## (ii) Sub-Sector: Health

01. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit agreed to expand cooperation in the efforts to address non-communicable diseases as well as trans-national public health issues and also encouraged active cooperation among concerned agencies including in the area of traditional medicine.

02. The 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine (BTFTM) held virtually in Sri Lanka on 20 January 2022 reviewed the actions taken by the Member States as per the agreed timeframes adopted in the **Plan of Action for Development of Traditional Medicine** that was finalized during the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the BTFTM in Kathmandu on 04-05 February 2020, and agreed on new timeframes for agreed activities.

03. India hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Webinar on **Harmonization of Curricula for Mutual Recognition of Traditional Medicine Degrees** of the BIMSTEC Countries virtually on 03 November 2020. The draft Report of the Webinar was circulated by the Secretariat for comments/concurrence of the Member States. All Member States have conveyed their comments/concurrence to the draft Report. Additionally, Myanmar and Sri Lanka have conveyed concurrence to the action points/ recommendations contained in the Report of the Webinar on 'Harmonization of Curricula for Mutual Recognition of Traditional Medicine Degrees of BIMSTEC Countries'. However, Bhutan and Thailand have conveyed their comments on the action points/recommendations, and comments/concurrence is awaited from the remaining the remaining Member States.

04. Regarding the development of a **BIMSTEC Traditional Medicine (TM) Portal**, the Secretariat requested the Member States to convey the updated information to be incorporated in the TM Portal that India will develop upon receipt of the updated information from all the Member States. Bhutan and Sri Lanka have conveyed the updated information, while the same is awaited from other Member States.

05. The Secretariat requested the Member States to convey their respective pharmacopeia/ web links to be transmitted to India for sharing in the TM Portal to be developed by India. Bangladesh has forwarded the eight volumes of the Unani and Ayurvedic pharmacopeia. Responses are awaited from the remaining Member States.

06. It was decided during the 4<sup>th</sup> BTFTM Meeting that, in addition to Diabetes, COVID-19 would be included as an area of collaborative research to be conducted by the Member

States, and the Member States agreed to nominate experts to **constitute an Expert Group** to conduct the systematic review of researches on traditional medicine used in diabetes and COVID-19 from published information as a first step in collaborative research. Accordingly, the Secretariat requested the Member States to convey the nominations to constitute the aforesaid Expert Group. Nominations have been received from Bhutan, India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, and the same is awaited from the other Member States.

07. The Secretariat requested India and Sri Lanka to propose modalities and date of the **training on Genetic Resource (GR), Traditional Medicine Knowledge (TMK) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** and **2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on TMK, GR and IPR** respectively, as agreed during the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BTFTM. Accordingly, India has proposed to organize the two-day training program on Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) for the BIMSTEC Members on 07-08 April 2022 or alternately 12-13 April 2022. Sri Lanka has responded to India's proposal and responses from other Member States are awaited.

08. As agreed by the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, it is expected that an **Expert Group on Public Health** to examine the scope of collaboration and to develop a Plan of Action/Work Programme will be constituted after the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit.

### (iii) **Sub-Sector: Human Resource Development**

01. As agreed by the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, it is expected that an **Expert Group on Human Resource Development** to deal with the activities under this Sub-Sector including development of a Plan of Action/Work Programme in this regard will be constituted after the 5<sup>th</sup> Summit.

## **G. CONNECTIVITY** (Lead Member State: Thailand)

01. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit directed the respective authorities to speed up efforts to conclude the BIMSTEC Coastal Shipping Agreement and the BIMSTEC Motor Vehicle Agreement as early as possible.

02. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting encouraged holding of the second round of negotiations by the Working Group on the BIMSTEC Coastal Shipping Agreement and initiate negotiation process of the proposed BIMSTEC Framework Agreement on Transit, Transshipment and Movement of Vehicular Traffic Between and Among BIMSTEC Member Countries under the auspices of the BTCWG and continue negotiation of the BIMSTEC Motor Vehicle Agreement by the Member States. India has conveyed a proposed time frame for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Working Group for the Motor Vehicle Agreement. The Secretariat is seeking concurrence from the Member States for this proposed date.

03. On the other hand, comments on both the negotiated draft text of the **Coastal Shipping Agreement and its draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** have been received from all the Member States. Accordingly, the Secretariat requested India, the Lead

Country of Transport and Communication sector, to propose a suitable date(s) for the Second Working Group Meeting in order to finalize the said Agreement and its SOP at the earliest. Accordingly, India proposed to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Working Group Meeting virtually on 20 October 2021, along with certain suggestions, including changing the name of the Agreement to the **Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation**. However, the Meeting was later postponed by India due to the inconvenience of some of the Member States.

04. The draft text of the **Motor Vehicles Agreement for the Regulation of Passenger and Cargo Vehicular Traffic between and among BIMSTEC Member States** was initially negotiated during the First Meeting of the Working Group held in New Delhi in April 2018. However, progress on the Agreement has stalled as some Member States felt that it would be desirable to first conclude a Framework Agreement on Transit, Transshipment and Movement of Vehicular Traffic and then commence negotiations on specific agreements under that Framework. Accordingly, Myanmar forwarded a Concept Paper on the aforementioned subject matter, which was circulated among the Member States for their views. All the Member States have conveyed their concurrence/comments/observations on the said Concept Paper drafted by Myanmar.

05. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit called for early adoption of the draft **BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity**, which identifies 267 projects at the cost of USD 124 billion approximately. Accordingly, the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting recommended the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity to the 5<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit for adoption.

06. As part of the Technical Assistance, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) prepared the Inception Report of the **Transport Connectivity Infrastructure Financing** along with a country specific questionnaire, which was circulated among the Member States for comments on the Inception Report and responses to the country specific Questionnaire. Accordingly, ADB submitted the Final version of the Study Report titled “**Transport Connectivity Infrastructure Financing**” incorporating comments received from some of the Member States. In this connection, BIMSTEC Secretariat in collaboration with ADB jointly organized a Virtual Consultation Workshop on Transport Connectivity Infrastructure Financing on 16 September 2021 with a view to gathering further feedback/comments on the Study Report. ADB agreed to incorporate the feedbacks/comments, if any, from the Member States and publish the Final Report by the end of December 2021. A workshop is expected to be jointly organized by the ADB and the Secretariat in 2022 to present the Final Report. The Final Report titled “**Financing Transport Connectivity Infrastructure in the BIMSTEC Region**” has been circulated on 22 March 2022 among the Member States for concurrence/final approval.

07. India hosted the First BIMSTEC Conclave of Ports in Vishakhapatnam, India on 07-08 November 2019 to develop a platform to strengthen port-led maritime connectivity in the Bay of Bengal region. Recently, upon the request of India, the Secretariat has requested Member States to indicate their readiness to host the Second BIMSTEC Conclave of Ports. However, response from the Member States is yet to be received in this regard.

08. The Leaders of the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit decided to establish a Working Group to deal with information technology and communications related matters with a view to providing greater access, more affordable and high-speed internet and mobile communications to the peoples of the region. Accordingly, the Secretariat drafted a Concept Note titled “BIMSTEC’s Collaboration in Information Technology and Communication-related matters” and requested India to host the First Meeting of the Working Group. The First Working Group Meeting is yet to convene. However, India hosted a BIMSTEC Ministerial Conclave at the India Mobile Congress in New Delhi on 25-27 October 2018.

## **H. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES**

### **(i) Poverty Alleviation**

01. The Second Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 12 January 2012 adopted the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action, which encourages all Member States to implement eight broad strategies including pro-poor and inclusive growth, social development and implementation of targeted programs for poor, increased coverage for social protection, increased preparedness to address the adverse impact of climate change, disaster risk management, good governance and periodic progress report.

02. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit called for effective implementation of the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action and for gearing up efforts of all sectors to contribute to the overarching goal of poverty alleviation. Subsequently, the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting encouraged the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Poverty Alleviation to review the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action and come up with suggestions to involve various Sectors and Sub-sectors to contribute to the overarching goal of poverty alleviation.

03. The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Poverty Alleviation was held virtually in New Delhi, India on 12 November 2020 decided that the Member States will update the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action including socio-economic indicators adopted by the Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation and submit the same to the Secretariat within one month. The Secretariat requested the Member States to update the aforesaid information in the stipulated time. So far, the Secretariat has received updated socio-economic indicators from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

04. The Second Expert Group Meeting also agreed that the Member States will submit both country-wise and common Priority Sectors with respect to Poverty Alleviation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, within one month. The Secretariat requested the Member States to submit the aforesaid information in the stipulated time. So far, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal have submitted the aforesaid information, whereas Thailand has shared their comments on the Proposed Priority Area of Action to be updated in the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action.

**(ii) Mountain Economy**

01. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit underscored the necessity of making concrete efforts to ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their bio-diversity in order to support sustainable development and decided to establish an Inter-governmental Expert Group to develop an action plan.

02. Based on the Concept Note titled "Promoting Mountain Economies in BIMSTEC Countries" submitted by Nepal, the Secretariat requested the Member States to volunteer to serve as the Lead Country for this sector and offer to host the First Meeting of the above Expert Group. No progress has been made in this regard.

03. Subsequently, the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting agreed to expedite the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Expert Group to develop an action plan to promote mountain economies as decided by our Leaders during the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit, and instructed the Secretariat to initiate the process. The Secretariat has requested the Member States to submit nominations to establish the Expert Group. The Secretariat has received nominations from Sri Lanka and is awaiting responses from the rest of the Member States.

**(iii) Blue Economy**

01. The 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting recalled the decision of the BIMSTEC Leaders to establish an Inter-Governmental Expert Group to develop an action plan on Blue Economy, keeping in mind the special needs and circumstances of the landlocked Member States, and instructed the Secretariat to initiate the process. In this regard, the Secretariat drafted and circulated a Concept Paper titled 'BIMSTEC Inter-Governmental Expert Group Meeting on Blue Economy' among the Member States in October 2019. In this connection, the Government of Bangladesh expressed its willingness to host the First Meeting of the Inter-governmental Expert Group on Blue Economy in the first quarter of 2020. However, the Meeting is yet to convene.

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## Annex V



### BIMSTEC CHARTER

#### PREAMBLE

We, the peoples of the Member States of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), represented by the Heads of State or Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of India, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the Kingdom of Thailand;

*Reaffirming* the firm commitment to the principles and purposes of BIMSTEC as enshrined in the 1997 Bangkok Declaration;

*Having recognized* the Memorandum of Association (MOA) on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat, done at Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 04 March 2014;

*Having recognized* the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Secretariat of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) done at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 01 November 2015;

*Being convinced* that geographical contiguity, abundant natural and human resources, historical linkages and rich cultural heritage present great potentials for promoting deeper cooperation in identified core areas in the region;

*Acknowledging* that enhanced inter-linkages and inter-dependence within the economies and societies in the BIMSTEC Member States provide greater opportunity to advance regional cooperation;

*Recognizing* the special needs and circumstances of the least developed and land-locked developing countries in the region and underlining the necessity to provide meaningful support to their development process;

*Reaffirming* strong commitment to making BIMSTEC a dynamic, effective and result-oriented regional organization for promoting a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Bay of Bengal Region through collective efforts, meaningful cooperation and deeper integration;

*Stressing* the need for a fair, just, equitable and transparent international order and reaffirming faith in the multilateralism with the United Nations at the centre and the rule-based international trading system;

*Underscoring* the importance of robust institutional arrangements to effectively steering the process of regional cooperation under BIMSTEC;

*Having regard* to all legal instruments concluded among the Member States since the establishment of BIMSTEC in 1997;

*Having regard* to the BIMSTEC Summit Declarations and BIMSTEC Ministerial Statements providing directives on vision and priorities of BIMSTEC cooperation and establishing rules, norms and practices for carrying out BIMSTEC activities;

*Recalling* the decision of the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit of 2018 to begin the process of drafting the Charter for the organization, building on the 1997 Bangkok Declaration, defining a long-term vision and priorities for cooperation, clearly delineating roles and responsibilities of different layers of institutional structure and decision-making processes;

*Hereby decide* to establish, through this Charter, the legal and institutional framework for BIMSTEC;

*And to this end*, the Heads of State or Government of BIMSTEC Member States, assembled in Colombo on the occasion of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit, have agreed to this Charter.



## **CHAPTER I**

### **PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES**

#### **Article 1**

#### **Purposes**

The purposes of the BIMSTEC shall be:

1. To create an enabling environment for rapid economic development through identification and implementation of specific cooperation projects in the already agreed areas of cooperation and such other areas that may be agreed upon by the Member States. Member States may periodically review the areas of cooperation.
2. To accelerate the economic growth and social progress in the Bay of Bengal region through joint endeavours in a spirit of equality and partnership.
3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, technical and scientific fields.
4. To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional and technical spheres.
5. To cooperate more effectively in joint efforts that are supportive of and complementary to national development plans of the Member States which result in tangible benefits to the people in raising their living standards, including through generating employment and improving transportation and communication infrastructure.
6. To cooperate in projects that can be dealt with most productively on a regional basis among the BIMSTEC Member States and that make best use of available synergies.
7. To maintain peace and stability in the Bay of Bengal region through close collaboration in combating international terrorism, transnational organized crimes as well as natural disasters, climate change and communicable diseases.
8. To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

9. To endeavor to eradicate poverty from the Bay of Bengal region.
10. To establish multidimensional connectivity, promote synergy among connectivity frameworks in the region, as a key enabler to economic integration for shared prosperity.
11. To promote trade and investment as a major contributing factor for fostering economic and social development in the region.

## **Article 2**

### **Principles**

The BIMSTEC and its Member States, in the pursuit of the purposes stated in Article 1, shall observe the following principles in all the activities:

1. Cooperation within the BIMSTEC will be based on respect for the principle of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs, non-aggression, peaceful co-existence, mutual respect and mutual benefit.
2. Cooperation within the BIMSTEC will be complementary to and not be a substitute for bilateral, sub-regional, regional or multilateral cooperation involving the Member States.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LEGAL PERSONALITY**

## **Article 3**

### **Legal Personality of BIMSTEC**

BIMSTEC as an inter-governmental organization is hereby conferred legal personality.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

## **Article 4**

### **Members of BIMSTEC**

The Member States of BIMSTEC are the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of India, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the Kingdom of Thailand.

## **Article 5**

### **Rights and Obligations**

1. The Member States of BIMSTEC shall have equal rights and obligations under this Charter.
2. The Member States of BIMSTEC shall take all measures that deem necessary, including enactment of appropriate domestic legislations to effectively implement provisions of this Charter and to comply with all obligations of membership.

## **Article 6**

### **Admission of New Members**

1. The process for application and admission to BIMSTEC shall be prescribed by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting upon the concurrence of all Member States.
2. The admission of new member shall be based on the following criteria:
  - (a) The applicant State shall satisfy the conditions of territorial contiguity to, and/or direct opening into, or primary dependence on the Bay of Bengal for trade and transport purposes and/or any other criteria agreed upon in the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.
  - (b) The applicant State shall agree to abide by this Charter.
  - (c) The applicant State shall possess the ability and willingness to carry out the obligations of Membership.
  - (d) Admission of the new Member shall contribute to unity and solidarity of the BIMSTEC.
3. The procedure for admission of new Member States shall be as follows:
  - (a) Any State which desires to become a Member of the BIMSTEC shall submit an application to the Secretary General. Such application shall contain a declaration, made in a formal instrument that the State in question fulfils the criteria of this Charter.

- (b) The Secretary General shall, for information, send a copy of the application to the Members of the BIMSTEC and shall include the item in the agenda of the next available Ministerial Meeting.
- (c) Admission shall be approved by the BIMSTEC Summit, upon the recommendation of the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.
- (d) The Secretary General shall inform the applicant State of the decision of the Summit regarding membership. Upon the approval of the membership application, the new member shall deposit the Instrument of Accession to the BIMSTEC Secretariat.

## **Article 7**

### **Admission of Observers**

1. The admission of an Observer shall be based on the following criteria:
  - (a) The applicant State shall satisfy BIMSTEC Member States that the applicant for Observership has shown interest in, and is able to contribute to the activities of BIMSTEC.
  - (b) The applicant regional/international organization shall satisfy BIMSTEC Member States that the applicant for Observership is in a position to contribute to the work programme of BIMSTEC.
  - (c) The applicant State and regional/international organization shall bear in mind that granting of Observer status does not automatically qualify for the membership.
  - (d) All decisions regarding the admission of observer states and regional/international organizations will be based on unanimity.
2. The procedure for admission of an Observer shall be as follows:
  - (a) Any State, regional organization or international organization desiring to become an Observer of the BIMSTEC shall submit an application to the Secretary General. Such application shall contain a declaration, made in a formal instrument that the State or international organization or regional organization in question fulfils the criteria of the BIMSTEC Charter.

- (b) The Secretary General shall, for information, send a copy of the application to the Members of the BIMSTEC and shall include the item in the agenda of the next Ministerial Meeting.
- (c) All decisions regarding the admission of observer states and international/regional organizations will be made by consensus by the BIMSTEC Summit upon recommendations of the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.
- (d) The Secretary General shall inform the applicant State or international organization or regional organization of the decision of the Summit. If the application is approved, observer status shall become effective on the date on which the Summit takes its decision on the application.
- (e) Roles and obligations for the Observer will be as agreed by the Member States in the relevant rules of procedures.

## **CHAPTER IV ORGANS**

### **Article 8 BIMSTEC Summit**

1. The BIMSTEC Summit shall comprise the Heads of State or Government of the Member States.
2. The BIMSTEC Summit shall:
  - (a) Be the supreme decision-making body of BIMSTEC;
  - (b) Deliberate, provide policy guidance and take decisions on key issues pertaining to the realization of the purposes of BIMSTEC, important matters of interest to Member States and all issues referred to it by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and BIMSTEC Sectoral Ministerial Bodies;
  - (c) Address emergency situations affecting BIMSTEC by taking appropriate measures;
  - (d) Decide on application for admission of new Member States and Observers;

- (e) Authorize the establishment and dissolution of Sectoral Ministerial Bodies and BIMSTEC Centres/Entities.
3. The BIMSTEC Summit Meetings shall be:
- (a) Held once every two years, preceded by the Ministerial Meeting, and be hosted by the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship; and
  - (b) Convened, whenever necessary, as Special Summit to be chaired by the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship, at a venue to be agreed upon by BIMSTEC Member States.
  - (c) The Chairman of BIMSTEC may, at his own initiative or at the request of a Member State, convene a Special Summit to address an important issue pertaining to the interest of BIMSTEC with the concurrence of all Member States.
  - (d) All decisions of the Summit Meetings shall be made on the basis of consensus.

### **Article 9**

#### **BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

1. The BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting shall comprise the Ministers dealing with foreign relations of the Member States.
2. The BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting shall have the following powers and functions:
  - (a) Coordinating overall BIMSTEC cooperation;
  - (b) Prepare the BIMSTEC Summit;
  - (c) Coordinate the implementation of agreements and decisions of the BIMSTEC Summit;
  - (d) Coordinate with the Sectoral Ministerial Bodies to enhance policy coherence, efficiency and cooperation with them;
  - (e) Approve the budget of the Secretariat and BIMSTEC Centres/Entities as proposed by the Senior Officials' Meeting;

- (f) Endorse the deliberations of the BIMSTEC Sectoral Ministerial Meetings;
  - (g) Appoint the Secretary General of BIMSTEC, with the rank and status of an Ambassador upon the recommendation of the Senior Officials' Meeting; and
  - (h) Undertake such other functions as may be assigned by the BIMSTEC Summit.
3. The BIMSTEC Ministerial Meetings shall:
- (a) Meet annually, preceded by the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), and to be hosted by the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship;
  - (b) Convene, whenever necessary, as special meeting to be chaired by the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship, at a venue to be agreed upon by the Member States.
  - (c) The Chairman of BIMSTEC may at his own initiative or at the request of a Member State, convene a Special Ministerial Meeting to address an important issue pertaining to the interest of BIMSTEC with the concurrence of all Member States.

### **Article 10**

#### **BIMSTEC Sectoral Ministerial Meetings**

1. The BIMSTEC Sectoral Ministerial Bodies shall comprise the relevant Ministers of line Ministries responsible for carrying out the activities of the respective sectors.
2. The BIMSTEC Sectoral Ministerial Bodies shall have the following powers and functions:
  - (a) Function in accordance with their respective established mandates;
  - (b) Implement the agreements and decisions of the BIMSTEC Summit under their respective purview;
  - (c) Strengthen cooperation in their respective fields in promoting BIMSTEC objectives;

- (d) Submit report and recommendations to the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting for the consideration of the BIMSTEC Summit; and
- (e) Assess and approve and take action on the deliberations of the BIMSTEC Sectoral Senior Officials' Meeting.

3. The Sectoral Ministerial Bodies shall meet as and when necessary to be hosted and chaired by the Lead Country of a particular sector. Each Sectoral Ministerial Body may have under its purview the relevant Senior Officials, Sectoral Working Groups and Sub-sectoral Expert Groups/Sub-groups etc., all to be hosted and chaired by the Lead Country of a particular sector or any other interested Member State.

### **Article 11**

#### **BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting**

1. The BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting shall comprise the Foreign Secretaries/Secretaries/appropriate Senior Officials nominated by the BIMSTEC Member States.

2. The Senior Officials' Meeting shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Prepare for the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting;
- (b) Follow up and coordinate the implementation of agreements and decisions of the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting;
- (c) Coordinate with the Sectoral Bodies in Sectors where there is no Ministerial body;
- (d) Initiate proposals on all administrative and budgetary matters for the consideration of the Ministerial Meeting; and
- (e) Undertake such other functions as may be assigned by the Ministerial Meeting.
- (f) Assess and approve and take action on the deliberations of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee.



3. The BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting shall be:
  - (a) Held once a year, preceding the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting to be hosted by the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship; and
  - (b) Convened, whenever necessary, as special session of the Senior Officials' Meeting to be chaired by the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship, at a venue to be agreed upon by BIMSTEC Member States.
4. The Senior Officials' Meeting shall report to the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

## **Article 12**

### **BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee**

1. The BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) shall comprise the National Focal Point at appropriate senior level of each BIMSTEC Member State.
2. The BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee shall have the following powers and functions:
  - (a) Deliberate on the administrative and financial matters of the Secretariat and BIMSTEC Centres/Entities;
  - (b) Prepare, in consultation with the Secretariat, schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC activities;
  - (c) Prioritize and rationalize BIMSTEC activities/projects; and
  - (d) Prepare for the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting.
  - (e) Undertake such other functions as may be assigned by the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting.
3. The meeting of BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) shall:
  - (a) Be held at least twice a year, both to be hosted by the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship;
  - (b) In addition, the Committee shall meet as and when necessary.

**Article 13**  
**BIMSTEC National Focal Point**

1. Each BIMSTEC Member State shall establish a BIMSTEC National Focal Point (NFP) at their respective Ministry of External Affairs/Foreign Affairs.
2. The National Focal Point shall have the following powers and functions:
  - (a) Serve as the national point of contact for all communications including e-mail with the BIMSTEC Secretariat;
  - (b) Be the repository of information on all BIMSTEC matters at the national level;
  - (c) Coordinate the implementation of BIMSTEC decisions at the national level; and
  - (d) Coordinate and support the national preparations of BIMSTEC meetings.

**Article 14**  
**Secretary General and the Secretariat**

1. The Secretary General of BIMSTEC shall be appointed by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, upon recommendation by the Senior Officials' Meeting, for a non-renewable term of office of three years, upon nomination by a Member State based on the principle of alphabetical rotation.
2. The Secretary General shall act as the Head of the Secretariat.
3. The Secretary General shall be of Ambassadorial rank.
4. The Secretary General shall have the following duties and responsibilities:
  - (a) Carry out directives of the Member States through different mechanisms and coordinate implementation progress;
  - (b) Coordinate, facilitate and monitor progress in the implementation of BIMSTEC agreements and decisions, and submit annual report on the work of the organization to the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting;

- (c) Participate in meetings of the BIMSTEC Summit, BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, BIMSTEC Sectoral Ministerial meetings and other relevant BIMSTEC meetings;
  - (d) Represent BIMSTEC and participate in meetings with external parties in accordance with approved policy guidelines and mandate given to the Secretary General.
5. The BIMSTEC Secretariat shall comprise of the Secretary General, Directors and such other staff as may be required and approved by the Member States.
6. In performance of their duties, the Secretary General and the staff shall:
- (a) uphold the highest standards of integrity, efficiency and competence;
  - (b) not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization and government or external party outside of BIMSTEC; and
  - (c) refrain from any action which might not commensurate with their respective position as BIMSTEC Secretariat officials.
7. The Secretary General and the Secretariat will not comply with any instruction from any individual Member State other than through BIMSTEC collective mechanism to maintain the exclusive character of the Secretary General and the Secretariat.

### **Article 15**

#### **Other Subsidiary Bodies**

Subsidiary bodies including BIMSTEC Centres/Entities, may be established through the signing of the specific Memorandum of Associations among the Member States and Headquarters Agreements with the Host Countries. Separate Agreements shall be signed for the establishment of each BIMSTEC Centre/Entity.

## **CHAPTER V IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES**

### **Article 16**

#### **Immunities and Privileges of the Secretary General and Staff on deputation of the BIMSTEC Secretariat**

1. The Secretary General and staff on deputation of the BIMSTEC Secretariat participating in official BIMSTEC activities or representing the BIMSTEC in the Member States shall enjoy such immunities and privileges as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions.
2. The immunities and privileges under this Article shall be laid down in a separate BIMSTEC agreement.

### **Article 17**

#### **Immunities and Privileges of the Officials on BIMSTEC duties**

The officials of the Member State participating in official BIMSTEC activities in the Member States shall enjoy such immunities and privileges as are necessary for the exercise of their functions.

## **CHAPTER VI DECISION MAKING**

### **Article 18**

#### **Consensus**

All decisions in BIMSTEC shall be based on consensus.

## **CHAPTER VII DISPUTE SETTLEMENT**

### **Article 19**

#### **Peaceful Settlement of Dispute**

Member States shall endeavor to resolve peacefully all disputes in a timely manner through dialogue, consultation and negotiation.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

#### **Article 20**

##### **Chairman of BIMSTEC**

1. The Chairmanship of BIMSTEC shall rotate on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States. The changeover of Chairmanship shall take place during the Summit meeting in a manner whereby the Member State chairing BIMSTEC shall host BIMSTEC Summit and hand over the chairmanship to the Member State next in alphabetical order.
2. The Member State assuming the Chairmanship shall chair:
  - (a) The BIMSTEC Summit and related summits and retreats;
  - (b) The BIMSTEC Ministerial Meetings;
  - (c) The BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meetings; and
  - (d) The BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee.
3. The Member State holding the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC shall actively promote and enhance the interests of BIMSTEC through policy initiatives, coordination, consensus building and cooperation. The Chairman shall represent the organization to external partners.

#### **Article 21**

##### **Working Language of BIMSTEC**

English shall be the working language of BIMSTEC.

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **BUDGET AND FINANCING**

#### **Article 22**

##### **General Principles**

1. The BIMSTEC shall establish financial rules and procedures to ensure observance of sound financial management and budgetary discipline.
2. Financial accounts shall be subject to internal and external audits.

**Article 23**  
**Operational Budget and Finances of the Secretariat**

1. The Secretariat shall be provided with the necessary financial resources to perform its functions effectively.
2. The operational budget of the Secretariat shall be met by the BIMSTEC Member States through annual contributions, as per the rate determined by the Ministerial Meeting, which shall be remitted in a timely manner.
3. The Secretary General shall prepare the annual operational budget of the BIMSTEC Secretariat for approval by the Ministerial Meeting upon the recommendation of the Senior Officials' Meeting.
4. The Secretariat shall operate in accordance with the financial rules and procedures determined by the Ministerial Meeting upon the recommendation of the Senior Officials' Meeting.

**CHAPTER X**  
**EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

**Article 24**  
**Conduct of External Relations**

The BIMSTEC may conclude agreements with countries or sub-regional, regional and international organizations and institutions. The procedure for concluding such agreements shall be as laid down by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

**CHAPTER XI**  
**FINAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 25**  
**Signature, Ratification, Depository and Entry into Force**

1. This Charter shall be signed by all BIMSTEC Member States.
2. This Charter shall be subject to ratification by all BIMSTEC Member States in accordance with their respective internal procedures.
3. Instrument of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary General who shall promptly notify all Member State of each deposit.

4. This Charter shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the deposit of the seventh instrument of ratification with the Secretary General of BIMSTEC.

#### **Article 26**

#### **Amendments**

1. Any Member State may propose amendments to the Charter. Proposed amendments to the Charter shall be submitted by the Ministerial Meeting to the BIMSTEC Summit for its decision.

2. Amendments to the Charter agreed by consensus by the Summit shall be ratified by all Member States in accordance with Article 25.

3. An amendment shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the deposit of the last instrument of ratification with the Secretary General.

#### **Article 27**

#### **Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure**

Unless otherwise provided for in this Charter, the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting shall determine the terms of reference and rules of procedure and shall ensure their consistency.

#### **Article 28**

#### **Review**

This Charter may be reviewed six years after its entry into force or as otherwise determined by the BIMSTEC Summit.

#### **Article 29**

#### **Interpretation and Implementation of the Charter**

1. Upon request of any Member State, the interpretation of the Charter shall be undertaken by BIMSTEC Secretariat in accordance with the rules of procedure determined by the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting with the concurrences of the Member States.

2. Parties to dispute may request the Chairman of BIMSTEC, to provide good offices, conciliation and mediation to settle any dispute arising out of the interpretation or implementation of the Charter.

### **Article 30**

#### **Legal Continuity**

1. All treaties, conventions, agreements, declarations and other BIMSTEC instruments which have been in effect before the entry into force of this Charter shall continue to be valid.
2. In case of inconsistency between the rights and obligations of Member States under such instruments and this Charter, this Charter shall prevail.

### **Article 31**

#### **Original Text**

The signed original text of the Charter in English shall be deposited with the Secretary General of BIMSTEC, who shall provide a certified copy to each Member State.

### **Article 32**

#### **BIMSTEC Assets**

The assets and funds of the organization shall be vested in the name of BIMSTEC.

### **Article 33**

#### **BIMSTEC Flag**

The BIMSTEC Flag shall be as shown in Annex-I.

### **Article 34**

#### **BIMSTEC Emblem**

The BIMSTEC Emblem shall be as shown in Annex-II.

### **Article 35**

#### **BIMSTEC Day**

The sixth of June shall be observed as BIMSTEC Day.

### **Article 36**

#### **Use of the Name of BIMSTEC**

The name of “BIMSTEC” shall strictly be used only in respect of the meetings and events of the BIMSTEC cooperation sectors agreed by the Member States.



Done in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in a single original in the English language.

**For the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina  
Prime Minister**

Done in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in a single original in the English language.

**For the Kingdom of Bhutan**

**His Excellency Dr. Lotay Tshering  
Prime Minister**

Done in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in a single original in the English language.

**For the Republic of India**

**His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi  
Prime Minister**

Done in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in a single original in the English language.

**For the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

**His Excellency Senior General Min Aung Hlaing  
Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister**

Done in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in a single original in the English language.

**For Nepal**

**Right Honourable Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba  
Prime Minister**

Done in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in a single original in the English language.

**For the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa  
President**

Done in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in a single original in the English language.

**For the Kingdom of Thailand**

**His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.)  
Prime Minister**

## Annex I

**BIMSTEC FLAG**

The specifications of the existing BIMSTEC Flag are as follows:

**A. Type of Flags**

There shall be following three types of flags for the BIMSTEC:

- a. Table Flag
- b. Car Flag
- c. Outdoor/Venue Flag

**B. Size of the Flag**

The ratio of the Flags = Length : Width = 5:3

- a. Table Flag: 10 in × 6 in (250 mm × 150 mm)
- b. Car Flag: 12.5 in × 7.5 in (320 mm × 190 mm)
- c. Outdoor/Venue Flag: 5 ft × 3 ft (1.52 m × 0.91 m)

**C. Size and the Position of the Logo of BIMSTEC<sup>1</sup>**

- a. The centre of circle of the BIMSTEC logo shall be at the intersection point of the perpendiculars drawn from the middle of the length and the width of the flag.
- b. Radius of the circle of the logo shall be  $\frac{2}{7}$ <sup>th</sup> of the width.
- c. The height of the letters of the word “**BIMSTEC**” at the logo shall be  $\frac{1}{19}$ <sup>th</sup> of the width of the flag.
- d. The height of lower edge of the word “**BIMSTEC**” at the logo shall be  $\frac{4}{9}$ <sup>th</sup> of the width of the flag.

**D. Background of the Flag**

The background of the flag shall be **white**. The shape shall be rectangular in the proportion of 5:3 with the existing Logo of BIMSTEC in the near middle of the Flag.

<sup>1</sup>All the specifications are calculated on the basis of the existing Logo of BIMSTEC



**Annex II**

**BIMSTEC EMBLEM**



## Annex VI

### **Modalities of Signing the BIMSTEC Charter**

1. The Secretariat will prepare a single original BIMSTEC Charter. There will be (7) separate signing pages for each Heads of State/Government, each attached to the Charter.
2. The Secretariat will circulate the scanned copy of the Original BIMSTEC Charter along with the respective signature page to each of the Member State so that the respective Member States can take the print out of the BIMSTEC Charter along with the signature page (in A4 size “parchment paper”) and place in front of the Head of State/ Government for His/ Her Excellency’s signature.
3. The Heads of State/Government will sign on the respective page at the virtual signing ceremony and display the signed page on the screen.
4. The date of the signature of the BIMSTEC Charter will be the date of virtual signing ceremony, *i.e.*, **30 March 2022**.
5. After the ceremony, the Member States will transmit the original signed pages to the Secretariat through diplomatic channel for deposit, and will also forward a scanned version of the same to the e-mail of the Secretariat.
6. The BIMSTEC Secretariat will attach and combine all seven (7) original signature sheets together with the BIMSTEC Charter, upon receipt.
7. The BIMSTEC Charter, together with the original signature pages, will be kept at the Secretariat and treated as the original text of the BIMSTEC Charter. Subsequently, a certified copy of the Charter will be sent to each of the seven Member States in due course.

**[Note:** *The Fifth BIMSTEC Summit will adopt the BIMSTEC Charter and Modalities for signing of the BIMSTEC Charter could be discussed during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials’ Meeting and the 18<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.*]

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## **BIMSTEC CONVENTION ON MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL MATTERS**

The Governments of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of India, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Kingdom of Thailand, Member States of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), hereinafter referred to collectively as the "Parties" and individually as "Party":

*Mindful* of the principles of the cooperation enshrined in the BIMSTEC establishing document;

*Reaffirming* the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non interference in the internal affairs of States;

*Concerned* about the escalation of criminal activities, both national and transnational;

*Convinced* that the establishment of regional arrangements for mutual assistance in criminal matters will greatly contribute to more effective cooperation for the control of criminal activities;

*Conscious* of the need to respect human dignity and recalling the rights conferred upon every person involved in criminal proceedings, as embodied in international instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

*Recognizing* the importance of a convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters as an effective way of dealing with the complex aspects and serious consequences of crime in its new forms and dimensions;

*Recalling* the discussions in BIMSTEC on cooperation measures for combating criminal activities including but not limited to those related to terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering and cyber crimes;

*Desirous* of extending to each other the widest measures of cooperation in combating crime by strengthening cooperation in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of crime, including but not limited to crime relating to terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering and cyber crimes.

Have agreed as follows:

## **Part I - General Provisions**

### **Article 1**

#### **Scope of Application**

1. The Parties to this Convention shall, subject to their national laws, and in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, provide to each other the widest measures of mutual assistance in criminal matters.
2. Mutual assistance shall be provided by the requested Party to the requesting Party in respect of offences the punishment of which at the time of request for assistance falls within the jurisdiction of the judicial authorities of the requesting Party and irrespective of whether the assistance is sought or is to be provided by a Court or other competent authority.
3. Assistance may be provided without regard to whether the conduct, which is the subject of the investigation, prosecution or proceedings in the requesting Party, would constitute an offence under the laws of the requested Party.
4. Mutual assistance in accordance with the present Convention shall include:
  - (i) locating and identifying persons and objects;
  - (ii) service of documents, including documents seeking the attendance of persons;

- (iii) providing information, documents and records;
- (iv) providing objects, including lending of exhibits;
- (v) search and seizure;
- (vi) taking evidence, obtaining statements and testimony of witnesses;
- (vii) making detained persons available to give evidence or assist in investigations;
- (viii) facilitating the appearance of witness or the assistance of persons in investigations;
- (ix) taking measures to locate, restrain, forfeit or confiscate the proceeds and instruments of crime;
- (x) taking measures to locate, freeze and forfeit or confiscate any funds or finances meant for the financing of all criminal acts in the territory of either Party and;
- (xi) any other assistance consistent with the objectives of this Convention and the laws of the requested Party, as may be mutually agreed upon.

5. This Convention shall apply to all requests for assistance made after its entry into force regardless of whether the acts or omissions involved were committed before or after its entry into force.

6. The provisions of this Convention shall not create any right on the part of any private person to obtain, suppress or exclude any evidence or to impede the execution of any request for assistance.

7. This Convention shall not apply to:

- (i) the arrest or detention of any person with a view to the extradition of that person;
- (ii) the transfer of persons in custody to serve sentences;

- (iii) the transfer of proceedings in criminal matters; and
- (iv) the enforcement in the requested Party of criminal judgments passed in the requesting Party, except to the extent permitted by the law of the requested Party;
- (v) offences under military law, which are not also offences under ordinary criminal law.

8. Nothing in this Convention entitles a Party to undertake in the territory of another Party the exercise of jurisdiction and performance of functions that are reserved exclusively for the authorities of that other Party by its domestic laws.

## **Article 2**

### **Definitions**

For the purpose of this Convention:

1. 'Criminal Matter' means investigations, inquiries, trials or other proceedings relating to an offence created by the legislature of the requesting Party and includes investigations, prosecutions and proceedings relating to economic or fiscal offences concerning taxation, duties, customs and foreign exchange.
2. 'Proceeds of Crime' means any property derived or obtained directly or indirectly by any person as a result of criminal activity including crime involving currency transfers or the value of any such property.
3. 'Property' means property and assets of every description whether corporeal or incorporeal, movable or immovable, tangible or intangible and deeds and instruments evidencing title to, interest in, such property or assets derived or used in the commission of an offence and includes property obtained through proceeds of crime.
4. 'Person' means natural or juridical person.

### **Article 3**

#### **Other Conventions/Treaties**

This Convention shall not affect the rights and obligations of the Parties arising from other conventions/treaties concerning mutual assistance in criminal matters to which they are parties.

### **Article 4**

#### **Execution of Requests**

1. Requests for assistance shall be executed promptly in accordance with the law of the requested Party and, insofar as not prohibited by that law, in the manner specified by the requesting Party.
2. The requested Party shall, upon request, inform the requesting Party of the date and place of execution of the request for assistance.
3. The requested Party shall not refuse to execute a request on the ground of bank secrecy.

### **Article 5**

#### **Refusal and Postponement of Assistance**

1. Assistance may be refused if:
  - (i) in the opinion of the requested Party, the execution of the request would impair its sovereignty, national security, public order or other essential interests or prejudice the safety of any person;
  - (ii) the execution of the request would be contrary to the domestic law of the requested Party;
  - (iii) the request relates to an offence in respect of which the accused person has already been tried and as a result convicted or acquitted, or he has been pardoned in respect of that offence;

- (iv) the request seeking location, freezing, restraint, attachment, forfeiture or confiscation of proceeds or instruments of activity which, had it occurred within the jurisdiction of the requested Party, would have been an activity in respect of which a forfeiture or confiscation order could not have been made;
- (v) there are substantial grounds for believing that the request for assistance has been made for the purpose of prosecuting a person on account of that person's race, religion, gender, nationality, ethnic origin or political opinions or that person's position may be prejudiced for any of those reasons;
- (vi) the offence is regarded by the requested State as being of a political nature. For the purpose of this Convention, the following offences shall not be considered offences of political nature:
  - (a) an offence against the life or person of a Head of State or a member of the immediate family of a Head of State;
  - (b) an offence against the life or person of a Head of a Government, or of a Minister of a Government;
  - (c) an offence within the scope of any international convention to which both the requesting and requested Parties are parties; and
  - (d) any attempt, abetment or conspiracy to commit any of the offences referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (c).

2. Assistance may be postponed by the requested Party if execution of the request would interfere with an ongoing investigation or prosecution in the requested Party.

3. The requested Party shall promptly inform the requesting Party of its decision not to comply in whole or in part with a request for assistance, or to postpone execution, and shall give reasons for that decision.

4. Before refusing a request for assistance or before postponing the execution of a request, the requested Party shall consider whether assistance may be provided subject to such conditions, as it deems necessary. If the requesting Party accepts assistance subject to those conditions, it shall comply with them.



## **Part II - Specific Provisions**

### **Article 6**

#### **Service of Documents**

1. The requested Party shall serve any document relating to a criminal matter transmitted to it for the purpose of service.
2. The requesting Party shall transmit a request for the service of a document pertaining to a response or appearance in the requesting Party within a reasonable time, before the scheduled response or appearance.
3. The requested Party shall return a proof of service in the manner required by the requesting Party, to the extent not prohibited by the law of the requested Party.

### **Article 7**

#### **Obtaining Documents, Records, Objects and Information**

1. The requested Party shall provide copies of publicly available information, documents and records of government departments and agencies.
2. The requested Party may provide any information, documents, records and objects in the possession of a government department or agency, but not publicly available to the extent and under the conditions they would be available to its own law enforcement and judicial authorities.
3. The requested Party may provide certified copies of documents or records, unless the requesting Party specifically requests originals.
4. Original documents, records or objects provided to the requesting Party shall be returned, to the requested Party as soon as possible, unless the latter waives its right of return thereof.
5. In so far as not prohibited by the law of the requested Party, documents, records or objects shall be provided in a form or accompanied by such certification as may be specified by the requesting Party in order to make them admissible according to the law of the requesting Party.

## **Article 8**

### **Search and Seizure**

The requested Party shall, to the full extent permissible by its laws, execute requests for search and seizure and delivery of any material to the requesting Party for evidentiary purposes, provided that the rights of bona-fide third parties are protected.

## **Article 9**

### **Taking Evidence in the Requested Party**

The requested Party, shall subject to its domestic laws and upon request, take the sworn or affirmed testimony, documents or records or otherwise obtain statements of persons including a person in custody or require them produce items of evidence relating to a criminal offence for transmission to the requesting Party.

## **Article 10**

### **Making Detained or Sentenced Persons Available to give Evidence or to assist in Investigation**

1. Upon request, a detained or sentenced person in the requested Party may, subject to its domestic laws and practice, be temporarily transferred to the requesting Party to assist investigations or to testify, provided that person consents to it.
2. When the person transferred is required to be held in custody under the law of the requested Party, the requesting Party shall hold that person in custody and shall return the person in custody to the requested Party immediately after the conclusion of the matter in relation to which transfer was sought or at such earlier time as the person's presence is no longer required.
3. When the sentence imposed expires, or where the requested Party advises the requesting Party that the transferred person is no longer required to be held in custody, that person shall be set at liberty and be treated as a person present in the requesting Party pursuant to a request seeking that person's attendance.
4. The period during which a person transferred is in custody in the requesting Party shall be deemed to be service in the requested Party of an equivalent period of sentence/custody in that country for all purposes.

## **Article 11**

### **Giving Evidence or Assisting Investigations in the Requesting Party**

1. The requesting Party may request the assistance of the requested Party in inviting a person:
  - a. to appear in proceedings in relation to a criminal matter in the requesting Party unless that person is the person charged; or
  - b. to assist in the investigations in relation to a criminal matter in the requesting Party.
2. The requested Party shall invite the person to assist in the investigation or to appear as a witness in the proceedings and seek that person's concurrence thereto. That person shall be informed of any expenses and allowances payable. Where appropriate, the requested Party shall satisfy itself that sufficient arrangement has been made by the requesting Party for the person's safety.
3. A person whose appearance as a witness is the subject of a request and who does not agree to appear shall not by reason thereof be made liable to and penalty or measure of compulsion in either the requesting or the requested Party.

## **Article 12**

### **Safe Conduct**

1. Subject to provisions in the Article 10 pertaining to making detained or sentenced persons available to give evidence or assist investigations, a person present in the requesting Party in response to a request shall not be prosecuted, detained or subjected to any other restriction of personal liberty in that Party for any acts or omissions which preceded that person's departure from the requested Party, nor shall that person be obliged to give evidence in any proceedings other than to which the request relates.
2. Paragraph 1 of this Article shall cease to apply if a person, being free to leave the requesting Party, has not left within fifteen (15) days after receiving official notification that the person's attendance is no longer required or, having left, has voluntarily returned. In such cases, the date and place of release of the person in question should be officially informed to the requested Party.
3. Any person who fails to appear in the requesting Party may not be subjected to any sanction or compulsory measure in the requested Party.

### **Article 13**

#### **Funds Meant for Financing Criminal Acts**

Where either of the Parties has reasonable grounds to believe that any person or group of persons in its jurisdiction has collected or has been collecting or has contributed or has been contributing to any funds meant, directly or indirectly, for the financing or furthering the criminal acts, and acts of terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and money laundering in the territory of other Party, including offences within the scope of any multilateral or regional conventions to which they are parties, it shall bring these facts to the notice of the other Party and shall take steps subject to its national law for search, seizure, forfeiture or confiscation of such funds and the prosecution of the person(s) or group(s) involved.

### **Article 14**

#### **Proceeds and Instruments of Crime**

1. The requested Party shall, upon request, endeavour to ascertain whether any proceeds or instruments of the alleged crime are located within its jurisdiction and shall notify the requesting Party of the results of its inquiries. In making the request, the requesting Party shall notify the requested Party sufficient reasons for its belief that such proceeds or instruments of crime are located within its jurisdiction.
2. In pursuance of a request made under paragraph 1 of the present Article, the requested Party shall endeavour to trace assets, investigate financial dealings, and obtain other information or evidence that may help to secure the recovery of proceeds or instruments of crime.
3. Where pursuant to paragraph 1 of the present Article, suspected proceeds or instruments of crime are found, the requested Party shall, upon request, take such measures as are permitted by its laws to prevent any dealing in, transfer or disposal of those suspected proceeds or instruments of crime, pending a final determination in respect of those proceeds or instruments by the requesting Party.
4. Subject to the provisions of domestic laws of the requested Party, property forfeited or confiscated pursuant to the present article shall accrue to the requesting Party unless otherwise agreed in each particular case.

5. The requested Party shall, to the extent permitted by its law, give effect to or permit enforcement of a final order forfeiting or confiscating the proceeds or instruments of crime made by the requesting Party or take other appropriate action to secure the proceeds or instruments of crime following a request by the requesting Party.

6. The Parties shall ensure that the rights of bona-fide third parties shall be respected in the application of the present Article.

### **Part III – Procedure**

#### **Article 15**

##### **Central Authorities**

1. Each Party shall designate a Central Authority to transmit, receive, examine and process for execution requests for assistance under this Convention.

2. The designation of Central Authorities shall be made at the time of the deposit of its instrument of ratification.

3. Each Party shall expeditiously notify the others of any change in the designation of its Central Authority.

#### **Article 16**

##### **Contents of Requests**

1. The requests for assistance under the Convention shall include:

- (i) the name of the competent authority conducting the investigation, prosecution or other proceedings to which the request relates;
- (ii) the nature and stage of the investigation, prosecution or other proceedings including a summary of the facts, a brief description of offence(s) and copies of the provisions of relevant laws;
- (iii) the purpose of the request and the nature of the assistance sought including the evidence required to be collected;
- (iv) the degree of confidentiality required and the reasons for that;

- (v) any time limit within which the request should be executed; and
- (vi) such other information as may be required under the domestic laws of the requested Party or which is otherwise necessary for the proper execution of the request.

2. In the following cases, request for assistance shall also include:

- (i) in the case of requests for the taking of evidence, search and seizure, or the location, freezing, restraint, attachment, or forfeiture or confiscation of proceeds or instruments of crime, or of funds meant for financing of acts of terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and money laundering, a statement indicating reasonable grounds for its belief that evidence or proceeds or instruments may be found in the requested Party;
- (ii) the request shall specify, as appropriate and so far as the circumstance of the case permit:
  - (a) the documents, records, property or digital or electronic data to be inspected, preserved, photographed, copied or transmitted;
  - (b) the samples of any property or digital or electronic data to be taken, examined or transmitted; and
  - (c) the site to be viewed, photographed or video graphed.
- (iii) in the case of requests to take evidence, statement or testimony from any person, an indication as to whether sworn or affirmed statements are required and a description of the subject matter of the evidence or statement sought or a list of questions to be put to that person;
- (iv) in the case of lending of exhibits, the current location of the exhibits in the requested Party and an indication of the person or class of persons who will have custody of the exhibits in the requesting Party, the place to which the exhibit is to be removed, any tests to be conducted and the date by which the exhibit will be returned;

- (v) in the case of making detained persons available, an indication of the person or class of persons who will have custody during the transfer, the place to which the detained person is to be transferred and the probable date of that person's return;
  - (vi) in case of requests for seizure and confiscation of funds meant for financing criminal acts including, but not limited to, acts of terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering and cyber crimes, the reasonable grounds for its belief that the funds are being so used; and
  - (vii) in case of a request pursuant to a court order, copy of the order pertaining to the assistance requested and a statement relating to the finality of the order.
3. If necessary, and where possible, requests for assistance shall include:
- (i) the identity, nationality and location of a person or persons who is/are the subject of the investigation, prosecution or other proceedings; and
  - (ii) details of any particular procedure or requirement that the requesting Party wishes to be followed and the reasons for that.
4. If the requested Party considers that the information is not sufficient to enable the request to be executed, it may request additional information to enable the request to be dealt with.
5. A request for assistance shall be made in writing. However, in urgent circumstances or where otherwise permitted by the requested Party, a request may be made orally but shall be confirmed in writing promptly thereafter.

### **Article 17**

#### **Confidentiality**

1. The requested Party may require, after consultation with the requesting Party, that information or evidence furnished or the source of such information or evidence be kept confidential, or that it be disclosed or used only subject to such terms and conditions as it may specify.

2. The requesting Party may require that the request, its contents, supporting documents and any action taken pursuant to the request be kept confidential. If the request cannot be executed without breaching the confidentiality requirement, the requested Party shall so inform the requesting Party prior to executing the request and the latter shall then determine whether the request should nevertheless be executed.

### **Article 18**

#### **Limitation of Use**

The requesting Party shall not disclose or use information or evidence furnished for purposes other than those stated in the request, without the prior consent of the requested Party. However, in cases where the charge is altered, the material provided may be used in respect of the altered charge, provided a ground for refusal of assistance under the Convention is not attracted.

### **Article 19**

#### **Authentication**

Documents, records or objects transmitted pursuant to this Convention shall not require any form of authentication, except as specified in Article pertaining to the obtaining of documents, records, objects and information as required by the requesting Party.

### **Article 20**

#### **Language**

1. Requests for assistance under the Convention shall be submitted in English.
2. Supporting documents, if not in English, shall be accompanied by an English translation.

### **Article 21**

#### **Expenses**

1. Unless otherwise agreed by the concerned Parties, the requested Party shall meet the cost of executing the request for assistance, except that the requesting Party shall bear;



- (i) the expenses associated with conveying any person to or from the territory of the requested Party at the request of the requesting Party, and any expenses payable to that person while in the requesting Party pursuant to a request under the Convention;
- (ii) the expenses and fees of experts either in the requested Party or the requesting Party;
- (iii) the expenses of translation, interpretation and transcription; and
- (iv) the expenses associated with the taking of evidence from the requested Party to the requesting Party *via* video, satellite or other technological means.

2. If it becomes apparent that the execution of the request requires expenses of an extraordinary nature, the requesting and the requested Parties shall consult to determine the terms and conditions under which the requested assistance can be provided.

## **Article 22**

### **Consultation**

Central Authorities of the Parties shall consult, at times mutually agreed, to promote the most effective implementation of this Convention. The Central Authorities may also agree on such practical measures as may be necessary to facilitate the implementation of the Convention.

## **Part IV - Final Clauses**

### **Article 23**

#### **Entry into Force**

This Convention is subject to ratification and shall enter into force on the thirtieth day of the date of deposit of the last instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General by the signatory State.

### **Article 24**

#### **Amendment**

A Party may propose an amendment to the present Convention to the Secretary-General of BIMSTEC who shall communicate the proposal to other States Parties to the Convention for consideration. Any amendment to the Convention shall be adopted by consensus.

**Article 25**  
**Depositary**

The Secretary-General of BIMSTEC shall be the depositary for this Convention. The Secretary-General shall notify the Member States of signatures of this Convention and the deposit of instruments of ratification and shall transmit certified copies of instruments of ratification to each Member State. The Secretary-General shall also notify the Member States of the date of entry into force of the Convention in accordance with Article 23.

IN WITNESS WHERE OF, the undersigned plenipotentiaries, being duly authorised by their respective Governments, have signed this Convention.

DONE in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in eight originals, in the English language, all texts being equally authentic.

**For the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP**  
**Foreign Minister**

**For the Kingdom of Bhutan**

**H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji**  
**Foreign Minister**

**For the Republic of India**

**H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar**  
**External Affairs Minister**

**For the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

**H.E. U Han Thu**  
**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the**  
**Union of Myanmar to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**For Nepal**

**Honorable Dr. Narayan Khadka**  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

**For the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**H.E. M. U. M. Ali Sabry P.C.**  
**Minister of Justice**

**For the Kingdom of Thailand**

**H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai**  
**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**



**BIMSTEC MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON MUTUAL  
COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF DIPLOMATIC TRAINING**

**AMONG**

**THE BANGLADESH FOREIGN SERVICE ACADEMY OF THE  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH**

**THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE ROYAL  
GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN**

**THE SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

**THE STRATEGIC STUDIES AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT OF THE  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE  
UNION OF MYANMAR**

**THE INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL**

**THE BANDARANAIKE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC TRAINING  
INSTITUTE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA**

**AND**

**THE DEVAWONGSE VAROPAKARN INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
KINGDOM OF THAILAND**

**THE Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan**

**THE Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India**

**THE Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

**THE Institute of Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal**

**THE Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and**

**THE Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand** (hereinafter referred to as the "Participants"),

**RECOGNISING** the spirit of cooperation that exists among their respective countries;

**TAKING** into consideration the importance of enhancing cooperation through the execution of activities among the Participants;

**DESIRING** to promote closer collaboration among the Participants;

**BEING AWARE** of immense potentiality of cooperation in the field of foreign service of the BIMSTEC countries in general, and among their diplomatic training institutions in particular;

**APPRECIATING** the value of specialized training, orientation and exchange amongst the diplomatic cadres;

**And WISHING** to further enhance cooperation and encourage more active engagements among the Participants for mutual benefits;

Have reached the following understanding:

### **PARAGRAPH I**

The purpose of the present Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to create a framework for closer cooperation between the Participants and to facilitate collaboration in the area of diplomatic training for the fulfillment of the following objectives:

- a) To carry out joint programmes and projects that may contribute to improving the quality of training and retraining, studies and projects serving the agreed common objectives, priorities and activities of the BIMSTEC countries;
- b) To increase the exchange of knowledge, experiences and achievements in application of new teaching methods used in diplomatic training among the BIMSTEC countries; and
- c) To ensure and achieve high-quality education and qualification in diplomatic training and skill development.

### **PARAGRAPH II**

The Participants may exchange information on the Modules of training programmes, international trends and advances in training, training techniques and the use of technology in training, including design and content of e-learning; as well as identify experts and joint research in areas mutually decided upon by the Participants.

### **PARAGRAPH III**

The Participants will, exchange experience, information and publications on subjects of common interests including training programmes, curricula of studies, and other academic, educational and training activities undertaken by the Participants in the field of diplomacy and international relations.

#### **PARAGRAPH IV**

The Participants will promote the exchange of experts, scholars, faculties and diplomatic trainees in fields of mutual interest.

#### **PARAGRAPH V**

The Participants will encourage coordinated research, joint studies and seminars on subjects of mutual interest.

#### **PARAGRAPH VI**

The Participants will mutually decide to explore other forms of cooperation which can be mutually beneficial to the Participants.

#### **PARAGRAPH VII**

1. The Participants will decide the specifics and logistics of each project jointly undertaken through direct discussion or diplomatic channel.
2. If necessary, a separate protocol laying down the terms and conditions of the proposed project may be concluded. However, as a general rule, the host institution will meet expenses incurred on local hospitality and logistics while the sending institution will bear expenses on international travel and other incidental entitlement/expenditure, if not otherwise agreed upon. This, however, will not limit any voluntary offer of any of the Participants.

#### **PARAGRAPH VIII**

This MOU does not create any legally binding obligation upon the Participants and does not constitute a treaty under international law.

#### **PARAGRAPH IX**

Any difference between the Participants concerning the interpretation and/or implementation of this MOU will be settled amicably by consultations through diplomatic channels.

### **PARAGRAPH X**

The Participants may consider, as seen appropriate, holding a consultation meeting at least once in every three (3) years in order to take stock of the progress and possible steps to be taken for furthering cooperation under this MOU.

### **PARAGRAPH XI**

1. This MOU will come into effect on the date of its signature by the Participants and will continue to have effect for a period of three (3) years. The renewal of this MOU will be agreed in a written notification by the Participants prior to the 60 days of the expiration of this MOU, or this MOU will be terminated in accordance with the following sub-paragraphs.

2. Any Participant may at any time withdraw from this MOU by giving notification in writing to other Participants through diplomatic channels. Withdrawal will become effective on ninety (90) days after the date of the notification and will not affect the ongoing projects unless otherwise decided by the Participants.

3. Withdrawal from this MOU by any single Participant will not cause to cease the continuation of cooperation by other Participants under the MOU. However, withdrawal by any three of the Participants will automatically terminate the MOU for all, which will be effective 90 days after such withdrawal. The termination of this MOU will not affect the ongoing any project or event under this MOU, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Participants.

### **PARAGRAPH XII**

1. This MOU may be revised or amended at any time, by mutual consent of the Participants, through diplomatic channels. Such revisions or amendments will come into effect on such date as may be determined by the Participants and will form an integral part of this MOU.

2. This shall be deposited with the Secretary General of BIMSTEC.



Signed in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in eight originals, in the English language, all texts being equally authentic.

On behalf of the Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy of the  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

**Ambassador Asad Alam Siam**  
**Rector, Foreign Service Academy**

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
**ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN**

**Ambassador Rinchen Kuentsyl**  
**Ambassador-designate of Bhutan to Sri Lanka**

On behalf of the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service of the  
Ministry of External Affairs of the  
**REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

**H.E. Mr. Saurabh Kumar**  
**Secretary (East) of the Ministry of External Affairs**

On behalf of the Strategic Studies and Training Department,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
**REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR**

**H.E. U Han Thu**  
**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of**  
**Myanmar to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

On behalf of the Institute of Foreign Affairs of the  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of  
**NEPAL**

**Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari**  
**Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

On behalf of the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training  
Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
**DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA**

**H.E. Professor G. L. Peiris**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

On behalf of the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs of the  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
**KINGDOM OF THAILAND**

**H.E. Mr. Poj Harnpol**  
**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand**  
**to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**



## **MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BIMSTEC TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FACILITY**

The Governments of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of India, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Kingdom of Thailand, the Member States of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC);

**RECALLING** the decision taken by the Second BIMSTEC Summit held in New Delhi, India from 11-14 November 2008 agreeing to the establishment of a BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (hereinafter referred to as the "TTF") to further the transfer of technologies, particularly those appropriate for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Sector;

**RECOGNIZING** that a Concept Paper on the establishment of the TTF was discussed and finalized at the Expert Group Meeting of the BIMSTEC Member States held in Colombo from 9-10 May 2011;

**TAKING** into account the comments of the Governments of the BIMSTEC Member States on the draft Concept Paper;

**DESIROUS** of concluding a Memorandum of Association (hereinafter referred to as "MOA") to define the terms and conditions of the establishment and operation of the TTF;

Have reached the following agreement:

### **Article 1 Establishment**

The Governments of BIMSTEC Member States agree to establish the TTF in Colombo, Sri Lanka as decided at the Second BIMSTEC Summit held on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 in New Delhi, India, and further agree that Sri Lanka shall take appropriate measures accordingly.

## **Article 2**

### **Objectives and Functions**

2.1 The main objectives of TTF shall be to coordinate, facilitate and strengthen cooperation in technology transfer among the BIMSTEC Member States by promoting the transfer of technologies, sharing of experiences and capacity building.

2.2 The TTF shall have the following functions:

- 2.2.1 to provide a mechanism for the effective transfer of available technologies, particularly technologies appropriate for the micro, small and medium enterprises among the BIMSTEC Member States.
- 2.2.2 to facilitate the business missions to help initiate technology transfer and sustainable business alliance between BIMSTEC Member States.
- 2.2.3 to provide a mechanism for assisting micro, small and medium enterprises in the areas of technology sourcing, technology evaluation, market assessment and intellectual property rights management among BIMSTEC Member States.
- 2.2.4 to facilitate transfer of technology intensive goods and services among the BIMSTEC Member States.
- 2.2.5 to carry out diagnostic studies for assessing technology needs of the BIMSTEC Member States and networking with focal points for sourcing technologies. The Member States shall nominate their respective National Level Focal Point.
- 2.2.6 to serve as a repository of information on good practices in the areas of technology transfer management, standards, accreditation, metrology, testing and calibration facilities available within the BIMSTEC Member States.
- 2.2.7 to provide for the development of skills in the field of technology transfer and technology management including IPR management.

- 2.2.8 to establish collaborative links for cross border technology transfer with other regional and international institutions dealing with technology transfer.
- 2.2.9 to create, manage and share a technology database relevant to the BIMSTEC Member States including the names and affiliations of experts in relevant areas of technology.
- 2.2.10 to promote capacity building, sharing of experiences and good practices in development, transfer and use of technologies.

### **2.3 Priority Areas of Cooperation:**

The TTF shall facilitate transfer of technologies among the BIMSTEC Member States, *inter alia*, in the following priority areas, which may be extended/modified as agreed upon by the Member States:

- (a) Biotechnology
- (b) Nanotechnology
- (c) Information and communication technology
- (d) Space technology applications
- (e) Agricultural technology
- (f) Food processing technology
- (g) Pharmaceutical technology
- (h) Automation
- (i) New and renewable energy technology
- (j) Oceanography
- (k) Nuclear technology applications
- (l) E-waste and solid waste management technology
- (m) Health technologies
- (n) Technologies pertinent to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation

## **Article 3 Organizational Structure**

### **3.1 Governing Board:**

The TTF shall have a Governing Board. The overall control of activities of the TTF shall be vested in the Governing Board.

**3.2 Composition of the Governing Board:**

The Governing Board shall consist of seven (7) persons, each appointed by his or her Member State for a three (3) year term. Member States may replace their nominees prior to the expiration of term of office. Each Member State shall also designate an alternate person to serve in the Governing Board Meetings in the event that its designated Member is unable to carry out his or her duties.

The Chairperson of the Governing Board shall be appointed for a one (1) year term from among the members of the Governing Board. The nominees of the Member States in Governing Board shall be according to alphabetical order of the names of the Member States.

The Governing Board shall meet at least once a year in any of the Member States and the Meeting shall be chaired by the representative of the Host Member State.

The Executive Director shall also be the Member-Secretary of the Governing Board.

**3.3 Responsibilities of the Governing Board:**

The Governing Board shall have the following responsibilities:

- 3.3.1 Formulate Rules and Procedures of the BIMSTEC TTF
- 3.3.2 Formulate Procedures and Guidelines for the selection and recruitment of the Executive Director and other staff for TTF
- 3.3.3 Formulate policies and provide general directions on the functions and duties of the TTF
- 3.3.4 Outline the organizational structure of the TTF
- 3.3.5 Approve the annual plan of activities and the budget of the TTF
- 3.3.6 Approve the Annual Report along with audited statement of expenditure of TTF.
- 3.3.7 Appoint the Auditor of TTF
- 3.3.8 Address any other concerns as appropriate

### **3.4 Executive Director:**

The TTF shall have a full-time Executive Director who shall be overall in-charge of administration, finance, planning and implementation of all tasks/activities/projects. The first Executive Director shall be from Sri Lanka and appointed by the Government of Sri Lanka, and subsequent Executive Directors shall be appointed by the Governing Board by alphabetical order. The tenure of Executive Director would be two years.

### **3.5 Recruitment:**

All reasonable endeavors shall be made in recruitment of professional and executive staff members of TTF to ensure balanced representation of all Member States.

## **Article 4 Funding**

4.1 Source of Funding: The TTF shall have the following sources of funding:

- (a) The non-recurring expenditure (capital expenditure) which includes the physical infrastructure such as building, equipment and vehicles etc will be borne by Sri Lanka as the host country.
- (b) Annual subscriptions from Member States.
- (c) Funds generated through TTF activities in the form of royalty, license fee, investments, consultancy etc.
- (d) Voluntary contributions.
- (e) Sponsorship, development assistance.

4.2 Institutional Expenditure and Programme Expenditure of the TTF shall be in accordance with the decisions of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM).

## **Article 5 Legal Status, Privileges and Immunities**

The TTF shall enter into Host Country Agreement with the Government of Sri Lanka regarding the legal status, privileges, immunities of the TTF and its personnel.

**Article 6**  
**Miscellaneous**

The relevant articles of this MoA shall be subject to such harmonized provisions for recruitment, staffing and funding arrangements, as shall be agreed by the Member States.

The definition of the key terms of this MoA is given at Annex I.

**Article 7**  
**Entry into Force, Dispute Resolution and Amendments**

This Memorandum of Association (MoA) shall enter into force on completion of all necessary formalities by all Member States and upon issuance of the notification thereof by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC.

Any dispute between the Member States concerning the interpretation and/or implementation of this MoA shall be settled amicably through consultation and/or negotiation in good faith, without reference to any third party or international tribunal.

Any provision of this MoA may be amended by mutual written agreement of the Member States and shall come into effect on completion of necessary formalities by Member States.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this MoA.

DONE in Colombo on the Thirtieth Day of March in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Two, in eight originals, in the English language, all texts being equally authentic.

**For the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

**H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP**  
**Foreign Minister**



**For the Kingdom of Bhutan**

**H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji  
Foreign Minister**

**For the Republic of India**

**H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar  
External Affairs Minister**

**For the Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

**H.E. U Han Thu  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of  
Myanmar to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**For Nepal**

**Honorable Dr. Narayan Khadka  
Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**For the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**H.E. Mrs. Deepa Liyanage  
Secretary of the State Ministry of Skills Development,  
Vocational Education, Research and Innovation**

**For the Kingdom of Thailand**

**H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**Annex X**

**Modalities of Signing the BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/ MoU**

1. The following three BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/ MoU would be signed during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit in Colombo on 30 March 2022:
  - a. BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
  - b. Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka
  - c. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States

**2. Mode of signing the BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/ MoU:**

The BIMSTEC Convention/ MoA/MoU will be signed **PHYSICALLY** in **Colombo, Sri Lanka** on **30 March 2022** in eight originals.

**3. Signatories of the BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/MoU:**

- i. The Hon'ble Ministers of External Affairs/ Foreign Affairs/ the nominated signatories of the BIMSTEC Member States may sign the BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/MoU **on the Summit Day, i.e., 30 March 2022.**
  - ii. In case of absence of physical presence of any Ministers of External Affairs/ Foreign Affairs from any of the BIMSTEC Member States on the day of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit in Colombo, the Ambassadors/ High Commissioners/ Accredited Ambassador of BIMSTEC Missions to Sri Lanka, may be nominated and authorized to sign the aforesaid documents **on the Summit Day, i.e., 30 March 2022.**
- 4. The BIMSTEC Leaders will witness the signing ceremony either physically/ through virtual mode, as per the mode of participation of the Leaders of BIMSTEC Member States.**

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Annex XI



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

**Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting [Hybrid]  
28 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Finalized Draft Annotated Provisional Agenda  
Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting  
29 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The present document contains the Draft Provisional Agenda for the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting [Section I] and Annotations to the Draft Provisional Agenda [Section II].

**Section I      Draft Provisional Agenda**

01.      Opening and Welcome Statement by the Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka
02.      Election of the Chairperson of the Meeting
03.      Adoption of the Agenda
04.      Statements by the Leaders of the Delegations/ Foreign Minister/ Ministers of External Affairs/ Foreign Affairs
  - 4.1      Bangladesh
  - 4.2      Bhutan
  - 4.3      India
  - 4.4      Myanmar
  - 4.5      Nepal
  - 4.6      Sri Lanka
  - 4.7      Thailand
05.      Report by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC
06.      Consideration and adoption of the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting [Hybrid] to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022

07. Briefing on the preparations for the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit
08. Status of BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/MoU/other important documents envisaged to be adopted/signed at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit
  - 08.01 BIMSTEC Charter
  - 08.02 BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
  - 08.03 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States
  - 08.04 Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka
  - 08.05 Rationalization and reorganization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC
  - 08.06 BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity
09. Finalization of the draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration
10. Any Other Matters
11. Date and Venue of the Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting
12. Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting
13. Handing over the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting
14. Closing Remarks by the Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka

## **Section II      Draft Annotated Provisional Agenda**

### **01.      Opening and Welcome Statement by the Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka**

Opening and Welcome Statement will be delivered by Honourable Professor Gamini Lakshman Peiris, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.

### **02.      Election of the Chairperson of the Meeting**

As per the existing practice, the Head of Delegation of the Member State hosting the Meeting, *i.e.*, Sri Lanka will be elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting. Upon assuming the Chair, the Chairperson will make initial remarks, including matters pertaining to conduct of the Meeting.

### **03.      Adoption of the Agenda**

The Meeting may consider and adopt the Agenda as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/MM/18/2022/01/Rev.2.**

### **04.      Statements by the Leaders of the Delegations/ Foreign Minister/ Ministers of External Affairs/ Foreign Affairs**

Honourable Foreign Minister/ Ministers of External Affairs/ Foreign Affairs/ Leaders of the Delegations of the BIMSTEC Member States will deliver their statements in the following alphabetical order:

- 4.1      Bangladesh**
- 4.2      Bhutan**
- 4.3      India**
- 4.4      Myanmar**
- 4.5      Nepal**
- 4.6      Sri Lanka**
- 4.7      Thailand**

### **05.      Report by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC**

The Report would be presented by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC on the progress and achievement in the Areas of Cooperation of the BIMSTEC, which is contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/MM/18/2022/02/Rev.1.**

### **06.      Consideration and adoption of the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting [Hybrid] to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022**

The Meeting may consider and adopt the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting [Virtual] to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022.

**07. Briefing on the preparations for the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit**

The Delegation of Sri Lanka will brief the Meeting on the preparations for the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

**08. Status of BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/MoU/other important documents envisaged to be adopted/signed at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit**

**08.01 BIMSTEC Charter**

The Meeting may consider the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) and recommend the adoption and signing of the BIMSTEC Charter during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

**08.02 BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters**

**08.03 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States**

**08.04 Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The above three legal instruments to be signed during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit as recommended by the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 01 April 2021.

**08.05 Rationalization and reorganization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC**

**08.06 BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity**

The Rationalization and reorganization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC and the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity to be adopted during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit as recommended by the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 01 April 2021.

**09. Finalization of the draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration**

The Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022 will discuss and update the draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration.

The Meeting may consider the recommendation of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the SOM and finalize the draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit and draft of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration.

**10. Any Other Matters**

Any other matters raised by Delegations and/or by the Secretariat will be considered under this Agenda Item.

**11. Date and Venue of the Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

The Meeting may suggest a suitable time-frame for holding of the Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

**12. Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

The Meeting may consider and adopt the Report of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

**13. Handing over the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

The current Chair of the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, *i.e.*, Sri Lanka will hand over the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting to the next Chair, *i.e.*, Thailand.

**14. Closing Remarks by the Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka**

Closing Remarks will be delivered by the Honourable Professor Gamini Lakshman Peiris, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.

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Annex XII



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

**Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting [Hybrid]  
28 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Finalized Draft Report of the  
Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting  
29 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

01. The Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 29 March 2022 to finalize the preparations for the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit. The list of the Ministers and the Heads of Delegation is at **Annex I**.
02. The Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting was chaired by Hon. Professor G. L. Peiris, MP, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.
03. The Ministers reviewed BIMSTEC's progress in the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors since holding of the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 01 April 2021. They expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in the past years and resolved to take necessary steps to bring focus in the activities of the organization. The texts of the statements delivered by the Heads of Delegation are at **Annex II-VIII**.
04. The Secretary General of BIMSTEC presented a Report to the Meeting, which is at **Annex IX**.
05. The Ministers considered and approved the Report of the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022.
06. The Ministers endorsed the updated draft Provisional Agenda of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit (**Annex X**) and also endorsed the updated text of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration (**Annex XI**) and recommended them to the Leaders for approval.
07. The Ministers reiterated their readiness to sign the following BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/MoU during the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit:

- i. BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters,
- ii. Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka,
- iii. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States

08. The Ministers reiterated its decision at the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and recommended the following important documents for adoption of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit:

- i. BIMSTEC Charter
- ii. Rationalisation of sectors and sub-sectors of BIMSTEC
- iii. BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity

09. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for carrying out the responsibilities of Chairmanship since the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit and successfully hosting the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting virtually in Colombo as well as the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting in Colombo. They also appreciated the kind acceptance of the Royal Thai Government to assume the next Chairmanship of BIMSTEC.

10. The Ministers adopted the Report of the Eighteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and recommended its approval by the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

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Annex XIII



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

**Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting [Hybrid]  
28 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**Finalized Draft Provisional Agenda  
Fifth BIMSTEC Summit  
30 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

1. Opening of the Summit and Welcome Address by the Chairperson/Hon'ble President of Sri Lanka
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Statements by the Leaders of Delegation in alphabetical order:
  - 3.1 Bangladesh
  - 3.2 Bhutan
  - 3.3 India
  - 3.4 Myanmar
  - 3.5 Nepal
  - 3.6 Thailand
4. Consideration of the Joint Statement of the 17<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and the Report of the 18<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting
5. Report by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC
6. Signing of the BIMSTEC Charter and witnessing of the Signing Ceremony for BIMSTEC Convention/MoA/MoU
7. Adoption of the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration

8. Any Other Business
9. Handing over of BIMSTEC Chairmanship
10. Remarks by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Thailand, Chair-designate of BIMSTEC
11. Closing Remarks by the Hon'ble President of Sri Lanka

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Annex XIV



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

**[FINALIZED DRAFT]<sup>1</sup>  
FIFTH BIMSTEC SUMMIT DECLARATION  
30 March 2022  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

**We**, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan; the Prime Minister of the Republic of India; the Chairman of the State Administration Council and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; the Prime Minister of Nepal; the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; and the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand; met (*virtually*) in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 30 March 2022 for the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit, and

**Reaffirming** our firm commitment to the principles and purposes of BIMSTEC as contained in the Bangkok Declaration of 1997;

**Recalling** the First BIMSTEC Summit Declaration (Bangkok, 31 July 2004), the Second Summit Declaration (New Delhi, 13 November 2008), the Third Summit Declaration (Nay Pyi Taw, 4 March 2014), the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat Outcome Document (Goa, 16 October 2016) and the Fourth Summit Declaration (Kathmandu, 30-31 August 2018);

**Noting** with satisfaction the evolution of BIMSTEC as a distinctive regional organization of the Bay of Bengal nations with increased membership, expanded mandate, formal institutional arrangements and norms while retaining its unique character as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia;

**Being convinced** that the adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter and approval of the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-Sectors of cooperation has provided our organization with a solid footing allowing us to move to a higher level of cooperation wherein implementation of concrete programs and projects to produce tangible economic benefits for our peoples will dominate BIMSTEC's activities;

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<sup>1</sup>As finalized by the Twenty Second Session of the BIMSTEC SOM held in hybrid mode from & in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022

**Noting** that the devastating impact of the COVID19 pandemic on our health, economy and society has created a renewed sense of urgency for leveraging geographical advantage and available resources in the BIMSTEC region to spur economic activities and address vulnerabilities in the post-COVID 19 recovery and rehabilitation process;

**Noting with appreciation** that the Member States are forcefully responding to the challenges posed by the pandemic by strengthening health system, providing income support for the poor and offering incentive packages to the businesses;

***Do hereby:***

1. **Encourage** Member States to continue to support one another in combating COVID 19 through the BIMSTEC framework as well as bilaterally to foster the spirit of BIMSTEC solidarity.
2. **Resolve** to intensify regional cooperation to strengthen economic and physical connectivity to enhance regional trade, investment, tourism, technology, energy and other forms of exchanges, including to offset the economic losses caused by the pandemic.
3. **Resolve** to strengthen our collective resilience to combat the challenges of poverty, natural disasters, climate change, pandemics, and all other public health emergencies, terrorism and transnational crimes, and ensure food and energy security through partnership and joint actions, in parallel to the implementation toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, keeping in mind that COVID 19 may not be the last calamity to befall our region.
4. **Note** the progress achieved in implementing directives given by us at the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit and **instruct** prompt implementation of the remaining directives.
5. **Adopt** the BIMSTEC Charter and approve the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-Sectors of cooperation.
6. **Instruct** the BIMSTEC Secretariat to develop Plans of Action in consultation with Lead Countries of the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-Sectors to guide their activities and to establish necessary institutional mechanisms to carry out their respective mandates.
7. **Reiterate** our commitment to timely holding of the Summit and meetings of all BIMSTEC mechanisms.
8. **Urge** the Member States to expedite conclusion of pending legal instruments and ratify the legal instruments that have already been signed.

9. **Instruct** the Ministerial Meeting to coordinate implementation of our decisions and report to the next Summit.
10. **Approve** the Joint Statement of the Seventeenth Ministerial Meeting and the Report of the Eighteenth Ministerial Meeting for implementation of the decisions and recommendations contained therein.
11. **Welcome** the signing of the following legal instruments:
  - (i) BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.
  - (ii) Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States.
  - (iii) Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
12. **Adopt** the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity as recommended by the Ministerial Meeting.
13. **Appreciate** the decision of the Government of Bangladesh to expand the existing office space of the Secretariat by constructing a modern building with appropriate facilities at the same location.
14. **Welcome** the appointment of Mr. Tenzin Lekphell of Bhutan as the third Secretary General of BIMSTEC for the term of 2020-2023 with effect from 06 November 2020.
15. **Express** our appreciation to Ambassador M Shahidul Islam, former Secretary General of BIMSTEC from Bangladesh for his valuable contribution.
16. **Express** our deep appreciation to Sri Lanka for its excellent leadership and valuable contribution during its Chairmanship of BIMSTEC.
17. **Welcome** Thailand as the next Chair of BIMSTEC and offer our full cooperation to the new Chair.
18. **Express** our profound appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

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<b>Actual Expenditure of the BIMSTEC Secretariat for FY 2021 along with the approved budget for FY 2021</b>					
<b>Object Code</b>	<b>Sub Object Code</b>	<b>Category / Object Title</b>	<b>Approved Budget for the year of 2021</b>	<b>Expenditure in the Year of 2021</b>	<b>Remaining Balance in the year of 2021</b>
		<b>RECURRENT EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$ USD</b>	<b>\$ USD</b>	<b>\$ USD</b>
<b>1000</b>		<b>Personal Emoluments</b>			
<b>1001</b>	100101	Salaries and Wages	<b>615,000.00</b>	<b>428,051.75</b>	<b>186,948.25</b>
	100102	Overtime and Holiday Pay	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>7,391.30</b>	<b>2,608.70</b>
<b>1003</b>		<b>Other Allowances</b>			
	100301	Representational Allowance	<b>62,100.00</b>	<b>51,271.61</b>	<b>10,828.39</b>
	100302	Educational Allowance	<b>235,000.00</b>	<b>58,909.26</b>	<b>176,090.74</b>
	100303	Medical Allowance	<b>40,000.00</b>	<b>9,443.79</b>	<b>30,556.21</b>
	100304	Festival Allowance	<b>7,000.00</b>	<b>5,880.86</b>	<b>1,119.14</b>
	100305	Conveyance Allowance	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>9,279.99</b>	<b>720.01</b>
	100306	Housing Allowance	<b>43,000.00</b>	<b>43,767.04</b>	<b>-767.04</b>
	100307	Travelling Allowance	<b>6,500.00</b>	<b>2,076.00</b>	<b>4,424.00</b>
	100308	Residential Telephone Allowance	<b>500.00</b>	<b>20.77</b>	<b>479.23</b>
	100309	Liveries Allowance	<b>1,500.00</b>	<b>1,500.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
	100310	Transfer Grant	<b>6,200.00</b>	<b>4,250.00</b>	<b>1,950.00</b>
	100311	Internet/Data Allowance	<b>6,200.00</b>	<b>4,558.09</b>	<b>1,641.91</b>
	100312	Contributory Provident fund	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>3,485.70</b>	<b>1,014.30</b>



<b>1101</b>		<b>Traveling Expenses</b>			
	110101	Air Fare	<b>35,000.00</b>	<b>2,642.83</b>	<b>32,357.17</b>
	110102	Combined and Incidental Expenses	<b>60,000.00</b>	<b>4,108.55</b>	<b>55,891.45</b>
	110103	Transport of Personal Effects	<b>20,000.00</b>	<b>6,560.45</b>	<b>13,439.55</b>
	110104	Transport of Vehicle	<b>6,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>6,000.00</b>
	110105	Children's Educational Passage	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>
	110106	Emergency Passage	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>
	110107	Emergency Medical Passage	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>4,000.00</b>
	110108	Home Leave Passage	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>887.50</b>	<b>3,112.50</b>
<b>1201</b>		<b>Supplies</b>			
	120101	Stationary and Office Requisites	<b>9,000.00</b>	<b>5,376.27</b>	<b>3,623.73</b>
	120102	News Papers, Magazines and Journals	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>377.14</b>	<b>622.86</b>
	120103	Fuel and Lubricants	<b>15,000.00</b>	<b>4,911.98</b>	<b>10,088.02</b>
<b>1301</b>		<b>Maintenance Expenditure for Vehicles</b>			
	130101	Servicing and maintenance of Secretariat vehicles	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>5,097.38</b>	<b>6,902.62</b>
	130102	Insurance Premium	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>2,020.98</b>	<b>979.02</b>
<b>1302</b>		<b>Maintenance of Buildings and Capital Assets</b>			
	130201	Repair and maintenance (R & M) of Building	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>4,326.30</b>	<b>3,673.70</b>
<b>1401</b>		<b>Communication Services</b>			
	140101	Telecommunications (office Phone)	<b>800.00</b>	<b>269.80</b>	<b>530.20</b>
	140102	Postal and Courier Charges	<b>200.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>200.00</b>

	140103	ICT Related Expenses	5,000.00	922.62	4,077.38
	140104	Maintenance and Hosting of Website and Internet connectivity	4,500.00	2,562.83	1,937.17
	140105	Video Conferencing Equipment	1,000.00	976.19	23.81
<b>1402</b>		<b>Hire Charges (Others)</b>			
	140201	Hire Charges of handyman	700.00	261.90	438.10
<b>1403</b>		<b>Electricity and Water</b>			
	140301	Electricity	14,000.00	7,294.88	6,705.12
	140302	Water	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
	140303	Gas	500.00	0.00	500.00
<b>1404</b>		<b>Rents</b>			
	140401	Rents	217,500.00	153,235.86	64,264.14
	140402	House Furnishing Grants	29,000.00	10,000.00	19,000.00
<b>1405</b>		<b>Other Services</b>			
	140501	Bank Charges	100.00	0.00	100.00
	140502	Security Expenses	4,500.00	3,779.76	720.24
	140503	Water Purification System	500.00	45.24	454.76
	140504	Others/Miscellaneous	12,000.00	9,771.80	2,228.20
<b>1501</b>		<b>Servicing of Meetings</b>			
	150101	Meetings and Events by the Secretariat	3,000.00	1,616.54	1,383.46
	150102	BIMSTEC Day Celebration (Special Occasion)	7,000.00	0.00	7,000.00
<b>1601</b>		<b>Publications and Outreach</b>			
	160101	Publications by the Secretariat	1500.00	1,500.00	0.00
	160102	Outreach and Awareness Programs	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
	160105	Honorarium for the seminars/meetings	1,500.00	1,400.00	100.00
	160106	Conveyance for Interns	1,000.00	892.86	107.14

1701		Procurement of Capital Items			
	170101	Procurement of Vehicle	35,000.00	33,777.62	1,222.38
	170102	Procurement of Computers, Printers, Scanners and Uninterruptible Power Supply Units (UPS)	5,000.00	4,380.98	619.02
<b>Total (USD)</b>			<b>1,577,800.00</b>	<b>900,884.42</b>	<b>676,915.58</b>
<b>Contingencies 5% of the total recurrent (USD)</b>			<b>78,890.00</b>		
<b>Grand Total(USD)</b>			<b>1,656,690.00</b>	<b>900,884.42</b>	<b>755,805.58</b>

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# Estimated Budget for the year of 2022

Annex XVI  
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Object Code	Sub Object Code	Category / Object Title	Approved Budget for the year of 2021	Estimated Budget for the year of 2022	Remarks
		<b>RECURRENT EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>\$ USD</b>	<b>\$ USD</b>	
<b>1000</b>		<b>Personal Emoluments</b>			
<b>1001</b>	100101	Salaries and Wages	<b>615,000.00</b>	<b>560,000.00</b>	<p>The Secretariat estimated the budget as per the following entitlement:</p> <p>1. Secretary General = US\$6250.00 x 1 x 12 = <b>US\$ 75,000.00</b></p> <p>2. Six Directors from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (replacement may join anytime), Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka = US\$4250.00 x 6 x 12 = <b>US\$ 306,000.00</b> (*Salary of Director from Thailand is not included in the estimated budget of FY 2022)</p> <p>3. Two incumbent staff under GSS I category = US\$1875.00 x 2 x 12 = <b>US\$ 45,000.00</b></p> <p>4. Salary for 25 staff under GSS II-V categories = US\$ 7900.00 x 12 = <b>US\$ 94,800.00*</b></p> <p>5. 1 more staff under GSS I category may be recruited in FY 2022 = US\$1875.00 x 12 = <b>US\$ 22,500.00</b></p> <p>4 more Office Assistants under GSS III category may be recruited in FY 2022 = <b>US\$ 13,440.00</b></p> <p>(*considering the annual increment on basic.)</p>
	100102	Overtime and Holiday Pay	<b>10,000.00</b>	<b>11,800.00</b>	<p>As per the existing rules and regulations of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, Drivers (GSS-III category) are entitled of Overtime and Holiday Pay.</p> <p>An additional amount of US\$ 1,000.00 has been estimated on the basis of increased annual increment of basic salary of the existing drivers.</p>

1003		Other Allowances			
	100301	Representational Allowance	62,100.00	64,800.00	<p>According to the existing provision of Representational Allowances, the estimated budget would be as follows:</p> <p>1. Secretary General =US\$1,200.00 x1x12 = <b>US\$ 14,400.00</b></p> <p>2. Seven Directors = US\$600.00 x7x12= <b>US\$ 50,400.00</b></p>
	100302	Educational Allowance	235,000.00	199,500.00	<p>In accordance with the existing provisions of the educations allowances, the Secretary General, Directors and GSS I, shall be entitled to education allowances for a maximum of two children, subject to an annual ceiling of US\$ 12,000.00 per child. While, GSS II-V shall be entitled to BDT 60,000.00 for two children (BDT 30,000 per child).</p> <p>The Secretariat estimated budget amounting to <b>US\$ 192,000.00</b> (US\$ 12,000X16) for 16 children of the existing entitled officials with maximum ceiling for the Secretary General, Directors and GSS I.</p> <p>The Secretariat estimated budget amounting to <b>US\$ 7,500.00</b> for the children of GSS II-V.</p>
	100303	Medical Allowance	40,000.00	40,000.00	<p>Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, <b><u>no enhancement has been proposed</u></b> in this sub-head for FY 2022.</p>
	100304	Festival Allowance	7,000.00	9,000.00	<p>GSS II-V employees of the Secretariat are entitled for a Festival Allowance annually. Considering the basic salaries of the incumbent employees under GSS-II-V categories, the Secretariat estimated the budget for FY 2022.</p>
	100305	Conveyance Allowance	10,000.00	14,000.00	<p>Conveyance Allowance is the entitlement of GSS II-V employees of the Secretariat. Considering the entitlements of the incumbent employees under GSS-II-V categories, the Secretariat estimated the budget for FY 2022.</p>

	100306	Housing Allowance	<b>43,000.00</b>	<b>86,000.00</b>	<p>According to the existing rules and regulations of the Secretariat, the Secretary General, Directors and GSS I including their spouses and dependent children are entitled subsistence allowance of US\$ 25.00 per day per head for maximum 21 days, in addition to their salaries, from the date of their first arrival in Dhaka. In addition, the Secretariat shall arrange temporary accommodation for them on their first arrival. Therefore, <b>the Secretariat estimated the budget of US\$30,000.00 on the basis of the incoming/outgoing entitled officials, i.e. 4 Directors.</b></p> <p>Besides, employees under GSS II-V categories are entitled 55% of their basic salaries as Housing Allowance monthly basis. Accordingly, <b>the Secretariat estimated the budget of US\$ 56,000.00 for the incumbent employees of the GSS II-V categories.</b></p>
	100307	Travelling Allowance	<b>6,500.00</b>	<b>9,000.00</b>	<p>Considering the tenure of the incumbent Directors and GSS-I, the Secretariat estimated an amount of US\$ 9,000.00 in this sub-head for FY 2022. Directors from Bhutan, Nepal will complete their tenure, whereas new Directors from Bhutan, India, and Nepal may join the Secretariat in FY 2022. In addition, 2 GSS-I will complete their tenure in FY 2022.</p>
	100308	Residential Telephone Allowance	<b>500.00</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<p>Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, no increase in the budget for the fiscal year 2022 is proposed.</p>
	100309	Liveries Allowance	<b>1,500.00</b>	<b>1,500.00</b>	<p>Liveries Allowance is the entitlement of GSS III-V employees of the Secretariat. Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, the Secretariat has proposed to decrease the budget for FY-2022.</p>
	100310	Transfer Grant	<b>6,200.00</b>	<b>12,250.00</b>	<p>According to the existing rules and regulations of the Secretariat, the Secretary General, Directors and GSS I on deputation shall be granted one month's salary as transfer grant on completion of their tenure in the Secretariat. Directors from Bhutan and Nepal will complete their 3-years tenure and 2 GSS-I will complete their tenure in the Secretariat in FY 2022. Considering these, an amount of <b>US\$12,250.00</b> (Director: US\$ 4250.00x2, and GSS I: US\$ 1875.00 x 2) is estimated for FY 2022.</p>

	100311	Internet/Data Allowance	<b>6,200.00</b>	<b>6,360.00</b>	<p>The Secretariat estimated the budget as per the following entitlement:</p> <p>1. Secretary General = US\$125.00 x 1 x 12 = US\$ 1,500.00</p> <p>2. 7 Directors = US\$40.00 x 7 x 12 = US\$ 3,360.00</p> <p>4. 2 GSS I = US\$25.00 x 2 x 12 = US\$ 600.00</p> <p>5. 3 more GSS I may be recruited in FY 2022 as per the approved organogram of the BIMSTEC Secretariat = US\$25.00 x 3 x 12 = US\$ 900.00;</p> <p><b>Total = US\$ 6,360.00</b></p>
	100312	Contributory Provident fund	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<p>As per the existing rules and regulations, employees under GSS II-V categories (more than 3 years) of the Secretariat are eligible for the Contributory Provident Fund. Based on the entitled officials, the Secretariat estimated the budget for this sub-head.</p>
<b>1101</b>		<b>Traveling Expenses</b>			
	110101	Air Fare	<b>35,000.00</b>	<b>35,000.00</b>	<p>Most of the Meetings scheduled in FY 2020 and FY 2021 have been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the Secretariat had spent US\$ 4,730.20 only from the estimated budget of US\$ 35,000.00 in FY 2020, while there is no expenditure in FY 2021 for Air Fare.</p> <p>Since, the pandemic situation is gradually improving, it is expected that the Member States will host more Meetings including the postponed ones in 2022 to take the BIMSTEC Agenda forward. However, <b>no enhancement required.</b></p>
	110102	Combined and Incidental Expenses	<b>60,000.00</b>	<b>60,000.00</b>	<p>Most of the Meetings scheduled in FY 2020 and FY 2021 have been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the Secretariat had spent US\$ 17,840.00 from the estimated budget of US\$ 60,000.00 in FY 2020, while there was an expenditure of US\$ 127.50 only from the estimated budget of US\$ 60,000.00 in FY 2021 for Combined and Incidental Expenses.</p> <p>Since, the pandemic situation is gradually improving, it is expected that the Member States will host more Meetings including the postponed ones in 2022 to take the BIMSTEC Agenda forward. However, <b>no enhancement required.</b></p>

	110103	Transport of Personal Effects	<b>20,000.00</b>	<b>20,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement required.</b> According to the existing provision, the Secretary General, Directors and GSS I shall be entitled to the cost of transportation of personal effects by air/surface during their joining and departure at the Secretariat. Considering the numbers of incoming and outgoing entitled officials during 2022, the Secretariat estimated budget of US\$ 20,000.00.
	110104	Transport of Vehicle	<b>6,000.00</b>	<b>6,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement required.</b> According to the existing provision, the Secretary General and the Directors shall be entitled to reimbursement of transport, insurance and handling charges for one car subject to a maximum of US\$ 1,500.00 upon production of receipt.
	110105	Children's Educational Passage	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> According to the existing provision, a maximum of two (2) dependent children each of the Secretary General and the Directors, and GSS-I left behind in the home country for the purpose of education, are entitled to economy class return air passage once a year by the shortest route to visit their parents in Dhaka. Therefore, the Secretariat proposed an amount of <b>US\$2000.00</b> for Children's Educational Passage.
	110106	Emergency Passage	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> According to the existing provision, the Secretary General, Directors and GSS I who are on deputation to the Secretariat may be given emergency passage once in their entire term, in case of death or serious illness of an immediate family member (spouse, parents and children) of the officials.
	110107	Emergency Medical Passage	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> According to the existing provision, in case of the Secretary General, Directors and GSS I, requiring treatment outside Bangladesh, within the BIMSTEC Member States, the Secretariat shall pay the return passage by economy class for the patient and one attendant.
	110108	Home Leave Passage	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>4,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> According to the existing provisions and considering the requirement for new SG, Directors and GSS I, an approximate amount has been projected.



<b>1201</b>		<b>Supplies</b>			
	120101	Stationary and Office Requisites	<b>9,000.00</b>	<b>9,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, no increase in the budget for the fiscal year 2022 is proposed.
	120102	News Papers, Magazines and Journals	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, no increase in the budget for the fiscal year 2022 is proposed.
	120103	Fuel and Lubricants	<b>15,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, <b>the Secretariat proposed to decrease budget in this sub-head for FY-2022.</b>
<b>1301</b>		<b>Maintenance Expenditure for Vehicles</b>			
	130101	Servicing and maintenance of Secretariat vehicles	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, no increase in the budget for the fiscal year 2022 is proposed.
	130102	Insurance Premium	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>3,500.00</b>	Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head and insurance premium for a new vehicle, the Secretariat proposed to increase an amount of US\$ 500.00 for FY 2022.
<b>1302</b>		<b>Maintenance of Buildings and Capital Assets</b>			
	130201	Repair and maintenance (R & M) of Building	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>8,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>
<b>1401</b>		<b>Communication Services</b>			
	140101	Telecommunications (office Phone)	<b>800.00</b>	<b>800.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>
	140102	Postal and Courier Charges	<b>200.00</b>	<b>200.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>

	140103	ICT Related Expenses	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>6,500.00</b>	The Government of Bangladesh provided a Mini Server for hosting the official website and e-mail services of BIMSTEC in 2016. In order to keep proper functioning of these services, the Mini Server needs to be replaced in 2022. In addition, the Secretariat would be required for regular servicing, repairing and maintenance of PABX System, WAN and LAN Connection infrastructure, annual maintenance of CC camera, mini server, conference room sound system, access control of attendance machine, replacement of the existing printers and photocopiers accessories.
	140104	Maintenance and Hosting of Website and Internet connectivity	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> However, the estimated budget would be required for payments relating to internet bills and annual service fee of SSL certificate for web and mail servers.
	140105	Video Conferencing Equipment	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b> The Secretariat had already installed a video conferencing system in FY 2020; therefore, an amount of \$1000 requires to pay Cisco WebEx license annual renewal fee in FY 2022.
<b>1402</b>		<b>Hire Charges (Others)</b>			
	140201	Hire Charges of handyman	<b>700.00</b>	<b>700.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>
<b>1403</b>		<b>Electricity and Water</b>			
	140301	Electricity	<b>14,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, the Secretariat <b><u>proposed to decrease budget</u></b> in this sub-head for FY-2022.
	140302	Water	<b>2,000.00</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, the Secretariat <b><u>proposed to decrease budget</u></b> in this sub-head for FY-2022.
	140303	Gas	<b>500.00</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>

<b>1404</b>		<b>Rents</b>			
	140401	Rents	<b>217,500.00</b>	<b>190,500.00</b>	Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, the Secretariat <b><u>proposed to decrease budget in this sub-head for FY-2022.</u></b> However, the Secretariat estimated the budget as per the following entitlement: 1. Secretary General = US\$5,000.00 x 1 x 12 = US\$ 60,000.00 2. Six Directors from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (replacement may join anytime), Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka = US\$1500.00 x 6 x 12 = US\$ 108,000.00; 3. Incumbent GSS I = US\$625.00 x 2 x 12 = US\$ 15,000.00 4. 1 more GSS I may be recruited in FY 2022 = US\$625.00 x 12 = US\$ 7,500.00
	140402	House Furnishing Grants	<b>29,000.00</b>	<b>23,000.00</b>	Considering the present expenditure trend in this sub-head, the Secretariat <b><u>proposed to decrease budget in this sub-head for FY-2022.</u></b>
<b>1405</b>		<b>Other Services</b>			
	140501	Bank Charges	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>
	140502	Security Expenses	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>4,500.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>
	140503	Water Purification System	<b>500.00</b>	<b>500.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>
	140504	Others/Miscellaneous	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement is required.</b>
<b>1501</b>		<b>Servicing of Meetings</b>			
	150101	Meetings and Events by the Secretariat	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	Since, the pandemic situation is gradually improving as well as the 25th Anniversary of the BIMSTEC will be celebrated in FY 2022, the Secretariat is planning to host a number of seminars, roundtable meetings, workshops, capacity building/training programmes, lectures etc in 2022. Besides, regular meetings are held at the Secretariat with different International Organizations, UN Agencies, Think Tanks such as ADB, World Bank, UNDP, IFRI etc. to discuss the possible areas of cooperation. Considering above, the Secretariat estimated budget of this subhead.

	150102	BIMSTEC Day Celebration (Special Occasion)	<b>7,000.00</b>	<b>15,000.00</b>	<p>The Member States had approved a total budget of US\$ 14,000.00 (US\$ 7,000 for each year) in order to celebrate BIMSTEC Day (6th June) in FY 2020 and FY 2021. However, the Secretariat could not able to host any public event such as Diplomatic Reception for commemorating the BIMSTEC Days in the last two executive years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Therefore, the Secretariat is planning to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the BIMSTEC in a befitting manner in FY 2022. In this connection, the Secretariat will host a Diplomatic Reception at the Secretariat premise at Gulshan, Dhaka (or any other appropriate venue in Dhaka) to mark the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC. It is expected that the Hon'ble Foreign Minister, Government of Bangladesh will be invited to grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. While, Ambassadors/ High Commissioners of the BIMSTEC Member States and representatives from the Diplomatic Corps, international community, dignitaries and officials of the Government of Bangladesh as well as friends of BIMSTEC including members of print and electronic media will be invited to the Reception. Expected participants/guests of the event are 500/600 persons.</p>
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	150103	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the BIMSTEC	NA	35,000.00	<p>The celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the BIMSTEC would be started from 06 June 2022 till 05 June 2023. In order to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the BIMSTEC in a befitting manner through organizing a series of events and activities. Therefore, the Secretariat proposes to newly include this sub-head in FY 2022 for covering the following events and activities:</p> <p>(i) Gift bag with souvenir/memento/memorabilia: The Secretariat is planning to make special gift bags and some souvenirs/mementos/memorabilia such as Mug, Penholder, Pen drive, Pen and Writing pad/notebook etc. Gift bag containing those souvenirs/mementos/ memorabilia and a copy of the special supplement to be published by the Secretariat to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of BIMSTEC Day, will be distributed amongst the attendees of the diplomatic reception in the evening of 06 June 2022. These souvenirs will also be gifted throughout the years from June 2022 to June 2023 during the meetings/calls on of the Secretary General with dignitaries of the Member States as well as during special events/seminars/workshop organized by the Secretariat on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.</p> <p>(ii) BIMSTEC Photo/Art Exhibition: The Secretariat is planning to organize a BIMSTEC Photo Exhibition in FY 2022.</p> <p>(iii) BIMSTEC Quiz competition: The Secretariat is planning to organize BIMSTEC Quiz competition amongst the nationals of the BIMSTEC Member States. In addition to the above, budgets for some of the events and activities relating to the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC are proposed under the relevant sub-heads of FY 2022.</p> <p><b>It may be mentioned that an amount of US\$ 30,000.00 was allocated for the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC in FY 2017 (US\$15,000.00) and FY 2018 (US\$15,000.00) in addition to the BIMSTEC Day Receptions.</b></p>
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1601		Publications and Outreach			
	160101	Publications by the Secretariat	1500.00	6000.00	<p>As a part of the commemoration of the 25h Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC, the Secretariat is planning to publish a Special publication on 06 June 2022, which would be a 200-250 pages of Magazine with 15-20 articles contributed by the Heads of the BNPTT organizations/former SGs/Academics etc. The editorial work will be done by the Secretariat and published with the help of a publishing house. 500/1000 hard copies of the magazine will be published. In this connection, the Secretariat proposed an amount of US\$ 5000.00.</p> <p><b>It may be mentioned that the allocated budget of US\$1500.00 had not been incurred during FY 2021 for consideration of the special publication to be published during FY 2022.</b></p>
	160102	Outreach and Awareness Programs	2,000.00	10,000.00	<p>As a part of the commemoration of the 25h Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC, the Secretariat estimated the budget to cover the following activities, events and programmes:</p> <p>(i) Special supplement in a leading daily English newspaper: The Secretariat is planning to publish a special supplement in a leading daily English news paper of the host country, i.e. Bangladesh. The special supplement may contains Messages of the Heads of Government, Foreign Ministers of all the seven BIMSTEC Member States, Secretary General of BIMSTEC issued on this occasion as well as 1 or 2 articles on BIMSTEC reflecting past achievement as well as future endeavors.</p> <p>(ii) 3/4 minutes Video on BIMSTEC: The Secretariat is planning to produce a high-impact video clip that is capable of capturing the attention of people across age barriers, gender, and language, in all the BIMSTEC Member States. Video should revolve around the Bay of Bengal countries that form the grouping/ organisation - span the history of the region, cultural traditions, common spiritual traditions, and expressions of solidarity across cultures and the coming together of the people of the region to chart a prosperous future for the region through the BIMSTEC umbrella.</p>

					<p>(iii) The Secretariat is planning to organize a number of Seminars in collaboration with renowned Universities in the BIMSTEC Member States.</p> <p>(iv) The Secretariat in association with the Foreign Ministry of the BIMSTEC Chair would organize a Seminar at the Capital of the Chair (Host Country).</p> <p><b>It may be mentioned that the allocated budget of US\$2000.00 had not been incurred during FY 2021 for consideration of these events to be organized in FY 2022.</b></p>
	160105	Honorarium for the seminars/meetings	<b>1,500.00</b>	<b>7,000.00</b>	<p>As a part of the commemoration of the 25h Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC, a 200-250 pages of Magazine with 15-20 articles contributed by the Heads of the BNPTT Organizations/former SGs/Academics etc would be published as a special publication. The Secretariat is planning to give a lump sum amount as honorarium to the contributors of the publication. In addition, the Secretariat will organize a number of seminars, workshops, capacity building/training programmes, webinar, conferences and BIMSTEC related events in FY 2022. The participants would be given some honorarium. It may be mentioned that the allocated budget of US\$1,500.00 had not been incurred during FY 2021.</p>
	160106	Conveyance for Interns	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>No enhancement required.</b>

1701		Procurement of Capital Items			
	170101	Procurement of Vehicle	35,000.00	120,000.00	<p>As part of the commitment for hosting the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka, the Host Country, <i>i.e.</i>, Bangladesh had provided 4 vehicles including a brand new BMW 5 Series for use by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC in July 2014 as Flag Car.</p> <p>The existing flag car of the Secretariat (Model name - BMW 520i, Manufacture Year - 2014) has been using for last 07 years. The flag car has been facing some major technical and mechanical problems for last 2 years. Besides, the maintenance and repairing costs of the vehicle has been increased significantly. Also, the vehicle was suddenly trapped while running on the road.</p> <p>It may be mentioned that most of the flag cars of the Diplomatic Missions in Dhaka replace after 05 years of their use. Therefore, the Secretariat proposes to replace the current flag car with a befitting brand new flag car in FY 2022 for the use by the Secretary General of BIMSTEC.</p>
	170102	Procurement of Computers, Printers, Scanners and Uninterruptible Power Supply Units (UPS)	5,000.00	5,000.00	<p><b>No enhancement required.</b> As part of the commitment for hosting the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka, the Host Country, <i>i.e.</i>, Bangladesh had provided capital items and equipments including Computers, printers, UPS and photocopiers for last 05 years starting from 2014 till 2019. Some of the printers and a photocopier are necessary to replace immediately in order to run the Secretariat's day-to-day works smoothly.</p>



	170103	Procurement of Capital Items for the Secretariat and Secretary General's Official residence	NA	8,000.00	As part of the commitment for hosting the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka, the Government of Bangladesh had provided capital items such as furniture, equipments, machineries etc. for last 05 years starting from 2014 till 2019 for the Secretariat as well as the official residence of the Secretary General of BIMSTEC. Due to the long use of last 07 years, some of the capital items such as furniture's and machineries have become torn and out of order. Therefore, the Secretariat proposed to add a new sub-head for replacing the torn and out dated capital items in FY 2022 in order to smooth function of the Secretariat and activities of the official residence of the Secretary General of BIMSTEC.
<b>Total (USD)</b>			<b>1,577,800.00</b>	<b>1,676,010.00</b>	
<b>Contingencies 5% of the total recurrent (USD)</b>			<b>78,890.00</b>	<b>83,800.50</b>	
<b>Grand Total(USD)</b>			<b>1,656,690.00</b>	<b>1,759,810.50</b>	

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