

Document Number: BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/20
Distribution: For Delegates Only
Date: 15 September 2022



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

Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC)
13-15 September 2022
Bangkok, Thailand

Report of the Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC)

Agenda Item 01: Opening of the Meeting

01. The Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 13-15 September 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. **Mr. Cherdchai Chaivaivid**, Director General, Department of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand welcomed all the distinguished delegates to the Fifth Meeting of the BPWC and delivered the Opening Remarks. In his remarks, he expressed deep appreciation to the delegates for their presence in the Meeting. He requested Member States to work collectively and share their thoughts so that fruitful discussions and constructive outcomes could be produced before the upcoming BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting. The full text of the Opening Remarks is at **Annex II**.

04. **H.E. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell**, Secretary General of BIMSTEC delivered the Special Remarks. In the remarks, he expressed deep gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting the Fifth Meeting of the BPWC and thanked the Delegations from all the Member States for attending the Meeting. The Secretary General congratulated Thailand for assuming the chairmanship of BIMSTEC. He hoped that this Meeting would produce constructive recommendations for submission to the next Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting, for consideration. The full text of the Special Remarks is at **Annex III**.

Agenda Item 02: Election of the Chairperson

05. As per the existing practice, Mr. Cherdchai Chaivaivid, Director General, Department of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, as the Head of Delegation of the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship, was elected to chair the Meeting. Upon assuming the Chairmanship, the Chair thanked all the delegates for their participation in the Meeting and briefed the delegates pertaining to conduct the Meeting.

Agenda Item 03: Adoption of the Agenda

06. The Meeting adopted the Agenda as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/01/Rev.1**, which is at **Annex IV**.

Agenda Item 04: Item-wise review of the action taken on the decisions of the Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) held virtually in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 31 August 2020

07. The Meeting took note of the progress on the decisions of the 4th Meeting of BPWC as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/02**.

Agenda Item 05: Discussion on the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms

08. The Meeting extensively deliberated on the Rules of Procedure (RoPs) for BIMSTEC Mechanisms. After discussion, the Meeting decided to hold the **Special Meetings of BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee**, to be anchored by the BIMSTEC Secretariat, to finalize the Draft Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms.

09. The Meeting also decided the following:

- i. The Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee will be held virtually on **10 October 2022** at the BIMSTEC Secretariat, Dhaka.
- ii. The Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms will be formulated on the following three categories:
 - a. Rules of Procedure for Core BIMSTEC Mechanisms;
 - b. Rules of Procedure for Sectoral BIMSTEC Mechanisms;
 - c. Rules of Procedure for External Relations/Others.
- iii. The Secretariat will circulate the draft 'Rules of Procedure for Core BIMSTEC Mechanisms' for comments and observations of the Member States, with the objective to discuss it at the Special Meeting of the BPWC to be held on 10 October 2022. The Secretariat will also circulate the Rules of Procedure for Sectoral BIMSTEC Mechanisms and the Rules of Procedure for External Relations/Others in due course for comments and observations of the Member States.

- iv. The Special Meetings of BPWC will deliberate on the draft Rules of Procedure sections by sections simultaneously across all the **Core BIMSTEC Mechanisms** (*i.e.*, BIMSTEC Summit, BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting, BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee Meeting) as well as **Sectoral BIMSTEC Mechanisms** (*i.e.*, BIMSTEC Sectoral Ministerial Meeting, BIMSTEC Sectoral Senior Officials' Meeting, Sectoral Joint Working Group/ Working Group and Sub-sectoral Experts' Group/Sub-Group/Task Forces/ *Ad hoc* Groups Meeting etc.).

10. Considering the time constraint, the Meeting decided to conclude at least the Rules of Procedure for Core BIMSTEC Mechanisms for submission to the 23rd Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) with a view to approval by the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and subsequent adoption by the 6th BIMSTEC Summit.

Agenda Item 06: Discussion on the Administrative and Disciplinary Rules of the Secretariat

11. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Administrative and Disciplinary Rules of the Secretariat as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/04**. After deliberations, the Meeting finalized the Draft Text of the Administrative and Disciplinary Rules of the Secretariat, which is at **Annex V**, for submission to the 23rd Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) for endorsement.

Agenda Item 07: Discussion on the Secretariat's estimated budget for FY 2023

12. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Secretariat's estimated budget for FY 2023 as contained in its **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/05**. After extensive deliberations and examination, the Meeting recommended the Secretariat's estimated budget for FY 2023 amounting to **US\$ 1,617,766.50 (Annex VI)** for endorsement of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' through correspondence, preferably before the end of December 2022.

13. The Meeting also recommended the following:

- i. While proposing the budget for the next Fiscal Year, as a standard procedure, the Secretariat will attach the actual head wise expenditure until the date of circulation of the budget of the current Fiscal Year.
- ii. The Secretariat will submit a detailed proposal identifying specific mechanism on finalization and approval of its budgetary matters before commencing of a Fiscal Year (January - December) for consideration of the Member States.

Agenda Item 08: Discussion on the revision of salaries and allowances of the Secretary General, Directors and General Services Staff-I to V

14. The Meeting extensively deliberated on the proposals submitted by the Secretariat on the revision of salaries and allowances of the Secretary General, Directors and General Services Staff I to V, which is contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/06**. The Meeting discussed at length the proposals submitted by the Secretariat and agreed the necessity of revising the salaries and entitlements of Secretary General, Directors and General Services Staff. After the preliminary discussion, the Secretariat proposed a revised proposal for consideration.

15. Pending finalization of the **“Manual for Revision of Salaries and Allowances of the BIMSTEC Secretariat”**, as an interim arrangement, the Meeting provisionally recommended the following revision of salaries with effect from 01 July 2022 subject to receiving comments/concurrences from the Member States:

Category	Existing Salary per month (Fixed in 2017)	Enhancement in percentage	Proposed Salary per month
Secretary General	US\$ 6,250.00	40%	US\$ 8,750.00
Directors	US\$ 4,250.00	40%	US\$ 5,950.00
GSS-I	US\$ 1,875.00	30%	US\$ 2,437.50

Category of GSS	Pay Scale (in USD) fixed in 2017	Enhancement in percentage	Proposed Pay Scale (in USD)
GSS-II	320-8X7-376-EB-9X11-475	50%	480-12X7-564-EB-14X11-718

Category of GSS	Pay Scale (in USD) fixed in 2017	Enhancement in percentage	Proposed Pay Scale (in USD)
GSS-III	280-7X7-329-EB-8X11-417	30%	364-9X7-427-EB-11X11-548
GSS-IV	255-6X7-297-EB-7X11-374	30%	332-8X7-388-EB-9X11-487
GSS-V	235-5X7-270-EB-6X11-336	30%	305-7X7-354-EB-8X11-442

16. The Member States will convey their concurrences/comments on the Secretariat's proposal **by 30 September 2022**.

17. The Meeting tasked the Secretariat to prepare a draft **“Manual for Revision of Salaries and Allowances of the BIMSTEC Secretariat”** for consideration of the Member States.

Agenda Item 09: Discussion on the proposed “BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030”

18. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the proposed “BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030” as contained in the Secretariat’s **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/07**. Under this Agenda Item, the Delegation of Thailand briefed the Meeting on the proposed “BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030”, the Draft Text of which along with the Concept Note and the Timeline of presenting the documents were forwarded by Thailand on 01 August 2022. The Vision document reflects BIMSTEC shared vision of driving forward towards a region that is Prosperous, Resilient, and Open. Thailand expressed its appreciation to all Member States for their inputs to the Concept Note and the Draft Text.

19. After deliberation, the Meeting finalized the Concept Note and the Draft Text of the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, which is at **Annex VII**. The documents will be submitted to the 23rd Session of BIMSTEC Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) for endorsement.

Agenda Item 10: Discussion on the proposal for proper utilization and management of the proposed financial assistance of one million USD to increase the operational budget of the BIMSTEC Secretariat by the Government of India

20. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the proposal for proper utilization and management of the proposed financial assistance of one million USD to increase the operational budget of the BIMSTEC Secretariat by the Government of India as contained in the Secretariat’s **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/08**.

21. Under this Agenda Item, the Delegation of India apprised the Meeting on the background and purpose of the financial assistance of one million USD by the Government of India to increase the operational budget of the BIMSTEC Secretariat.

22. After discussion, the Meeting agreed on the proposal on the list of priority tasks and management of financial assistance of one million dollars (US\$ 1,000,000.00) by the Government of India to the BIMSTEC Secretariat (**Annex VIII**). The Meeting also agreed to include the finalization of “**Manual for Revision of Salaries and Allowances of BIMSTEC Secretariat**” as a priority task.

23. The Meeting agreed to utilize the financial assistance from the Government of India for holding Special BPWC Meetings (virtual/in person) at the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka to finalize the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Mechanisms, ToR for Eminent Persons’ Group and other important institution building tasks, as agreed upon by the Member States.

Agenda Item 11: Discussion and finalization of a fixed time-frame for holding the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting annually

24. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the fixation of time-frame for holding the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting annually as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/09**.

25. The Meeting agreed in principle on the fixation of time-frame for holding the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting annually and reiterated the importance of holding the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting annually.

26. The Meeting also decided that the fixed time-frame for annual BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting will be discussed during the deliberation on the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting at the Special Meetings of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee.

Agenda Item 12: Discussion on the schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings

27. The Meeting considered the Secretariat's Note on the schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/10**. The Meeting updated the BIMSTEC calendar of activities/events for 2022-2023, which is at **Annex IX**. The Meeting also decided the following:

- i. The Member States will further update the BIMSTEC calendar of activities/events for 2022-2023, to be hosted by the respective Member States and forward the same to the Secretariat at the earliest. The Secretariat will compile the details received from the Member States and update the BIMSTEC calendar of activities/events-2022-2023 for circulation among the Member States.
- ii. The Secretariat will also explore the possibility of developing an online based system for updating the schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings by the BIMSTEC National Focal Points.

Agenda Item 13: Discussion on the recommendations of the Secretary General's progress report, placed before the 22nd Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022

13.1 Discussion and finalization of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for *Ad hoc* Eminent Persons' Group on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC

13.2 Discussion on developing the Plan of Action/ Work Programme of the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC cooperation

13.3 Discussion on Annual Report on Sectoral activities to be presented by the respective Lead Country in the Senior Officials' Meeting

13.4 Discussion on early operationalization of the BIMSTEC Centres

13.5 Discussion on the project-based cooperation and financing of BIMSTEC activities

28. The Meeting considered the above Agenda Items together on recommendations from the Secretary General's progress report, placed before the 22nd Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 28 March 2022 and agreed as follows:

13.1 Discussion and finalization of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for *Ad hoc* Eminent Persons' Group on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC

29. The Meeting decided that the Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee to be held virtually on 10 October 2022 will negotiate the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for *Ad hoc* Eminent Person' Group on Future Direction of BIMSTEC.

13.2 Discussion on developing the Plan of Action/Work Programme of the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC cooperation

30. The Member States will prepare and forward their respective Plan of Action/Work Programme of the reconstituted Sectors and Sub-sectors of BIMSTEC cooperation to the Secretariat at the earliest for circulation among the Member States.

13.3 Discussion on Annual Report on Sectoral activities to be presented by the respective Lead Country in the Senior Officials' Meeting

31. The Meeting recommended for introduction of brief presentation on the status of sectoral activities by the representative of the respective Lead Country during the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting.

13.4 Discussion on early operationalization of the BIMSTEC Centres

32. Bhutan will forward the draft Organogram of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO) including the Terms of Reference (TOR) for appointing Director, Professional and General Services Staff as well as their emoluments and other administrative and financial matters for circulation among the Member States through the BIMSTEC Secretariat.

33. India proposed to host the Second Meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (BCWC) on 01 November 2022 (in person) to conclude the Host Country Agreement. India will also propose a new date for convening the First Meeting of the Governing Board of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre with the objective to discuss the Host Country Agreement among others.

34. Regarding operationalization of the BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Sri Lanka, the Meeting recommended constituting the Governing Board of the Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) at the earliest which will deliberate on early operationalization of the TTF.

13.5 Discussion on the project-based cooperation and financing of BIMSTEC activities

35. Regarding collaboration with other regional and international organizations with similar aims and purposes on the project-based cooperation and financing of BIMSTEC activities, the Meeting decided that the Secretariat will circulate the Concept Note and draft Memorandum of Understanding, as and when necessary, simultaneously among the Member States for comments/concurrences.

Agenda Item 14: Discussion and consideration of the recommendations from the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) held virtually in New Delhi, India on 21-22 December 2020

36. The Meeting examined the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) held virtually in New Delhi, India on 21-22 December 2020 as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/16** and tasked the Secretariat to further list out the appropriate recommendations being made under the Agenda Item 07- "Future Roadmap for BIMSTEC Cooperation: Points for consideration of the BIMSTEC Summit", especially on the categories of BIMSTEC Leaders and BIMSTEC Secretariat and place them along with the Report to the Senior Officials' Meeting for consideration.

Agenda Item 15: Consideration of the Report of the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) held virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan on 20 September 2021

Agenda Item 15.1 Consideration of the Procedures and Rules of BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission

37. The Meeting considered Agenda Items 15 and 15.1 together.

38. The Meeting took note of the Report of the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) held virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan on 20 September 2021 and decided to replace the Article 4 (i) of Procedures and Rules of BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission with the following and recommended to the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting on Culture for endorsement through the Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee together with other Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC mechanisms:

“The Chairperson of the Commission, in consultation with the BIMSTEC Secretariat, shall convene meeting(s) of the Commission.”

Agenda Item 16: Discussion and finalization of the programmes to be organized by the Member States for the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of BIMSTEC

39. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the programmes to be organized by the Member States for the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of BIMSTEC as contained in the Secretariat's **Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/05/2022/19**.

40. After deliberations, the Meeting recommended that the Member States will organize the commemorative events on voluntary basis. The following activities will be organized by the Member States for the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of BIMSTEC:

- i. Bangladesh will organize an event on Trade and Investment to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of BIMSTEC. The Concept Note and date will be conveyed through the Secretariat soon.
- ii. Nepal is planning to organize a tourism /cultural related fair to commemorate the 25th anniversary of BIMSTEC.
- iii. Sri Lanka will organize a commemorative event on 04 October 2022, in collaboration with the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute, Sri Lanka.

- iv. Thailand organized an exhibition to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC on 13 – 19 June 2022 at Icon Siam Department Store, where the Secretary General of BIMSTEC delivered the special remarks at the venue. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand and Ubon Ratchathani University, a leading university in the northeast of Thailand, will organize two more events - seminars and quiz contests about BIMSTEC, to commemorate this special occasion, which will be attended by university and high school students.
- v. The Secretariat in collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan will organize BIMSTEC Quiz competition in Thimphu, Bhutan in February 2023. The Secretariat will circulate the Concept Note with the request to nominate two participants from each Member State and sought the cooperation of the National Focal Points in this regard.

Agenda Item 17: Discussion on the convening of the Twenty Third Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting and Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting

- 41. The Delegation of Thailand proposed that the Twenty Third Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting and Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 01-02 February 2023.
- 42. The Delegation of Thailand requested the Member States to convey the concurrences to the proposed dates by 03 October 2022.

Agenda Item 18: Any Other Matters

- 43. Under the Agenda item, the following issues were raised by the Member States and agreed as follows:
 - i. The Delegation of Bangladesh sought clarity on the hosting of the Sectoral Meetings by the Member States other than the Lead Country as per the earlier decisions taken before the reconstitution of sectors and sub-sectors of BIMSTEC. Following the deliberation on the matter, the Meeting decided that as per the Article 10 of the BIMSTEC Charter, the Lead Country will get the first preference to host the Sectoral Meetings. In case of inconvenience of the Lead Country, any other interested Member State can host the Meeting.
 - ii. Thailand proposed to host a Special Session of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) at Chulalongkorn University in virtual mode to formulate suggestions on the topics of economic development in BIMSTEC in order to create collective effort to help Member States that are facing new challenges. The recommendations from the Special Session will be reported to the Twenty Third Session of BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting in February 2023. Thailand will circulate the Concept Note in due course.

- iii. The Delegation of Myanmar also informed the Meeting that Myanmar is planning to host the Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) in May 2023 in hybrid mode.
- iv. The Chair suggested Thailand, Chair of BIMSTEC, to explore the possibility of introducing a Retreat of the Senior Officials before the start of regular session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting to discuss freely without fixed agenda in order to strengthen SOM process. Thailand will circulate a Concept Note on this matter in due course.
- v. The Delegation of Sri Lanka raised the issue of external funding for the sectoral activities of BIMSTEC. The Meeting decided that such matter should be raised at the Meeting of the Governing Body who can recommend to the higher bodies.

Agenda Item 19: Date and Venue of the Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC)

44. The Meeting welcomed the offer of Thailand for its proposal to host the Sixth Meeting of the BPWC in person in May 2023 in Bangkok.

Agenda Item 20: Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee

45. The Meeting considered and adopted the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee for submission to the Twenty Third Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting for consideration.

Agenda Item 21: Closing of the Meeting

46. The Meeting expressed deep appreciation to the Kingdom of Thailand for the warm hospitality extended to the participants and for the excellent arrangement made for the Meeting. The Chair thanked the delegates for their active participation and their valuable contributions in successful conclusion of the Meeting while the Delegates appreciated the Chair for steering of the Meeting effectively and efficiently.

47. The Meeting also expressed its sincere thanks to the Secretary General and the Secretariat for their hard work and contribution in facilitating the Meeting.
