

**BIMSTEC Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh**

**Press Release, 14 March 2024**

**The Second Meeting of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on Future Directions of BIMSTEC**

The Second Meeting of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on Future Directions of BIMSTEC was convened, on 11-12 March 2024, at the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Meeting was chaired by Dr. Soonthorn Chaiyindeepum, member of EPG from Thailand, which is the current Chair of BIMSTEC. The members of EPG from 6 BIMSTEC Member States participated in the Meeting. The BIMSTEC Secretariat, led by H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, facilitated the Meeting and participated in EPG's deliberations.

Over the course of the two-day long Meeting, the EPG engaged in discussions on various crucial aspects of BIMSTEC framework, including the functioning of Core and Institutional Mechanisms, BIMSTEC's External Relations and various sectors of cooperation.

The EPG, entrusted with the task of developing an outcome-oriented BIMSTEC 2030 Agenda, has been conducting a comprehensive review of BIMSTEC framework including institutional mechanisms, with a view to make recommendations to reform and repurpose BIMSTEC in order to foster a prosperous, resilient and developed Bay of Bengal region.

The Third Meeting of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on Future Directions of BIMSTEC will be held in Dhaka on 12-13 May 2024; the first Meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 in Dhaka. The EPG will submit its Report to BIMSTEC Leaders.