



**Secretariat
Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral
Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**

Secretary General

06 June 2022

MESSAGE

Today, as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) marks its Silver Jubilee, I extend warm greetings to the governments and peoples of the seven Member States of BIMSTEC – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

Twenty-five years ago, on the 06th of June 1997, the regional cooperation journey of BIMSTEC began with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration. Since then, BIMSTEC has succeeded in working towards getting its institutional framework in place to facilitate regional cooperation as envisioned by the BIMSTEC Member States. Establishing the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka in 2014, and the adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit in Colombo on 30th March this year (2022) are two important milestones in this regard.

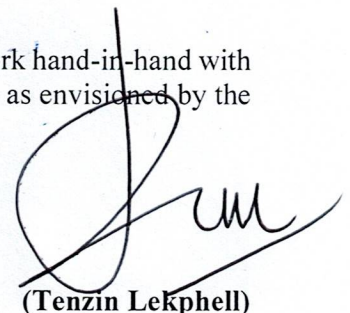
BIMSTEC marks its twenty-fifth year at a time when the world and the region are emerging from a devastating pandemic that has impacted the economies of all countries. At the same time, events unfolding in Europe have created disruptive ripple effects across the world including the BIMSTEC region, worsening the condition of our already battered economies.

Crises, however, also create opportunities, and BIMSTEC holds much promise as a platform for cooperation to achieve a prosperous future for the peoples of our region. With the disruption in global supply chains due to COVID-19, the need and opportunity to create intra-regional trade has emerged stronger. Therefore, Member States are now emphasizing on trade facilitation measures to increase intra regional trade.

Thailand, the current Chair of BIMSTEC, leading the connectivity sector of BIMSTEC has chosen “Prosperous, Resilient and Robust, Open BIMSTEC” as the theme for its chairmanship. BIMSTEC stands well poised to take on the implementation of the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity that holds the potential of transforming the Bay of Bengal region from one of the least integrated to the most well-connected and networked engine of economic growth in the Indo-Pacific in times to come.

As we look forward with optimism, I wish to express deep gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh for hosting the BIMSTEC Secretariat and committing to provide a new modern iconic building for the smooth functioning and proper representation of the Secretariat. I also thank Sri Lanka for hosting the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit this year on 30th March, and the current Chair, Thailand, for guiding us as BIMSTEC steers forward in its twenty-fifth year to implement important decisions and directives of our leaders.

On this important occasion, I wish to reaffirm the Secretariat’s commitment to work hand-in-hand with all Member States, at all times, to pursue the goals and objectives of BIMSTEC, as envisioned by the Member States.



(Tenzin Lekphell)