



The Prime Minister of Nepal

MESSAGE

On the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the establishment of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), on behalf of the people and Government of Nepal as well as on my own, I wish to extend warm greetings and felicitations to the peoples and fellow Governments of BIMSTEC Member States.

Since last year, global community has been grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Current trying time demands us to pool our strengths, stand in solidarity with each other and build better resilience across the region. The raging second wave of the COVID transmission has exposed our vulnerability. We are racing against time to ensure the required supply of personal protective equipment, therapeutic drugs and vaccines, arrange respirators, oxygen, ventilators and ICU beds, and provide critical care to the patients.

I believe that vaccination is a key part of the solution to such a pandemic. Our region should muster further efforts in ensuring timely and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Collaboration and cooperation in responding to the global health crisis is also a contribution towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. This is crucial, in particular, for the realization of the overarching goal of eradicating poverty and ensuring basic social protection for our peoples.

The pandemic has also caused widespread social impacts. Women, children, elderly people, and those poor and marginalized ones are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Education has come to a standstill in the midst of the pandemic. Renewed attention is needed to assure that the future of millions of students would not be compromised.

The best way we can push through such a difficult moment in history is through collective resolve to move ahead. Sharing of experiences in strengthening our health systems and accelerating cooperation in trade and technology, science and innovation, have become vitally important areas of regional and global cooperation.

Home to 22 percent of the global population, BIMSTEC is a region with huge potentials for meaningful cooperation and strengthened partnership. As envisioned by the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration adopted in Kathmandu in August 2018, Nepal is committed to working in concert 'towards a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Bay of Bengal region'.

I hope that the upcoming BIMSTEC Summit will be a milestone for institutional strengthening and intensification of multi-sectoral cooperation among member states, including through the adoption of BIMSTEC Charter.

May the BIMSTEC Day inspire us to further deepen our solidarity, collaboration and cooperation for peace, prosperity and wellbeing of our peoples.

K P Sharma Oli

Kathmandu, 1 June 2021