



**Message from the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Kingdom of Thailand
on the Occasion of BIMSTEC Day 2019 (6 June 2019)**

I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to the Governments and the peoples of BIMSTEC on the auspicious occasion of BIMSTEC Day 2019.

Today, BIMSTEC turns twenty-two years old. Over the years, our Bay of Bengal cooperation has matured into an important regional player in the Asian region and is an important connector between Southeast Asia and South Asia. However, with the increasing global challenges and uncertainties, BIMSTEC needs to re-strategize itself to become more focused and relevant. Thailand is of the view that prioritizing **BIMSTEC's 14 areas of cooperation** into pillars, **finalizing BIMSTEC FTA, drafting a BIMSTEC Charter to create a rules-based BIMSTEC** should be our priority this year. These will lead to more **concrete outcomes and create a more modern, dynamic and resilient BIMSTEC**. This will ultimately shape BIMSTEC's competitive identity in the international community.

Furthermore, Thailand is a strong advocate of connectivity, which is one of the most important elements for promoting sustainable development. Therefore, we look forward to the conclusion of the **BIMSTEC Master Plan on Transport Connectivity** to create seamless connectivity, synchronize rules and regulations, foster human resource development and help to realize the sustainable development of all which would add strategic value to BIMSTEC and the related subregions as a whole.

To this end, I wish to reaffirm Thailand's commitment to and support of BIMSTEC as it serves as an essential platform for cooperation and linkage between South and Southeast Asia.

I am, therefore, pleased to extend my best wishes for the continued success and prosperity of BIMSTEC. May our cooperation continue to go from strength to strength for the peace, stability and sustainability of our region and the well-being of our peoples.

Don Pramudwinai
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand

Bangkok
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