



The Prime Minister



KATHMANDU
NEPAL

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MESSAGE

On the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC), I am pleased to extend, on behalf of the Government and people of Nepal, my best wishes to the organization for the continued success of its initiatives and activities for deepening regional integration and co-operation. This special day will remind and inspire all of us to dedicate ourselves towards attaining concrete outcomes in line with the evolution of BIMSTEC. The two decades of experience at BIMSTEC appraises that we need to make further efforts to promote regional collaboration and partnership for our mutual benefit.

BIMSTEC countries collectively possess bountiful natural resources, vibrant population and diverse cultural heritages. The region has huge potentials for cooperation and collaboration for closer intra-regional connectivity. Enhanced connectivity of geography, finance, technology, knowledge and ideas can create robust linkages in trade and investment, energy and tourism, among others, that can uplift the countries and their people to the upper rung of development ladder.

However, we have a multitude of challenges in the region. Mass poverty, increasing inequalities, illiteracy and diseases are particularly prevalent while impact of climate change and natural disasters is more visible. To overcome these existing and emerging new challenges, we require enhanced partnership and collaboration among us. The earlier we collectively address these challenges, the better we would be able to fast achieve high, sustained, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development in the region. It is imperative that, building on existing mechanisms and instruments of the organization, BIMSTEC countries collaborate in a true spirit of regional solidarity and partnership towards this end.

I would like to recall our renewed commitments as incorporated in the Outcome Document agreed at the BRICS-BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat in Goa, India on 16 October 2016. The Agenda of Action provides a clear direction to reinforce our endeavors towards harnessing natural and human resources for our collective progress and prosperity. We will have the opportunity to review its progress during the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit to be convened in Nepal.

On this BIMSTEC Day, I wish to reaffirm Nepal's commitment to regional integration and cooperation with our belief that BIMSTEC provides a platform to progress and prosperity in the region.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'