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SECRETARIAT
BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL
TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION
DHAKA

Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC)
25 February 2025
Bangkok, Thailand [Virtual]

Report of the Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee
(BPWC)

Agenda Item 01: Opening of the Meeting

01. The Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) was held virtually in Bangkok, Thailand on 25 February 2025.

02. Delegations from the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Republic of India, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nepal, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Kingdom of Thailand participated in the Meeting. The list of the participants is at **Annex I**.

03. In her Opening Remarks, **Ms. Prangtip Kanchanahattakij**, Deputy Director General of Department of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand cordially welcomed all distinguished delegates to the Eighth Meeting of BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) being held virtually. The full text of the Opening Remarks is at **Annex II**.

04. **Mr. Md. Mosharaf Hossain**, Director of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, delivered the Special Remarks and thanked the Delegations for attending the Eighth BPWC Meeting. He assured the Meeting of the Secretariat's full support and cooperation. The text of the Opening Remarks is at **Annex III**.

Agenda Item 02: Election of the Chairperson

05. As per the Rules of Procedure of BPWC, the Head of Delegation of the National Focal Point of the Member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship shall chair the BPWC Meeting. Therefore, **Ms. Prangtip Kanchanahattakij**, Deputy Director General of Department of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, as the Head of Delegation of the Member State holding the BIMSTEC

Chairmanship, was elected to chair the Eighth BPWC Meeting. Upon assuming the Chairmanship, the Chair thanked all the delegates for their participation in the Meeting and briefed the delegates pertaining to conduct the Meeting.

Agenda Item 03: Adoption of the Agenda

06. The Meeting considered and adopted the Agenda, which is at **Annex IV**.

Agenda Item 04: Item-wise review of the action taken on the decisions of Seventh Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) held virtually in Bangkok, Thailand, on 01 August 2024

07. The Meeting took note of the progress on the decisions of the Seventh Meeting of BPWC, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/02, which is at **Annex V**.

Agenda Item 05: Discussion on the draft Provisional Agenda and draft Sixth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration

08. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the draft Provisional Agenda and draft Sixth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/03/Rev.1. The Sixth BIMSTEC Summit is scheduled to be held in Bangkok on 04 April 2025.

09. After discussion, the Meeting finalized the draft Provisional Agenda of the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit for submission to the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) for consideration, with the understanding that BIMSTEC Leaders will witness the signing of BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation on 04 April 2025 during the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit, while the signing of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with External Partners will be witnessed by the Ministers on 03 April 2025 during the Twentieth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting. The details of signing ceremonies will be mentioned in the Programmes of the Summit and Ministerial Meeting, to be conveyed by Thailand by first week of March 2025. The finalized draft Provisional Agenda of the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit is at **Annex VI**.

10. After extensive deliberation, the Meeting finalized the draft text of the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration and submitted it to the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) for consideration. The finalized draft Sixth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration is at **Annex VII**.

Agenda Item 06: Discussion on the draft Provisional Agenda and draft Report of Twentieth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting

11. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the draft Provisional Agenda and draft Report of the Twentieth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/04/Rev.1.

12. After deliberation, the Meeting finalized the draft Provisional Agenda and draft Report of the Twentieth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and submitted them to the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) for consideration, which are at **Annex VIII** and **Annex IX** respectively.

Agenda Item 07: Discussion on the draft Provisional Agenda of the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting

13. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the draft Provisional Agenda of the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/05/Rev.1.

14. After deliberation, the Meeting finalized the draft Provisional Agenda of the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) and submitted to the SOM for consideration, which is at **Annex X**.

Agenda Item 08: Discussion on the recommendations outlined in the Report of the Eminent Persons' Group on the Future Direction of BIMSTEC

15. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the recommendations outlined in the Report of the Eminent Persons' Group on the Future Direction of BIMSTEC, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/06.

16. The Meeting extensively deliberated on the two groups of recommendations, as clustered/ listed by the Special Meeting of BPWC held on 28 January 2025 and updated the recommendations taking into account the comments of member States, which is at **Annex XI**. After discussion, the Meeting decided the following:

- (i) Member States will convey their comments, if any, on the finalized recommendations that can be taken up for implementation, indicating timeframe, responsible core/sectoral mechanisms etc. latest by 06 March 2025. If no comments are received within given timeframe, it will be considered as concurrence by the member States.
- (ii) The Secretariat will circulate the final version of finalized recommendations incorporating comments of member States and strategic pathways by 10 March 2025.

Agenda Item 09: Consideration of the Audit Report of the Panel of Auditors for FY 2014 and 2015; and discussion on the mandate of the next Audit Team

17. The Meeting considered the “Audit Report of the Panel of Auditors for FY 2014 and 2015” (**Annex XII**), as contained in the Secretariat’s Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/07, and recommended to the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) for consideration.

18. After discussion, the Meeting tasked the Secretariat to implement the recommendations contained in the Audit Report of the Panel of Auditors for FY 2014 and 2015 in a step-by-step manner.

19. The Meeting recommended continuing with existence practices of conducting external audit of the Secretariat’s accounts. In order to clear the backlog of unaudited years, the Meeting submitted the following recommendation on conducting the Audit of Secretariat’s accounts to the Twenty Fifth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) for consideration:

Fiscal Years	Countries to nominate panel of auditors	Head of Panel of Auditors	Audit conducting year
2016-2017	Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka	Myanmar	1 st half of 2025
2018-2019	Thailand, Bangladesh and Bhutan	Thailand	2 nd half of 2025
2020-2021	India, Myanmar, Nepal	India	1 st quarter of 2026
2022-2023	Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	2 nd quarter of 2026
2024-2025	Bhutan, India, Myanmar	Bhutan	4 th quarter of 2026

Agenda Item 10: Consideration of the draft Procedures for Disposal of Goods and Services of the BIMSTEC Secretariat

20. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the draft Procedures for Disposal of Goods and Services of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, as contained in the Secretariat’s Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/08, which is at **Annex XIII**.

21. The Meeting decided that the Secretariat will circulate the revised draft Procedures for Disposal of Goods and Services of the BIMSTEC Secretariat for comments/ concurrence of the member States.

Agenda Item 11: Consideration of the Proposal of the Secretariat for the Amendment of the Provisions Relating to Financial and Administrative Matters of the BIMSTEC Secretariat

22. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Proposal of the Secretariat for the Amendment of the Provisions Relating to Financial and Administrative Matters of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/09.

23. After discussion, the Meeting decided the following:

- (i) Nepal will convey its comments on the Proposal of the Secretariat for the Amendment of the Provisions Relating to Financial and Administrative Matters of the BIMSTEC Secretariat.
- (ii) Thailand suggested to explore other modalities (*e.g.* health insurance) that is followed in other regional organization to address this issue.
- (iii) The proposal will be further discussed and finalized in the next Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee.

Agenda Item 12: Discussion on the annual schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings

24. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the annual schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/10/Rev.1.

25. The Meeting took note of the annual schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings, which is at **Annex XIV**. After discussion, the Meeting decided the following:

- (i) Member States will consider the proposal of Thailand on the annual schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings.
- (ii) Nepal and Sri Lanka will convey their proposals/comments on the annual schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings by 05 March 2025.
- (iii) The Secretariat will circulate the final version of the annual schedule/calendar of BIMSTEC Meetings, incorporating proposals from the member States, by 10 March 2025.

Agenda Item 13: Discussion on the observations and recommendations of the Secretary General's Statement at the Twenty Fourth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM)

26. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the observations and recommendations of the Secretary General's Statement at the Twenty Fourth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/11.

27. The Meeting took note of the recommendations of the Secretary General (**Annex XV**). The Meeting reiterated the necessity of holding regular and frequent Core Meetings, either in-person, hybrid or virtual mode and member States/Secretariat will take appropriate measures to implement the rest of the recommendations of the Secretary General.

Agenda Item 14: Discussion on the Draft Concept Note on BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Tropical Medicine and Public Health

28. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Draft Concept Note on BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Tropical Medicine and Public Health, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/12, which is at **Annex XVI**.

29. The Meeting took note of the draft Concept Note on BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Tropical Medicine and Public Health. After deliberation, the Meeting decided the following:

- (i) Thailand will forward the revised draft Concept Note on BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Tropical Medicine and Public Health taking into account the comments received from the member States.
- (ii) The Secretariat will circulate the revised Concept Note and seek approval of the member States through correspondence so that the Concept Note can be considered during the Twenty Fifth Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM).

Agenda Item 15: Discussion on the Draft Concept Note for the BIMSTEC Excellence Center in Public Audit (BECPA) and the Draft Concept Note for Supreme Audit Institutions in BIMSTEC Cooperation (BIMSCOP) under the Bangkok Vision 2030

30. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Draft Concept Note for the BIMSTEC Excellence Center in Public Audit (BECPA) and the Draft Concept Note for Supreme Audit Institutions in BIMSTEC Cooperation (BIMSCOP) under the Bangkok Vision 2030, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/13, which are at **Annex XVII** and **Annex XVIII**.

31. After deliberation, the Meeting decided the following:

- (i) Remaining member States will convey their comments on the Draft Concept Note for the BIMSTEC Excellence Center in Public Audit (BECPA) and the Draft Concept Note for Supreme Audit Institutions in BIMSTEC Cooperation (BIMSCOP) under the Bangkok Vision 2030, by 05 March 2025.
- (ii) Thailand will forward the revised Draft Concept Note for the BIMSTEC Excellence Center in Public Audit (BECPA) and the Draft Concept Note for Supreme Audit Institutions in BIMSTEC Cooperation (BIMSCOP) under the Bangkok Vision 2030 by 12 March 2025, taking into account the comments received from the member States.
- (iii) The Secretariat will circulate the revised Concept Notes and seek approval of the member States through correspondence so that the Concept Notes can be considered at the Twenty Fifth Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM).

Agenda Item 16: Consideration of the Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate held in Noida, India on 18 November 2024

32. The Meeting considered the Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate held in Noida, India on 18 November 2024, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/14, along with the recommendations contained therein.

Agenda Item 17: Consideration of the Finalized Draft Text of the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Energy Centre

33. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Finalized Draft Text of the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Energy Centre, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/15, which is at **Annex XIX**.

34. The Meeting took note of concurrences of Myanmar and Sri Lanka as well as comments of Bhutan on the Draft Text of the Rules of Procedure for BIMSTEC Energy Centre. After deliberation, the Meeting decided that India will convey its comments on the draft RoP of BEC and forward to the Secretariat by 07 March 2025. The Meeting requested remaining member States (i.e. Bangladesh, Nepal and Thailand) to convey their comments on the draft RoP of BEC by 07 March 2025.

35. The Secretariat will seek approval of the member States on the finalized draft RoP of BEC through correspondence by 14 March 2025.

Agenda Item 18: Discussion on Contribution of member States for Institutional Expenditure and Programme Expenditure of BIMSTEC Centres/Entities

36. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the Contribution of member States for Institutional Expenditure and Programme Expenditure of BIMSTEC Centres/Entities, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/16.

37. After discussion, the Meeting tasked the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive Note on member States' contributions towards Annual Budget of Institutional Expenditure and Programme Expenditure of BIMSTEC Centres/Entities, considering financing mechanism of similar centres of other regional organizations (e.g. ASEAN, SAARC etc.).

Agenda Item 19: Discussion on the finalized Draft Concept Note and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the BIMSTEC

38. The Meeting considered the Note by the Secretariat on the finalized Draft Concept Note and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the BIMSTEC, as contained in the Secretariat's Document Number BIMSTEC/BPWC/08/2025/17. The finalized Draft Concept Note and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the BIMSTEC is at **Annex XX**.

39. The Meeting took note of the briefing by the Secretariat regarding the consultation between the Delegation of UNOPS and Secretary General. The member States expressed their concern on financial obligations regarding this MoU. Hence, the Meeting instructed the Secretariat to consult with the UNOPS to incorporate a clause to confirm that there will be no financial liability/obligation on the part of BIMSTEC member States and the BIMSTEC Secretariat under the MoU.

Agenda Item 20: Any Other Matters

40. Upon requests from Nepal and Sri Lanka, the Delegation of Thailand informed the Meeting that the letters inviting the Leaders to attend the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit will be sent to the member States in due course. Regarding the theme of Leaders statements, the Delegation of Thailand also informed that the member States may consider 'Prosperous, Resilient and Open (PRO) BIMSTEC' as the theme of their Leaders' statements or, any other theme on BIMSTEC as deemed appropriate by the member States. The duration of the Leaders statements will be specified in the draft programme of the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit.

41. India will revise the draft Rules of Procedures (RoP) for the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (BCWC) by 05 March 2025 and forward to the Secretariat for circulation among the member States for their comments. The Secretariat will seek approval from the member States on the revised draft RoP for the BCWC through circulation.

42. As suggested by India, the operational modalities of three new sub-sectors (i.e. Blue Economy, Mountain Economy and Poverty Alleviation) will be discussed in the BPWC Meeting.

Agenda Item 21: Date and Venue of the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee

43. The delegation of Bangladesh informed the Meeting that the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) will be held in Dhaka, after Bangladesh assumes the chairmanship of BIMSTEC. The exact date and venue will be conveyed through the Secretariat in due course.

Agenda Item 22: Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee

44. The Meeting considered and adopted the Report of the Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee for submission to the Twenty Fifth Session of BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) to be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 02 April 2025.

Agenda Item 23: Closing of the Meeting

45. The Chair thanked the delegates for their active participation and their valuable contributions to the successful conclusion of the Meeting, while the Delegates appreciated the Secretariat for facilitating the Meeting.
