

**Statement by His Excellency Senior General Min Aung Hlaing,
Chairman of the State Administration Council and
Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
at the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit
(Bangkok, Thailand, 4 April 2025)**

(Theme: Prosperous, Resilient, and Open BIMSTEC)

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

- At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to **Her Excellency Paetongtarn Shinawatra** for the warm welcome and the generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation since our arrival at this beautiful city of Bangkok.
- I would like to congratulate Madam Chair and her dedicated team for their efforts in convening the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit. This summit presents an invaluable opportunity for us to reflect on the progress we have made and to further strengthen the cooperation within the BIMSTEC community.
- The theme of Thailand's BIMSTEC Chairmanship—**"Prosperous, Resilient, and Open BIMSTEC"**—is highly relevant to our shared aspirations.
- I am encouraged by the initiatives that are taking shape under Thailand's able stewardship. I would particularly like to acknowledge the Chair's initiative in formulating the **BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030**, which we are adopting today.
- Furthermore, we are going to adopt the **Rules of Procedure of BIMSTEC Mechanisms** at this Summit. These Rules of Procedure will serve as guidelines for the orderly conduct of our meetings and help maintain clarity in how decisions are made in BIMSTEC mechanisms.
- While I appreciate the insightful views shared by previous speakers, I would like to offer my thoughts on how we can build a **Prosperous, Resilient, and Open BIMSTEC**.

Building a Prosperous BIMSTEC

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

- A cornerstone of a prosperous BIMSTEC lies in deepening trade and investment flows. Although the **Framework Agreement on the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (FTA)** was signed in 2004, the full realization of the agreement and the establishment of the FTA remain a significant work in progress. As the FTA aims to facilitate trade in goods and services by eliminating trade barriers, it is expected to significantly contribute to the economic growth of the Member States. In this regard, we must expedite the conclusion of the constituent agreements of the FTA to reap its benefits.

- Furthermore, we must explore the possibility of digital cross-border payment systems and trade settlements in local currencies to further ease transactions and reduce dependence on foreign currencies. At present, Myanmar has facilitated “Baht-Kyat” direct payment with Thailand and “Rupee-Kyat” direct payments with India to ensure smooth transaction in border trade.
- Connectivity remains the backbone of regional integration. Strengthening connectivity will unlock new opportunities for trade, tourism, and investment. We must expedite the implementation of the **BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity** to enhance regional connectivity.
- In this regard, the **India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway project** presents a significant opportunity for enhanced regional connectivity.
- I would like to welcome the signing of the **Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation**, which will improve regional maritime connectivity, promote trade, and drive investment in port infrastructure.
- Energy cooperation is another critical pillar for regional prosperity. We must prioritize the conclusion and implementation of the **BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan** to enable more efficient sharing of energy resources and reduce costs for consumers and businesses.
- Food security plays a crucial role in building prosperous BIMSTEC. As our population continues to grow, it is essential to meet the increasing demand.
- As the Lead Country for Agriculture and Food Security, Myanmar, with the support of BIMSTEC Secretariat, lead the drafting and finalization of the **Plan of Action on Strengthening BIMSTEC Agricultural Cooperation (2023-2027)** and the **Plan of Action on BIMSTEC Fisheries and Livestock Cooperation**. I encourage all Member States to implement these Plans of Action effectively in order to address regional food security.
- Myanmar is endowed with abundant fertile soil, water resources, and a favorable climate for agriculture and livestock. I firmly believe that by combining our resources with the advanced agricultural and livestock practices of BIMSTEC member countries, we can not only benefit Myanmar but also strengthen the region's food security. Therefore, I would like to invite BIMSTEC member countries to invest in Myanmar’s agriculture-based industries, fostering mutual growth and regional food security.
- I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate India for providing the BIMSTEC Scholarship in Agriculture for the Member States.

Creating a Resilient BIMSTEC

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

- Among BIMSTEC Member States, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar are prone to the natural disasters. The landlocked countries, Bhutan and Nepal are also facing the effects of the climate change. Recently, a powerful earthquake struck center to Myanmar and some countries in the region have also been affected. More regional cooperation is needed in addressing the challenges of the natural disasters.
- The people of Myanmar would like to express their special gratitude to the Member States for their sympathy, the immediate arrival of relief and assistance, and the quick delivery of relief and food supplies for the victims of the devastating earthquake that struck Myanmar on 28 March. As of 7 am today, the death toll in Myanmar has reached 3,311, with 4,792 injured and 221 people missing.
- It is essential to build resilience within BIMSTEC. As our region faces numerous challenges, including climate change, natural disasters, pandemics, and other unforeseen crises, we must adopt proactive measures for crisis management, disaster preparedness, and environmental sustainability.
- Our nations are already experiencing its effects, and we must enhance cooperation on climate change mitigation and adaptation, with particular focus on the implementation of the **BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Environment and Climate Change**.
- The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for preparedness in health crises. We must fortify healthcare systems and ensure timely access to vaccines, medicines, and medical supplies. The **BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Public Health (2023-2025)** is crucial in enhancing regional cooperation on health, and I urge Member States to support its timely implementation.
- Taking this opportunity, I wish to appreciate World Bank for its proposal to support the activities relating to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR).
- Regional security is another key pillar of resilience. Cybersecurity, maritime security, and combating transnational crimes such as human trafficking, drug smuggling and online scamming require close coordination among our law enforcement agencies.
- We need to work together to combat the growing threat of online frauds locally and internationally. Myanmar is working with neighboring countries to combat online fraud. People who have been trafficked for online fraud activities are being repatriated to their respective countries.

- It requires sustained collaboration among our Member States, not just short term, in combating online fraud as it poses a significant threat to the public's interests.
- I am pleased to mention here that Myanmar has successfully hosted the **4th Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs (4th BNSCs)** on 24-26 July 2024 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Fostering an Open BIMSTEC

- An open BIMSTEC embraces deeper people-to-people connectivity, recognizing the cultural, social, and economic ties that bind us together.
- Tourism is a key driver for fostering mutual understanding and building bridges between our peoples. By promoting sustainable tourism, we can tap into the rich cultural heritage of our region and provide new economic opportunities for local communities. In doing so, I would like to point out that Nepal and Bhutan are landlocked countries and therefore may face difficulties in transportation and communication. So, there is a need to create more opportunities for cooperation among.
- Our youth are the future of BIMSTEC. To equip them for the digital economy, we must expand educational exchange programs, create opportunities for youth entrepreneurship, and promote skills development.
- In this connection, I would also like to commend the Chair for convening the “**BIMSTEC Young Gen Forum**” in Bangkok on April 2-3, 2025 to exchange ideas and explore ways to contribute to the BIMSTEC cooperation.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

- I am encouraged by the growing interest from various regional and international organizations in partnering with BIMSTEC. It is crucial that we maintain strong partnerships with existing partner organizations and explore opportunities to engage with potential development partners to mobilize the expertise and resources needed to implement BIMSTEC projects effectively.
- I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the Eminent Persons’ Group for their report and recommendations on the future direction of BIMSTEC.
- Furthermore, I take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome **Mr. Indra Mani Pandey** as the new Secretary-General of BIMSTEC and extend our heartfelt thanks to **Mr. Tenzin Lekphell**, the former Secretary-General, for his valuable contribution to BIMSTEC.

Madam Chair, Excellencies,

- In conclusion, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Thailand for its leadership and dedication during its BIMSTEC Chairmanship, which have greatly contributed to the progress of BIMSTEC.
- As we look ahead, I would like to congratulate Bangladesh on assuming the role of the next Chairman of BIMSTEC and we will extend our full support and cooperation during its chairmanship.
- I also would like to reiterate our firm commitment to working closely with fellow Member States to shape a future that is not only prosperous, resilient, and open but also just, equitable, and sustainable for all.
- Thank you.

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