



Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

Press Release

BIMSTEC Granted Observer Status at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG)

7 September 2025: The BIMSTEC Secretariat is pleased to announce that the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) has been granted Observer Status at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG). It marks a significant milestone in BIMSTEC's efforts to promote regional cooperation in combating money laundering and financing of terrorism.

The APG, established in 1997 in Bangkok, Thailand, is the largest Financial Action Task Force-Style Regional Body (FSRB). With its Secretariat based in Sydney, Australia, the APG plays a crucial role in advancing Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Standards in the Asia-Pacific region. It also works closely with the global institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, OECD, UNODC, INTERPOL, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and others.

The APG's decision to grant BIMSTEC Observer Status reflects recognition of BIMSTEC's sustained commitment to regional cooperation in anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism. Since establishment of the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC) in 2005, and its Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism, BIMSTEC has consistently advanced initiatives for information exchange, capacity building and development of joint strategies to address illicit financial flows among the member States.

Observer Status at the APG will enable BIMSTEC to engage with the relevant regional and global institutions, benefit from international best practices and contribute to shaping responses to emerging financial crimes. It will reinforce BIMSTEC's collective commitment to peace, stability and sustainable economic development in Bay of Bengal region.

The BIMSTEC Secretariat expresses its appreciation to the APG and its members for their decision to recognise BIMSTEC as an Observer and is looking forward to active engagement in advancing the shared objectives. The Secretariat also thanks the BIMSTEC member States, particularly India, which leads regional cooperation in security sector, for their support in this regard.

BIMSTEC comprises seven countries of the Bay of Bengal region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It pursues regional cooperation in 7 broad sectors: Agriculture & Food Security; Connectivity; Environment & Climate Change; People-to-People Contact; Science, Technology & Innovation; Security; and Trade, Investment & Development. The cooperation also covers 8 sub-sectors: Blue Economy, Mountain Economy, Energy, Disaster Management, Fisheries & Livestock, Poverty Alleviation, Health, and Human Resource Development.

For media inquiries, please contact:

BIMSTEC Secretariat

Email: media@bimstec.org