

**Opening Remarks of the Secretary General of BIMSTEC**  
**Knowledge Sharing Workshop on MSME Facilitation in the BIMSTEC Region**  
**28–29 April 2026 | Bangkok, Thailand**

**Nomaskar,**

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Distinguished Delegates, Good morning to you all!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this Knowledge Sharing Workshop on MSME Facilitation in the BIMSTEC member States. I am thankful to Asian Development Bank for taking this timely and useful initiative. I also thank all resource persons and participants from the BIMSTEC Member States for their presence and contribution.

As you are aware, the BIMSTEC Leaders, at the 6th BIMSTEC Summit, had adopted BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030. It articulates our shared aspiration for a prosperous, resilient and open BIMSTEC region. It underscores the importance of progressively enhancing competitiveness of MSMEs in the BIMSTEC member States as a key driver of inclusive and sustainable growth. Indeed, the importance of having thriving MSMEs in the BIMSTEC member States cannot be overstated.

Distinguished delegates,

MSMEs remain the backbone of our economies. In the BIMSTEC member States, they constitute the overwhelming majority of enterprises, generate substantial employment, contribute a large portion of GDP and exports and play a vital role in driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Besides, MSMEs are also vital for fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and resilience.

However, despite their growing significance, MSMEs continue to face a range of structural challenges. These include limited access to finance and technology, regulatory complexities, constrained market access and gaps in digitalization. Addressing these Challenges effectively requires not only national initiatives by our member States but also meaningful regional cooperation under BIMSTEC.

A number of initiatives under BIMSTEC contribute directly to creating a more enabling environment for MSMEs, including the BIMSTEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework. Our proposed initiative towards enabling cross-border digital payment has the potential to significantly improve MSME ecosystem across the region. In addition, under BIMSTEC, a number of initiatives have been taken to promote business to business linkages. The proposed BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce and Industries, once established, will provide a platform for structured and sustained dialogue to address the challenges faced by MSMEs.

This Workshop is a timely initiative to hold discussions on various aspects of promoting MSMEs under BIMSTEC. It provides a valuable platform for the officials working on MSME facilitation to exchange experiences, share best practices and identify practical pathways for advancing MSME facilitation at the regional level. I am hopeful that the discussions over the next two days will contribute to a better understanding of the shared challenges and will help identify areas where collaborative efforts can yield tangible outcomes.

I request all the participants to engage actively in the deliberations, share their perspectives and explore innovative approaches that can be adapted by the BIMSTEC member States. I wish the Workshop every success, which will contribute to further strengthening MSME ecosystem in the BIMSTEC member States.

Thank you.