Statement delivered by
H.E. U Kyaw Myo Htut, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Virtual)

(Bangkok, 9 March 2023)

Mr. Chair Excellency Don Pramudwinai,

Excellencies,

Excellency Tenzin Lekphell, Secretary General of BIMSTEC,

Distinguished Delegates,

• At the outset, I wish to express my sincere thanks to Thailand for taking tremendous efforts in holding this important meeting.

• It is my great pleasure to attend this Meeting on behalf of the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. U Than Swe. Since I am joining the BIMSTEC Meeting for the very first time, I would like to take this opportunity in conveying my best wishes and greetings to all of you.

• I also wish to congratulate our Chair, Thailand, for excellent chairmanship which will bring to the successful endorsement of “BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030” and the “Rules of Procedures (RoP) for various BIMSTEC Mechanisms” today.

• I commend the work of our SOM leaders and BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) for finalizing RoP for various BIMSTEC Mechanisms i.e. Core, Sectoral and External Relations as well as for finalizing the ToR for Eminent Persons’ Group (EPG) on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC.
Mr. Chair,

- As countries in our region and beyond are tackling global food crisis, the cooperation among the BIMSTEC Member States in Agriculture and Food Security Sector is getting more important and needs special attention.

- As all of you are aware, Myanmar is taking responsibilities as a Lead Country for Agriculture and Food Security Sector of BIMSTEC Cooperation.

- As mandated by our BIMSTEC leaders at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit, Myanmar in consultation with BIMSTEC Secretariat had prepared the “Plan of Action on Strengthening BIMSTEC Agricultural Cooperation (2023-2027)” to further guide our cooperation in a practical manner. Therefore, Myanmar welcomes adoption of the said PoA at the Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture on 10 November 2022 in India.

- At the moment, we are seeking the concurrence/ comments on the “Draft Plan of Action on BIMSTEC Fisheries and Livestock Cooperation” as well as “Draft TOR for Expert Group on Fisheries and Livestock”, which were jointly developed by Myanmar and the BIMSTEC Secretariat in order to advance our cooperation in BIMSTEC Fisheries and Livestock Sub-Sector. In this context, Myanmar has also proposed to hold the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Fisheries and Livestock in July 2023 to further enhance our cooperation in this important Sub-Sector which is vital for our daily livelihood.

- Moreover, allow me to inform the meeting that we have successfully hosted the “Regional Seminar on Food Security and Sustainable Food Systems in BIMSTEC” in January 2023 with the participation of all Member States, to find ways and means for food security in our region.
Mr. Chair,

- The cooperation in BIMSTEC Security Sector, led by India, is, no doubt, one of the most active Sectors under BIMSTEC framework. I therefore appreciate regular holding of various meetings by Member States under this sector.

- I wish to take this opportunity in informing the meeting that Myanmar and India are working closely for the successful holding of the next **BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs (NSC) Meeting**.

- I thank India for holding the 10\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the BIMSTEC **Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC)** in January 2023. Myanmar, Lead Country of BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals, is working together with all BIMSTEC Member States to develop BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Drug Control, Action Plan to Prevent the Illicit Flow of Funds (IFF), BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report.

- I also wish to place on record India’s initiative in regular holding of Annual BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise to further enhance our cooperation and expertise in disaster management as Bay of Bengal is, time and again, affected by natural disaster.

Mr. Chair,

- Myanmar is also committed to hold the **Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (6\textsuperscript{th} BNTPP)** Meeting within this year, after the Special Session of BNPTT to be hosted by Thailand in May 2023.

- Taking this opportunity, I wish to congratulate Bhutan and BIMSTEC Secretariat for jointly organizing the first ever “**BIMSTEC Quiz Competition**” on 15 February 2023 in Thimphu (Bhutan) to celebrate the 25\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of
BIMSTEC. Initiatives like this will definitely foster mutual understanding and cordial relations among our youth.

Mr. Chair,

- I am convinced that the various capacity building programmes under BIMSTEC framework are gaining momentum. I thank India for inviting Myanmar and other BIMSTEC Member States to join the "First Trade Facilitation Capacity Building Program" to be held physically in May 2023 in New Delhi.

- I recall India’s initiatives in organizing "1st Special Course of Diplomats from BIMSTEC Member States" by Foreign Service Institute of India in February 2020. I therefore encourage India and other Member States to organize similar courses for our diplomats as we have already signed "MoU on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/ Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States" during Fifth BIMSTEC Summit last year.

Mr. Chair, Excellencies,

- Before I conclude, I wish to reiterate the importance of adhering principles enshrined in the BIMSTEC Charter by all Member States while intensifying our commitment. Furthermore, with the entry into force of BIMSTEC Charter and adoption of RoPs of various BIMSTEC mechanisms, BIMSTEC will undoubtedly emerge as a rule-based organization.

- I would also like to express our sincere thanks to Secretary General H.E. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell and BIMSTEC Secretariat team for their efficient works as well as for the support to our Chair in successful convening of this important Meeting.

- I thank you.

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