

## **REPORT OF THE FIRST SENIOR TRADE/ECONOMIC OFFICIALS MEETING OF BIMST-EC**

**New Delhi, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2000**

The First Meeting of Senior Trade/Economic Officials of BIMST-EC was held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2000 in New Delhi, India.

### **Agenda Item 1 : Inauguration of the Meeting**

The meeting was inaugurated by the Chairman, Mr P P Prabhu, Commerce Secretary, Government of India. Welcoming the delegates from the BIMST-EC Countries he highlighted the vast potential that existed for economic cooperation including trade growth within the region. He expressed the hope that the Meeting would lead to meaningful initiatives to harness this potential. The list of delegates is at Annexure I.

### **Agenda Item 2 : Adoption of Agenda**

The Meeting adopted the agenda, which appears as Annexure II.

### **Agenda Item 3 : Progress Report**

Member Countries exchanged views on the progress in the six identified sectors of cooperation.

Bangladesh, the lead country for the Trade and Investment Sector, reported that the Sectoral Meeting on Trade and Investment had been held in Dhaka in November 1999. It was decided that steps should be taken to hold Meetings in various sub-sectors pertaining to trade and investment within 2000. India mentioned that it would be organizing a technical workshop for discussing ways and means of combating diseases and enhancing productivity in the coconut and spices sub-sector. A conference for identifying possibilities of collaboration in the automotive sub-sector will also be hosted by India.

Sri Lanka reported on the Tourism Sector, for which they are the lead country. Sri Lanka said that the Expert Group Meeting on Tourism was held in August 1999 in Colombo. Nepal participated in this Meeting as an Observer. An Action Plan comprising ten areas of cooperation was adopted. It has been decided to observe 2001 as the "Visit BIMST-EC" year. The next meeting of the Expert Group is proposed to be held in May 2000 at which Member Countries are expected to review the progress on the Action Plan and to decide on the future course of action.

Myanmar reported on the Energy Sector and mentioned that they had set up a national level committee to oversee this cooperation. They informed the Meeting that the Energy Sector Committee of Experts/Officials Meeting would be held in Yangon on 5 – 6 June 2000.

The Meeting noted with interest the potential for cooperation in New and Renewable Sources of Energy. India made a presentation in this regard covering wind energy; photovoltaics, solar water heating, bio-mass and bio-gas energy as well as Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC). In this connection, India suggested a project for wind mapping to locate areas in Member Countries where wind energy can be exploited. Another project could also study the use of solar lanterns, use of agricultural waste such as coconut fibre as bio-mass etc. India also offered to provide technology free of cost in respect of silk reeling ovens based on gasified wood which would be 60% more efficient than wood, as well as set up demonstration units in Member Countries. Other areas discussed in the Energy Sector included industrial energy efficiency. It was agreed that India would prepare a concept paper on the possible cooperation in the Energy Sector and circulated it before the Sectoral Meeting on Energy to be held in June in Myanmar.

