

**THE BIMST-EC FORUM ON TOURISM HELD
ON 30 – 31 OCTOBER 1998 IN CALCUTTA, INDIA
WAS REPRESENTED BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER
OF TOURISM & CIVIL AVIATION
HON. H.B. SEMASINGHE**

It is commonly observed that Tourism exists as the thrust industry in the economies of the BIMST-EC countries contributing heavily for their socio economic development unparalleled to any other. This is indicative in increasing foreign exchange earnings, speedy employment generation and improving living standards of the people.

Sri Lanka contribution will be basically in the following areas.

(A) HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Sri Lanka with its wider experience over the past thirty five years in organized Human Resource Development will assist Member countries in Net Working HRD Training, component which is vitally required for quality Tourism.

(B) RELAXATION OF FRONTIER FORMALITIES

Sri Lanka Government has taken lot of efforts in facilitating frontier formalities such as visas, custom regulations, access and other regularly issues. Government has already decided to permit entry of bona – fide Tour Groups from India without prior visit Visa. This would be possible to expand to other member countries too.

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Sri Lanka has for its credit lot of experiences on sustained Tourism Development while achieving high levels of Green productivity. These success stories could be offered to be shared by the member countries where infrastructure Development has taken place having the Eco-system well protected.

(D) JOINT TOURISM PROMOTION

Sri Lanka will contribute fully for Joint Tourism Promotion in the Region by providing promotional material, organizing education seminar, fam tours and offering a convention center equipped with all required logistics.

(E) INTER COUNTRY BUDDHIST CIRCUIT

Sri Lanka has a historically valued Buddhist culture to share with many of the member countries whose religion is predominantly Buddhism. There is lot of potential for expansion in this sphere.

(F) CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity in the areas of Tourism packages is another direction Sri Lanka is seriously taking note of for Tourism Promotion. This would include coordination with Air Lines, Transport

operators, Hotels lodges etc. Sri Lanka will also contribute to develop inter regional transport net works with special focus to land and sea transport other than widening the air corridor.

(G) ADVENTURE TOURISM

Adventure Tourism through sports and trekking is another area where Sri Lanka would offer opportunities for inter regional Tourism promotion having to its credit international reputations and well developing infrastructure facilities.