



BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI- SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

BIMSTEC LEADERS' RETREAT 2016 OUTCOME DOCUMENT

16 October 2016

Goa, India

We, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, the State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Prime Minister of Nepal, the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, met in Goa on 16 October 2016 for the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit.

We express our deep sorrow at the passing of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej whose contributions to global development have been recognised by the United Nations in its First Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award. We convey our heartfelt condolences to the Royal Family, the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand.

We wish to express our appreciation for the opportunity of a Summit between BRICS and BIMSTEC Leaders to discuss matters of mutual interest and exchange views on important global and regional issues including the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We believe this joint Summit will lead to greater trust and understanding among countries of the two groupings, and will promote further cooperation for their mutual benefit.

Recalling the principles enshrined in the 1997 Bangkok Declaration, we reemphasize that cooperation within BIMSTEC will be based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political

independence, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit.

We agree to intensify our efforts to realise the objectives and purposes of BIMSTEC as outlined in the 1997 Bangkok Declaration, and reaffirm that BIMSTEC has considerable potential for economic and social development through mutually beneficial cooperation in the identified priority areas. We pledge to work collectively towards making BIMSTEC stronger, more effective, and result oriented.

We recall the Third BIMSTEC Summit Declaration issued in Nay Pyi Taw on 04 March 2014, and wish to reiterate our deep commitment to BIMSTEC as an organization promoting regional cooperation and integration in the Bay of Bengal region. We recognize that our geographical contiguity, abundant natural and human resources, rich historical linkages and shared cultural heritage provide BIMSTEC the ideal platform to promote peace, stability and prosperity in our region.

Recognizing that terrorism continues to remain the single most significant threat to peace and stability in our region, we reiterate our strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stress that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever. We condemn in the strongest terms the recent barbaric terror attacks in the region. We strongly believe that our fight against terrorism should not only seek to disrupt and eliminate terrorists, terror organisations and networks, but should also identify, hold accountable and take strong measures against States who encourage, support and finance terrorism, provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups, and falsely extol their virtues. There should be no glorification of terrorists as martyrs. We recognize the need for urgent measures to counter and prevent the spread of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. We express our determination to take concrete measures to step up cooperation and coordination among our law enforcement, intelligence and security organisations.

We commit to expedite the signing of the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, and to early ratification of the

BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking.

Being acutely aware of the growing threat to our planet from climate change, and in particular to the lives and livelihoods of peoples in the Bay of Bengal region, we resolve to strengthen cooperation to protect and preserve the environment. We stress the necessity of pursuing sustainable development and of the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change at the regional and national levels.

We encourage closer cooperation in disaster management through joint exercises, sharing of information including early warning system, adoption of preventive measures, joint action on relief and rehabilitation, and capacity building. We agree to build on the existing capacities in the region and to explore the possibility of establishing partnerships with other regional and international entities in this sector.

Being convinced that the development of connectivity in various forms and manifestations is the key to promote regional integration, we express satisfaction at the continuing efforts and initiatives to advance multi-modal physical connectivity (air, rail, roads and waterways) in the BIMSTEC region. We note with satisfaction the progress achieved in implementation of the recommendations of the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study. We agree to explore the possibility of having a BIMSTEC Motor Vehicle Agreement.

We reiterate our commitment to sustainable agriculture and food security and agree to deepen cooperation in the Agriculture Sector, including crops, livestock and horticulture as well as to intensified cooperative efforts towards increased productivity and yields of agricultural produce in the region.

Being aware that the Bay of Bengal region is home to over thirty percent of the world's fishermen, we recognize that cooperation in sustainable development of fisheries in this region has the potential to make a significant contribution towards ensuring food security and improving

livelihoods of people in our region and agree to deepen cooperation in this Sector.

We recognize the enormous potential that the development of the blue economy holds for our region, and agree to explore ways to deepen our cooperation in areas such as aquaculture (both inland and coastal), hydrography, seabed mineral exploration, coastal shipping, eco-tourism and renewable ocean energy with the objective of promoting holistic and sustainable development of our region.

We recognize that the benefits derived from mountain regions are essential for sustainable development. We call for greater efforts towards the conservation of the mountain eco-systems including biodiversity.

We welcome the growing cooperation in energy among BIMSTEC Member States. We decide to expedite the signing of the BIMSTEC Memorandum of Understanding on Grid Interconnection. We direct that steps be taken for early operationalization of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre. Given the high potential of energy sources in the region particularly renewable and clean energy sources, we agree to accelerate our efforts to develop a comprehensive plan for energy cooperation with a view to augment interconnectivity and promoting regional energy trade.

We renew our commitment to the early conclusion of BIMSTEC Free Trade Area negotiations, and direct the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) and Working Groups to expedite the finalization of its constituent Agreements. We also direct the TNC to expedite the negotiations on the Agreements on Services and Investment. We agree to take concrete steps to enhance trade facilitation. We also agree to offer special and differential treatment for Least Developed Countries for their integration into the regional economy.

Recognizing the need for development, access and availability of technology -including for SMEs- for promoting sustainable development across sectors, we direct for early finalization of the Memorandum of

Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Sri Lanka.

We agree to continue our collective efforts to address public health issues. We direct the BIMSTEC Network of National Centres of Coordination in Traditional Medicine and its Task Force to expand and deepen cooperation in this sector.

We resolve to create a deeper understanding and trust across the region and reiterate our commitment to promote people-to-people contact at various levels among Member States. We note with satisfaction that two Meetings of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) have been held and encourage BNPTT to organize regular consultations and programmes with stakeholders from the Member States with a view to intensifying people-to-people contact. We agree to expand linkages among our educational and research institutions.

Acknowledging the civilizational, historical and cultural linkages in our region, we recognize the rich potential for development of tourism and reiterate our keen interest in taking concrete steps to promote intra-BIMSTEC tourism including specialized tourist circuits and eco-tourism. In particular, we encourage the development of Buddhist Tourist Circuit and Temple Tourist Circuit within the region.

We decide to expedite the establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory in Bhutan, which will serve as a repository for information on cultural industries.

We reaffirm our commitment to effective implementation of the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action as adopted at the Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation held in Nepal in January 2012 and endorsed by us at the Third BIMSTEC Summit held in Myanmar in March 2014.

We note with satisfaction that the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka has become functional since September 2014 and also

appreciate the contributions made by the Government of Bangladesh in operationalizing the Secretariat.

Recognizing the year 2017 as the Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of the BIMSTEC, we direct the BIMSTEC Secretariat to plan a series of activities to celebrate the Twentieth Anniversary and also direct our authorities to undertake such activities.

Reaffirming the imperative of making regional cooperation under BIMSTEC effective, we remain committed to hold Meetings of all BIMSTEC mechanisms in a timely and regular manner at the designated level.

We the leaders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand wish to express our profound appreciation of the initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to invite BIMSTEC Leaders' to the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit, and for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements during the Summit.

We look forward to meeting in Nepal for the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit in 2017.



**Secretariat
Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral
Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**

Priority Communication/Urgent

BIMSTEC/SEC/09/02

The Secretariat of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation [BIMSTEC] in Dhaka presents its compliments to the Ministries of External Affairs/Foreign Affairs of the BIMSTEC Member States and to the Diplomatic Missions of the BIMSTEC Member States in Dhaka and has the honour to refer to the Outcome Document of the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat 2016 which was held in Goa, India on 16 October 2016.

In addition to the Outcome Document, the Leaders of the BIMSTEC during the informal consultation at the Retreat agreed to the following Agenda of Action:

I. Trade and Investment

- a. To conclude BIMSTEC Framework Agreement on Transit, Transshipment and movement of Vehicular Traffic
- b. To conclude BIMSTEC Trade Facilitation Agreement
- c. To fast track BIMSTEC Free Trade Area negotiations
- d. To conclude BIMSTEC Agreement on Mutual Assistance on Customs Matters

II. Transport and Communication

- a. To conclude BIMSTEC Coastal Shipping Agreement
- b. To seek greater physical and economic connectivity between South and South East Asia
- c. To prepare a master plan for BIMSTEC Connectivity
- d. To discuss BIMSTEC Economical, Technical and Infrastructure Cooperation

III. Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

- a. To convene Annual Meeting of National Security Chiefs of Member States on Information and Intelligence Sharing
- b. To discuss the Cooperation on Countering Radicalization and Terrorism

IV. Energy

- a. To expand BIMSTEC Energy Trade

V. Technology

- a. To expedite the setting up of the BIMSTEC Centre for Technology Transfer

VI. Environment and Disaster Management

- a. To undertake Annual BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise

VII. Agriculture

- a. To discuss greater BIMSTEC Agriculture Cooperation

VIII. To set up BIMSTEC Eminent Persons' Group

IX. To develop outcome oriented BIMSTEC 2030 Agenda

The Secretariat, in order to implement the above Agenda of Action, shall coordinate with the Lead Countries of the respective priority areas and shall keep the esteemed Ministries informed.

The Secretariat of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation [BIMSTEC] in Dhaka avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministries of External Affairs/Foreign Affairs of the BIMSTEC Member States and to the Diplomatic Missions of the BIMSTEC Member States in Dhaka the assurances of its highest consideration.



Dhaka, 19 October 2016

**Ministries of External Affairs /Foreign Affairs of the BIMSTEC Member States
[FAO: National Focal Points of the BIMSTEC]**

**Diplomatic Missions of the BIMSTEC Member States in Dhaka
[FAO: Focal Points of the BIMSTEC/Members of the BIMSTEC Working Group]**