

**Address by Secretary General of BIMSTEC at
Workshop on Cross-border Transmission Lines Optimization of the
BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan
(18-20 February 2024, Dhaka, Bangladesh)**

- Excellency, Md. Habibur Rahman, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources
- Mr. Abdul Motaleb Sarker, Director General (SAARC and BIMSTEC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Edimon Ginting, Country Director of ADB
- Distinguished Participants, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Namaskar! A very good morning to you all!

It gives me immense pleasure to address this Workshop. I thank Asian Development Bank (ADB) for taking the initiative of organizing this useful Workshop and for making a very informative presentation. I am grateful to the Government of India for supporting the BIMSTEC Secretariat for co-sponsoring this Workshop. I thank the Government of Bangladesh for facilitating this Workshop. I extend a warm welcome to all the participants from BIMSTEC member States and thank them for their presence.

Distinguished participants,

To sustain their high economic growth, the BIMSTEC member States require access to adequate, affordable, clean, and sustainable sources of energy, which is a fundamental pre-requisite for realization of the SDGs. The BIMSTEC member States are heavily dependent on imported energy resources and energy security has emerged as a key area of cooperation within BIMSTEC. The BIMSTEC member States have been striving to promote energy security by facilitating intra-regional energy trade as well as developing hydro-power and other renewable sources of energy. Political consensus is thereon forging cooperation in energy sector.

Distinguished Participants,

In 2018, the BIMSTEC member States concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishment of BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection to facilitate electricity trade in the region. The MoU provides a broad framework for the Parties to cooperate for connecting their grids, with a view to promoting intra-regional power transmission and trade in electricity. A BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee (BGICC) has been established to coordinate implementation of grid interconnection and trade in electricity. The Committee has held two rounds of meetings and implementation of the provisions of the MOU has begun.

The need for making quick progress in establishing a region-wide electricity grid cannot be overstressed. A common BIMSTEC Grid will serve the interests of all the member BIMSTEC States and enhance their energy security. I am hopeful that the Master Plan Study prepared by ADB will assist our expert groups and policy makers to identify the bottlenecks and missing links in developing a regional grid without duplicating the already existing bilateral and trilateral initiatives among the member States.

Distinguished Participants,

I am glad to inform you that BIMSTEC member States have also signed a Memorandum of Association (MOA) for establishing a BIMSTEC Energy Centre, to coordinate, facilitate and strengthen energy cooperation. The Governing Board of the BIMSTEC Energy Center has been constituted and 1st meeting of the Board was held last year. The BIMSTEC Energy Center, which is being set up in Bengaluru in India, is expected to be fully operational later this year.

Optimizing cross-border transmission requires a multidisciplinary approach that integrates technical, economic, regulatory and environmental considerations to create a reliable, resilient and sustainable energy infrastructure that supports regional energy integration and promotes socioeconomic development.

I believe that this 2 day Workshop will play a crucial role in fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, capacity building and stakeholder engagement to advance regional energy integration and would facilitate finalization of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study.

I thank ADB once more for organizing this Workshop. I wish this Workshop a great success. I am confident it will achieve its goals. I thank you all for your kind attention. Have a good day.