



BIMSTEC

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation



NEWSLETTER

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Editorial



Welcome to the October-December edition of the BIMSTEC Newsletter. As we near the end of the year, we are happy that lives are getting back to normal. Connectivity and economic activities are gradually reviving. BIMSTEC meetings are being held as scheduled although many are still using the virtual format. Virtual meetings are cost effective but they cannot replace the value of in-person meetings in terms of the people to people connectivity and relationship building. Often, results arising out of the informal meetings are not as intended. Therefore, the Secretariat would like to urge Member States to consider hosting in-person meetings where possible, especially in key areas.

We are happy to mention that during the period, we hold two Special Meetings of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee to discuss and finalize the Rules of Procedure for the BIMSTEC Mechanisms that will help streamlining the work of the organization. In addition, I believe we are also one step closer to finalize the Rules of Origin in the Trade sector after the holding of Twenty First Meeting of the Working Group on Rules of Origin. With the Twenty second meeting being agreed to be held in -person, we hope that this vital sector will move forward that can provide the real benefit to the people of this region.

This quarter also saw the holding of First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Environment and Climate Change and the First Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Expert Group on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund. We hope that the momentum created in these areas will continue seamlessly in the future and that tangible outcomes can be seen.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy and Prosperous New Year 2023.

Tenzin Lekphell
Secretary General, BIMSTEC

Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (S-BPWC)



As agreed at the 5th BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee Meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand from 13-15 September 2022, a Special session of BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee Meeting anchored by the BIMSTEC Secretariat was held virtually in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 10 October 2022 with the participation of all the Member States. The Meeting was held to discuss the Rules of Procedure for the Core BIMSTEC Mechanisms and the Terms of Reference of the Eminent Persons' Group. The discussions will be continued at the Special session of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee Meeting proposed to be held in person in Dhaka, Bangladesh in December 2022.

Twenty First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO)



The Twenty First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO) was held virtually in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 18-19 October 2022. Bangladesh. With the participation of all the Member States, the Meeting deliberated the draft text of the Rules for Determination of the Origin of Good for Agreement on BIMSTEC Free Trade Area as well as the Operational Certification Procedures for the Rules of Origin for the BIMSTEC FTA. While the Meeting agreed and updated most of the draft texts, it also felt the need to meet in person for effective deliberation and negotiation on certain sections. The delegates also worked on updating the transposition of BIMSTEC Product Specific Rules from HS2007 to HS2017.

Second Meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate



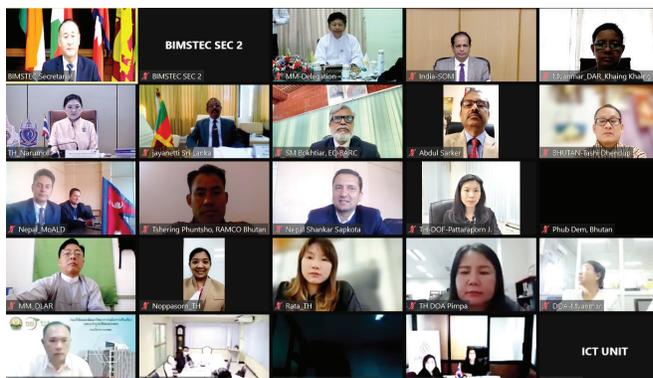
The Second Meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (BCWC) was held at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) in Noida, India on 01 November 2022. The Meeting reviewed the draft text of the Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the BIMSTEC Secretariat for establishing the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate in India. The Meeting also discussed the need for an Administrative and Financial Framework for the functioning of the BCWC as well as the appointment of an Acting Director for the Centre until the organization is fully established as envisaged.

Second Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate



The Second Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate was held back to back with the Second Meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) in Noida, India on 2 November 2022. The Meeting suggested the requirement of Ocean and Wave modeling, visibility and fog forecast, impact based forecast, guidance for extreme weather events, real-time observation, capacity building, installation of AWS over high terrain and their operational maintenance, installation of Radars and Radio sonde stations over the BIMSTEC region among others. The Meeting also made various recommendations to be considered by the Governing Board, including real time data sharing, creation of a website, training and development of a strategic plan for BCWC.

Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Agriculture



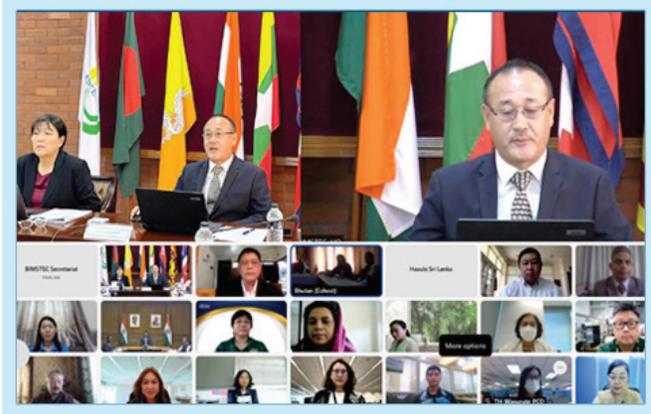
The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Agriculture was hosted by India virtually in New Delhi on 9 November 2022. The Meeting reviewed the progress of activities in the identified common projects and also finalized the Plan of Action on Strengthening BIMSTEC Agricultural Cooperation (2023-2027). The Memorandum of Understanding between the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and BIMSTEC was also finalized for approval. The Meeting also agreed to include the Fisheries and Livestock Sub-sector under the purview of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Agriculture (SOM-A) and the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture (BAMM).

Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture



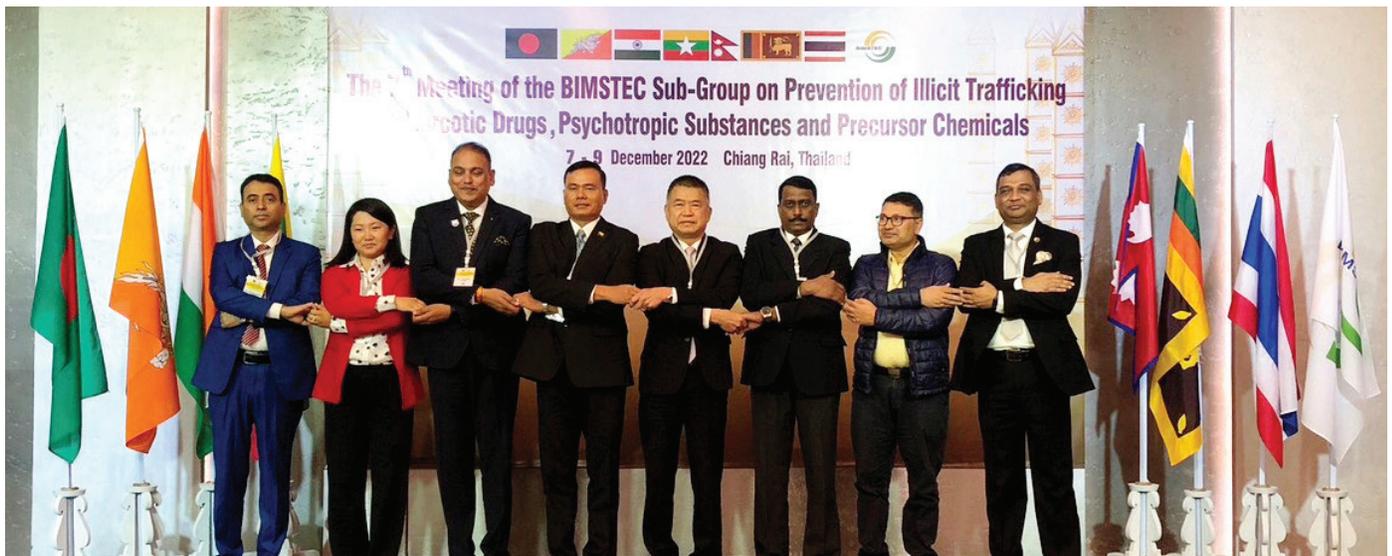
The Second BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture was virtually hosted by India on 10 November 2022 in New Delhi. In their Joint Statement, the Ministers called for expediting the implementation of the common identified projects and deepening cooperation in agricultural R&D to increase productivity and profitability of farmers through sustainable and climate resilient agriculture to attain food security and nutrition. The Meeting also approved the Plan of Action on strengthening BIMSTEC Agricultural Cooperation (2023-2027) proposed by the Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Agriculture. The Ministers appreciated the Government of India for providing fully funded six scholarships at the Masters level, and six scholarships for PhD programmes in Agriculture.

First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Environment and Climate Change



The First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Environment and Climate Change was held on 6 December 2022 in Thimphu, Bhutan virtually. All Member States participated in the meeting hosted and chaired by the Lead Country for Environment and Climate Change, Bhutan. The Meeting deliberated and updated the draft Concept Paper on 'Potential Areas for Cooperation among the BIMSTEC Member States on Environment and Climate Change' developed by Bhutan. The participants also discussed and deliberated on the Draft Plan of Action developed by Bhutan which would be further circulated amongst the Member States for their inputs and comments.

Seventh Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals (SG-NDPSPC)



The Seventh Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals (SG-NDPSPC) was held in Chiang Rai, Thailand from 7-9 December 2022. Member States shared their respective experiences and urged for more collaboration and real time information sharing. The Meeting updated the Plan of Action on Drug Control with a view to finalizing it at the Eighth SG-NDPSPC Meeting. The Meeting also discussed capacity building programmes, the creation of an Electronic Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (BDOMD) as well as the publication of the BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report.

BIMSTEC Workshop on the Role of Public-Private Partnership in Developing Value Chain Management

BIMSTEC Workshop on the Role of Public-Private Partnership in Developing Value Chain Management through Post-Harvest Management was hosted virtually in Thimphu, Bhutan, on 13-14 October 2022. The workshop was represented by the Governments of the BIMSTEC Member States, as well as representatives of Bhutan's private sector. During the Workshop, success stories and ideas regarding the way forward on Post-Harvest Management were shared. The representatives of the Member States also shared their experiences of Public-Private Partnership in value chain development through post-harvest management of agricultural products. They also identified the issues and challenges faced by private stakeholders as well as the public in developing the value chain through post-harvest management.



Secretary General Participated the “Seeds Without Borders: Regional cooperation for seed sharing”



Participating in the “Seeds Without Borders: Regional cooperation for seed sharing” Workshop being held in Thimphu, Bhutan, on 22-23 November 2022, the Secretary General of BIMSTEC H.E. Tenzin Lekphell observed that six out of the seven BIMSTEC Member States Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are signatories to the Seeds Without Borders Agreement. He looks forward to strengthening collaboration between BIMSTEC and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in agriculture development and seed promotion in particular.

Secretary General Tenzin Lekphell participated in the No Money for Terror (NMFT) Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing



The Secretary General of BIMSTEC, H.E. Tenzin Lekphell, attended the Third ‘No Money for Terror’ (NMFT) Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing in New Delhi on 18-19 November 2022, at the invitation of the Government of India. The Conference was aimed at building on gains of the two previous conferences held in Paris in April 2018 and Melbourne in November 2019 to work towards enhancing global cooperation to combat terrorist financing.

First *Ad-Hoc* Expert Group Meeting on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund



The BIMSTEC Secretariat hosted the First *Ad-Hoc* Expert Group Meeting on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund virtually in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 19 December 2022. The Meeting finalized the draft Concept Paper on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund and agreed that the work of drafting a comprehensive strategy be proposed for technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Meeting also finalized the Terms of Reference for the development of the strategy by ADB.

The Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (S-BPWC)



The Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee was held in person in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 21-22 December 2022 with the participation of all the Member States. The Meeting deliberated extensively on the draft Rules of Procedure for the Core BIMSTEC Mechanisms. The Meeting finalized the draft Rules of Procedure for the BIMSTEC Sectoral Mechanisms, draft Terms of Reference for the Eminent Persons' Group on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC and draft Procedures and Rules for the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission.



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