

2nd BIMSTEC SUMMIT

Second BIMSTEC Summit Declaration

13 November 2008, New Delhi.

We, the Chief Adviser of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, the Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Nepal, the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand met in New Delhi, India on November 13, 2008 for the Second BIMSTEC Summit Meeting;

Recognising that with our geographical contiguity, abundant natural and human resources as well as rich historical and cultural heritage, BIMSTEC Member States have great potential for economic and social development which provides a sound basis for mutually beneficial cooperation,

Acknowledging that our economies and societies have become increasingly inter-linked and inter-dependent,

Realizing that globalization has brought about increased opportunity for economic and social development, and that increasing complexity of economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world highlights the need for concerted regional efforts to respond to these challenges,

Noting the progress made in promoting and strengthening active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, technical and scientific fields for attaining the purposes and objectives of BIMSTEC,

Recognizing that the recent extraordinary volatility in fuel and food prices not only puts our resources and growth prospects under pressure, but also hits hardest the poorest sections of our population calling for timely and effective responses,

Recognising the adverse impact of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of our populations and the serious threat it poses to our region,

Convinced that through our close cooperation we can maximize the potential of our capabilities and resource endowments for economic and social development of our states and peoples,

Recognising the threat that terrorism poses to peace, stability and economic progress in the region, emphasise the need for close cooperation in combating all forms of terrorism and transnational crimes,

Reiterating our commitment to BIMSTEC as a regional cooperation grouping,

Do hereby:-

Underscore our resolve to abide by the founding objectives and principles of BIMSTEC.

Take note with satisfaction of the progress of our cooperation in the energy sector and in the establishment of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre in India.

Take note with satisfaction of the progress and substantive outcome of our cooperation in the environment and disaster management sector and in the establishment of the BIMSTEC Weather and Climate Centre in India.

Take note with satisfaction of the progress made in the establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission and the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory in Bhutan.

Take note with satisfaction of the finalization of the BIMSTEC Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking.

Take note with satisfaction of the progress made on the negotiations of the Agreement on Trade in Goods with agreed General Rules of Origin and Product Specific Rules under the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area.

Direct the BIMSTEC Trade Negotiating Committee to conclude the negotiations on Trade in Goods as soon as possible, and to continue its efforts for Agreements on Services and Investments.

Agree that improved transportation and communication linkages and greater connectivity between our Member States is an important element for the BIMSTEC process that will lead to direct benefits to our peoples through increased trade and investment, tourism, and people-to-people contacts. In this regard, we acknowledge and note the BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS) conducted by the ADB in association with the BIMSTEC Member States as an important first step in identifying the bottlenecks and suggesting ways to overcome them.

Agree to harness the region's natural, cultural and historical endowments in order to enhance intra-BIMSTEC tourism as well as tourism from other countries.

Agree to continue our cooperation in the area of energy and decide to hold the second BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Conference in Thailand in 2009.

Agree to cooperate in expanding the technology base of Member States through collaborations and partnerships targeted towards micro, small and medium scale enterprises and decide to establish a BIMSTEC Technology Transfer/Exchange Facility in Sri Lanka.

Agree to continue cooperation for the sustainable use of marine resources through effective conservation and management of resources in the Bay of Bengal and decide to include inland fisheries in the scope of cooperation in this area.

Agree to continue and strengthen our cooperation on poverty alleviation in the context of ensuring food security for the vulnerable people in the region and decide to hold the second BIMSTEC Ministerial Conference on Poverty Alleviation in Nepal in 2009 and to establish a BIMSTEC Poverty Alleviation Centre in Bangladesh.

Agree to expand cooperation in culture to include cultural values, diversity and heritage and decide to support the establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory in Bhutan.

Agree to continue cooperation in the field of agriculture and decide to initiate short and long term joint research programmes to increase productivity and yields in our region.

Agree to continue our collective efforts to combat public health threats from emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases as well as to cooperate in the area of traditional medicine by setting up a BIMSTEC Network of National Centres of Coordination in Traditional Medicine.

Agree to augment our efforts to further promote people-to-people contacts among our States and decide that India will take the lead to establish a BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks.

Agree to share experience and enhance collaborative efforts to jointly face the current global financial crisis, while taking into account the needs of the vulnerable sections of the society.

Agree to intensify our efforts to strengthen cooperation in all areas of activities within the framework of BIMSTEC so as to promote regional cooperation and cohesion.

Agree to establish an institutional structure to serve as a focal point for coordination and to follow up on decisions taken by BIMSTEC Summits, Ministerial Conferences and other official meetings, and decide to establish a Permanent Secretariat for BIMSTEC.

We, the leaders from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand, express our appreciation to the Government of India for its hospitality and for the arrangements made for the Summit.