

National Statement by Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Mr. Devendra Karki at the Third BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Meeting to held in virtual mode from Kathmandu on 20 April 2022

Madam Chair
Honourable Ministers
Your Excellencies, the Secretaries
Your Excellency the BIMSTEC Secretary General, and
Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, I would like to Congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election as the Chair of this meeting.

I express my sincere appreciation to the Secretary General His Excellency Tenzin Lekphell and his team at the BIMSTEC Secretariat for the excellent preparations made and for the professional support provided to Nepal in hosting the meeting.

Excellencies,

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC. Our organization that links the Himalayas with the Bay of Bengal, and the mountains with the oceans has been effortful to rediscover the common heritage, revive connectivity, and rekindle hope and optimism for the peoples in the region.

The historic Fifth BIMSTEC Summit, held recently in Colombo, Sri Lanka has revived the thrust of the regional process. It has helped culminate the initiatives that began during the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2018. The adoption of the Charter and three other legal instruments were important milestones achieved in Colombo.

Needless to say, BIMSTEC is a sector-driven regional cooperation organization. And, energy is one of the key areas deemed to be instrumental in realizing a just, prosperous, and sustainable Bay of Bengal Region.

Having said this however, BIMSTEC countries are highly vulnerable in terms of energy security, the implications of which will inevitably erode our economic initiatives and development projects, ultimately leading to a rise in poverty level.

This has to be reversed. We must enhance regional energy cooperation grounded on sustainable, renewable and clean energy solutions.

Distinguished Delegates,

In recent years, Nepal has made important strides in the energy sector.

Nepal has tremendous hydropower potential that can cater to the needs of the entire region. The necessity is to harness it up to the optimum scale for the benefit not only of Nepal but also of the region.

I take this opportunity to state that, with the operationalization of 456MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, Nepal will soon become an energy surplus country round the year. As several other hydro projects are underway, we are looking for new avenues to export our energy power. We want to be connected with our neighbors through the grid and non-grid solutions.

Of course, some advancements have been made in realizing energy cooperation with our neighbours. South Asia's first 69 km long cross-border petroleum products pipeline from Motihari in India to Amlekhgunj in Nepal has been launched. It is a testimony that mutual trust, cooperation, and partnership among neighbors in the region can optimize and scale up our common development efforts.

Nepal has been effortful to accelerate energy and climate actions in line with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

We have made substantial progress in providing clean and reliable energy to our people. As a result, 93% of our population has access to electricity.

We are committed to ensuring by 2030 that 15% of our total energy demand is supplied from clean energy resources and that by 2045 we will decarbonize our economy in all sectors and reach a net zero-emission scenario.

We stress a coordinated action plan among the BIMSTEC Member States to ensure a carbon-neutral region. We need to chart out short, medium, and longer-term Power trading projects that can gradually shift to the sustainable energy sector.

The Second Energy Ministerial meeting held in Bangkok in 2010 envisioned a BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study. We call for the early realization of the Master Plan Study.

Besides the technical aspects relating to grid interconnections, our common spirit and the willpower of the Member States can play a crucial role in the deeper integration through effective grid connectivity and reduce the perils of energy security in the BIMSTEC region.

Excellencies,

It is a matter of satisfaction that the institutionalization process of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre has gained momentum in recent times.

It was the First BIMSTEC Energy Ministerial Meeting held in New Delhi, India, that called for the establishment of an Energy Centre in the region.

The noble understanding behind the conception of the Energy Centre was to coordinate, cooperate and explore the possibility of BIMSTEC Member States on energy cooperation with the assistance of development partners.

Besides formulating policy frameworks in consultation with the Member States, the Centre is also expected to provide a platform for sharing information and best practices concerning energy efficiency and non-conventional energy sources.

We express happiness on the fact the Energy Centre is being operationalized soon.

I conclude, Madam Chair, by reiterating that every crisis comes with an opportunity. We must make the current COVID-19 crisis a gateway to a greener, safer and more sustainable Bay of Bengal region. A robust and renewed regional partnership on energy will be critical in this regard.

Thank you.