

8TH MEETING OF AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS OF BIMSTEC COUNTRIES HELD

Relevant for: Economy | Topic: Agriculture Issues and related constraints

India hosted the 8th Meeting of Agriculture Experts of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Countries virtually Today. Dr Trilochan Mohapatra, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research & Education & Director General, ICAR chaired the daylong meeting with Dr. Thanda Kyi, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Republic of the Union of Myanmar Co-Chair. Experts of Agricultural Ministries from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand participated in the meeting.



The Chairman highlighted the UN Food System Summit 2021 and the transformations that are happening in the agriculture and food systems globally. He exhorted to enhance the engagement and deepen the cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors amongst the BIMSTEC Member States by encouraging the exchange of knowledge, germplasm, students and experts. He also emphasized addressing biosafety and biosecurity concerns and promoting digital agriculture along with the trade of technologies for developing resilient agriculture, food systems and value chains.

The BIMSTEC Member States appreciated the greater engagement of India offering six slots of scholarships each for Master and PhD programmes in agriculture and its other initiatives for capacity development and training including the development of seed sectors. The cooperation in the areas of high impact transboundary diseases of livestock and poultry; aquatic animal diseases and bio-security in aquaculture and digitalization to promote precision farming was also discussed in the meeting.

The BIMSTEC provides a unique link between South and South-East Asia with 5 countries -

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka from South Asia and two countries - Myanmar and Thailand from South-East Asia coming together on one platform for cooperation in 14 key economic and social sectors of the economy.

The BIMSTEC was founded in 1997 with an ambition to pursue mutual trade, connectivity and cultural, technical and economic development in the region. Initially, six sectors- trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries were included for sectoral cooperation which was later expanded to 14 areas of cooperation. Agriculture is one of the 14 sectors. As about 1.7 billion+ people i.e., 22 per cent of the global population live in BIMSTEC countries, agriculture & allied activities are central to the economic and social development of the region.

The 4th Summit of BIMSTEC Heads of States held on August 30-31, 2018 at Kathmandu emphasised deepening the cooperation in the agriculture sector to attain food and nutritional security, preserve and promote knowledge on traditional farming and reduce costs, enhance income and mitigate risks for farming communities. Likewise, the 1st meeting of the agriculture Ministers of BIMSTEC held on July 12, 2019 in Myanmar also reiterated stronger agricultural cooperation among BIMSTEC countries. This has assumed even greater significance in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the food system.

The Senior Officers of DARE and ICAR including Additional Secretary, DARE and Director, DARE; Deputy Director Generals and Assistant Director Generals of ICAR, Director, IARI, and representatives of Ministry of External Affairs joined the virtual meeting at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.

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