



BIMSTEC-IFPRI CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE Inclusive Agricultural Transformation with Climate Change in BIMSTEC Countries

October 10-11, 2023 | Paro, Bhutan

CONCEPT NOTE

Background:

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an intergovernmental regional organization comprising seven Member States (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand) lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal. The organization acts as a bridge between South and South-East Asia and has huge potential for growth and development. BIMSTEC has identified seven Sectors of Cooperation (SoC) with each Member State leading a SoC to take the initiatives forward and promote cooperation among the Member States.

Climate change is a global phenomenon and an integral part of development agenda. The adverse impact of climate change has become more pronounced over the years, wreaking havoc in almost all parts of the world. The BIMSTEC region is no exception and has become one of the worst affected regions. The region has experienced record increase in temperatures, frequent floods, and landslides in the recent years.

Recognizing the adverse impact on the lives and livelihood of the people and the serious threats that it poses to the region, BIMSTEC leaders agreed to explore collaborative initiatives and enhance cooperation in environmental protection and sustainable development. Accordingly, Environment and Climate Change (ECC) has been identified as one of the seven Sectors of Cooperation with Bhutan as the Lead Member State. A Joint Working Group (JWG) on ECC has also been constituted with representation from all the Member States and held its first meeting virtually on 06 December 2022. The meeting primarily deliberated on the draft Concept Note and Plan of Action (PoA) on ECC.

The International Food Policy Research (IFPRI) is a research center of the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research, a worldwide partnership engaged in agriculture research for development, and provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. IFPRI's research focuses on five strategic areas of which fostering climate-resilient and sustainable food security is one of them.

BIMSTEC and IFPRI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in March 2023 in Dhaka to strengthen collaboration in areas of mutual interest. The MoU is expected to facilitate technical cooperation, drawing upon both organizations' mandate, competence, and areas of expertise. The proposed BIMSTEC-IFPRI Conference on Environment and Climate Change: '*Inclusive Agricultural Transformation with Climate Change in BIMSTEC Countries*' is one of the activities to take this partnership forward.



The one-and-a-half-day BIMSTEC-IFPRI conference will be held in Paro, Bhutan from October 10 to 11, 2023, and is being organized by BIMSTEC, IFPRI and the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MoENR), Royal Government of Bhutan.

Conference Structure and Thematic Areas:

The conference will consist of four key sessions spanning one and a half days. The following four themes that have been collaboratively finalized with stakeholder consultation and shortlisted from a large set, will be deliberated upon as a panel discussion during the conference:

Theme 1 – Climate vulnerability- *BIMSTEC region’s agri-food: Imperatives for action-GHG emissions, water challenge, waste management and bio-diversity- Road to environment and climate stewardship*

Theme 2 – Integrated approach to climate goals and governance in BIMSTEC - *Climate risks, livelihoods, and welfare- Nexus and the tradeoffs- Policy support and offsets. Climate Security; Environment and climate (ECC) in a post FTA BIMSTEC.*

- **Mobilizing and sustaining climate finance in BIMSTEC-** *New avenues for action-What is and can be in store for agricultural and food sector? Climate diplomacy and international systems of cooperation and engagement*
- **Developing and maintaining ECC metrics for BIMSTEC-** *Mitigation and adaptation. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) for ECC policies and programs in BIMSTEC*

Theme 3 – Technological cooperation, traditional and indigenous knowledge, Climate smart agri-food system in BIMSTEC – *Traditional agriculture and linking with modern methods - Regional Energy trade and cooperation for meeting goals.*

Theme 4 – Leveraging and Exploring markets for climate action - *Carbon markets, water markets, greening value chains and transboundary systems.*

The discourse will bring together about 60-80 global and regional participants, experts, BIMSTEC member states, relevant government officials from Bhutan, donors, and other agencies working on environment and climate change. It is our hope that such a format will not only enable the convergence of the different thematic areas but will also bring into focus the inter-dependencies and linkages, supporting future collaborations and effective networking among the institutions and actors involved. In particular, this conference has been planned to precede the BIMSTEC member states’ second JWG meeting on ECC which will be held in Bhutan on 12 October and the sessions have been developed to help enhance the understanding on ECC, its various aspects and impacts, and aid the deliberations of the JWG in finalizing the BIMSTEC Plan of Action on ECC.

Date and Venue:

The conference will take place on October 10 & 11 2023 at the Tashi Namgay Resort in Paro, Bhutan.