



March 29, 2022

## Address the People's Concerns in the BIMSTEC Summit

We, the civil society of Nepal, had organized and discussed the key concerns of the people to be raised during the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit which is going to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on March 30, 2022. The discussion was concluded among former foreign Ministers, academics, foreign experts, senior journalists, and CSOs representatives. We appreciate the regular convening of the BIMSTEC and enabling environment of economic growth and peace and security in the region. The discussion had raised the following key concerns and agendas to be raised by the government of the region.

1. Post COVID-19 Economy Recovery: We the representatives of the civil society would like to request to prioritize the post-COVID-19 economic recovery in the BIMSTEC region. Many small and medium enterprises have collapsed, so BIMSTEC as a regional forum can discuss what programs and policies are necessary to revive the SMEs (Small and Middle Enterprises) and reduce the economic inequality among the people.
2. Facilitate and strengthen the Mountain –low lands – Coastal connectivity in the region by promoting transparent trade and trade facilities (goods and services) and people-to-people connections. We urge the representatives of the BIMSTEC to respect and promote the rights of the poor and marginalized communities.
3. We call upon all the governments of BIMSTEC to make the COVID-19 vaccines accessible and free to the people including the marginalized communities. We noted that the effort state of the vaccination drive has exacerbated existing inequalities and created new forms of inequalities in the region. Regional cooperation and a coordinated effort to address these issues are equally important. In addition, the entire process from vaccine acquisition to distribution needs to be transparent.
4. We considered the immediate need of addressing the issues of climate justice and environmental governance in the BIMSTEC region. Increased climatic impacts had jeopardized development efforts as well as the lives and livelihoods of people, particularly indigenous peoples, local communities, women, and other marginalized groups residing in the mountain region and downstream.
5. Similarly, the people Delta regions of India and Bangladesh are facing problems of unpredictable weather and floods which impacted the livelihood of the people in the region. Thus, we urge the representatives to adopt fast and fair appropriate strategies and actions to address the concern of the climate crisis.

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