

Tuesday
July 11, 2017

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13:00 to 14:30

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Room E, WTO Building

Enhancing Connectivity in the Bay of Bengal Region and Beyond

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand accounts for 21 per cent of the world population. Though this provides a huge potential for trade, intra-BIMSTEC trade is less than 10 per cent of their total trade.

Two crucial reasons inhibiting intra-regional trade growth are:

- low level of economic integration; and
- dearth of trade-related infrastructure, especially transport connections and transit initiatives.

A key driver of trade-led growth for countries in the Bay of Bengal region lies in their ability to take advantage of economic opportunities presented by their neighbours, in terms of regional integration and trade-related infrastructural development.

Therefore, this session at the Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade will discuss existing transport and transit initiatives in the Bay of Bengal region and their implications for trade inclusiveness and sustainable development, particularly their development dimensions such as reduction in time and cost of doing trade, employment generation.

It will also look at how regional initiatives for transport and transit connectivity can be better harnessed by international instruments (such as the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, the TIR Convention), not just within this region but in the larger Indian ocean region and beyond."

Chair/Moderator

Shamika N Sirimanne

Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, United Nations Conference of Trade and Development

Presenter

Bipul Chatterjee

Executive Director, CUTS International

Keynote Address

Naindra Prasad Upadhaya

Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Nepal

Panellists

- **Kazem Asayeh**, Senior Adviser on TIR and Trade Facilitation, International Road Transport Union
- **Yann Duval**, Chief, Trade Facilitation Unit, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- **Tran T T Hang**, Coordinator, EIF Executive Secretariat
- **Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol**, Executive Director, International Institute for Trade and Development, Thailand
- **Marcus Bartley Johns**, Senior Private Sector Specialist, World Bank Group, Singapore Office
- **Pranav Kumar**, Head, International Trade Policy Division, Confederation of Indian Industry