

Regional Policy Dialogue

Connectivity Imperatives in the Bay of Bengal Region

May 2-3, 2018, Hotel Metropolitan, New Delhi

Agenda

Day 1: Wednesday, May 2, 2018

1600 - 1630 Registration

1630 - 1830 Opening: Emerging Trends in Regionalism and Strategic Issues for Better Connectivity in the Bay of Bengal Region

This will be a high-level plenary with speakers sharing their insights on emerging strategic and geopolitical issues impacting connectivity in the Bay of Bengal region. This will also highlight how countries in the Bay of Bengal region are looking at regionalism at present and what priorities define their approach to the region.

- Welcome remarks by Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International
- Introductory by Jaya Singh Verma, Programme Manager Asia Regional Team, Department for International Development, British High Commission
- Introductory by Robert Garverick, Minister Counsellor for Economic, Environmental, Science and Technology Affairs, US Embassy in New Delhi
- Special Address by Amitava Chakraborty, Director, Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute
- Special Address by Dasho Kinley Dorji, Former Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication, Royal Government of Bhutan
- Special Address by Sandeep Kumar, Commissioner (Customs & Export Promotion), Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India
- Special Address by Toe Aung Myint, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of Myanmar
- Special Address by Purushottam Ojha, Former Commerce Secretary of Nepal
- Vote of Thanks by Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International

1900 - 2030 Book Release: Putting Consumer's First – Essays in honour of Pradeep Mehta

2030 Reception & Dinner

Day 2: Thursday, May 3, 2018

0900 - 1030 Session 1: Linking Connectivity to Livelihoods

This session will deliberate on how better connectivity between and among countries in the Bay of Bengal region will impact job creation and sustainable livelihoods. It will look at evidence presented from the recent relevant studies to discuss trends and come up with recommendations for the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, with a particular focus on women's entrepreneurship.

Chair

Atiur Rahman, Chairman, Unnayan Shamannay and Former Governor, Bangladesh Bank

Presentation

Debolina Mukherjee, Policy Analyst, CUTS International

Panellists

- Mustafizur Rahman Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh
- Pushpa Chhetri, Director, Bhutan Media and Communication Institute, Bhutan
- Sagar Prasai, India Country Representative, The Asia Foundation
- R. Sushila, Executive Director, Vivada Cruises
- SwanPyae Oo, Project Manager, Myanmar Marketing Research & Development

1030 - 1100 Networking Break

1100 - 1300 Session 2: Leveraging Infrastructure for Better Physical Connectivity

This session will look at the status of existing infrastructure and the gaps, how on-going and planned infrastructure development can be leveraged for optimum outcomes from enhanced connectivity and what more needs to be done at the national and regional levels in terms of physical infrastructure, to come up with specific and prioritised infrastructure related recommendations. The session will also spend some time on how to look at infrastructure from a gender lens.

Chair

Anil Bamba, Member (Planning & Development), Land Ports Authority of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India

Presentation

Sarbjit Singh, Policy Analyst, CUTS International

Panellists

- Monoj Kumar Roy, Former Additional Secretary (FTA), Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh
- Karma Pemba, Chief Transport Officer, Road Safety & Transport Authority, Royal Government of Bhutan
- Joseph George, Consultant, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- Soumya Chattopadhyay, Consultant, Regional Cooperation, Asian Development Bank
- Hla Tun Oo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Construction, Government of Myanmar

- Rajan Sharma, Oriental Freight Service and Former President, Nepal Freight Forwarders Association

1300-1400 Lunch

1400 - 1530 Session 3: Software of Connectivity: The BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement and Other Initiatives

This session will focus on the current status and possible challenges to the implementation of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement and examine how tools like the TIR Convention can enable and facilitate the implementation of such connectivity initiatives. It will also discuss the implications of a successful implementation of the BBIN MVA for other connectivity initiatives in the region.

Chair

Sudhakar Dalela, Joint Secretary (North), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*

Presentation

Surendar Singh, Fellow, CUTS International

Panellists

- Abdul Matlub Ahmad, President, India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce
- Md. Sanuwarul Kabir, Assistant Commissioner, National Board of Revenue, Government of Bangladesh
- Satish K. Reddy, Consultant, Asian Development Bank
- Peeyush Naidu, Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP
- Hla Hla Yee, General Secretary, Myanmar International Freight Forwarders Association

1530 - 1600 Networking Break

1600 - 1730 Session 4: Private Sector Perspectives on Leveraging Connectivity

This session will discuss the envisaged and desired outcomes of connectivity initiatives in the region as perceived by private sector players. It will collate private sector inputs on the sectors, projects and dialogues, which are to be prioritised and at what levels. The idea is to come up with a prioritised action agenda to enable the private sector to leverage various connectivity initiatives in the region.

Chair

M P Bezbaruah, Former Member, North Eastern Council, Ministry of the Development of North East Region, Government of India

Presentation

Prithviraj Nath, Associate Director, CUTS International

Panellists

- Damchae Dem, Founder, Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs
- Pranav Kumar, Director & Head, International Policy & Trade, Confederation of Indian Industry

- Paresh Agarwal, General Manager (International Marketing), Container Corporation of India Ltd.
- Julian Bevis, Senior Director, Group Relations, South Asia, Maersk Line India Pvt Ltd
- Myo Thant, Managing Director, Zar & Zar Co. Ltd., Myanmar
- Kailash Bajimaya, Nepal Chamber of Commerce

1730 - 1830 Closing: Key Policy Recommendations and An Action Agenda

This session will focus on bringing together the suggestions in the form of either policy and/or practice changes or specific business/investment opportunities/ideas that emerged from all the different sessions. A compilation of the key recommendations will be presented by CUTS International followed by reflections from government officials and experts to sum-up the key takeaways from this dialogue.

Chair

Bipul Chatterjee, Executive Director, CUTS International

Rapporteur's Presentation

- Indranil Bose, Professor, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata
- Enamul Haque, Professor, East West University, and Emeritus Fellow, Unnayan Shamannay, Dhaka

Speakers

- Badrul Hassan Babul, Trade Consultant (Joint Secretary), FTA Wing, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh
- Gyem Bidha, Deputy Chief Laboratory Officer, Bhutan Agriculture & Food Regulatory Authority, Royal Government of Bhutan
- Nikunj Kumar Srivastava, Additional Director, General of Foreign Trade, Department of Commerce, Government of India
- Myint Lwin, Deputy Director General, Department of Consumer Affairs The Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar
- Sujeev Shakya, Chairman, Nepal Economic Forum

Vote of Thanks

Bratindra Bhattacharya, Director, CUTS International

*TBC