

**Welcoming remarks by His Excellency U Thein Sein,
President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
at the Opening Ceremony of the Third BIMSTEC Summit
Banquet Hall, MICCII, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
(0900 hours, 4 March, 2014)**

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and on my own, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Your Excellencies and the distinguished participants for your presence here this morning.

This auspicious occasion marks the launching of the 3rd Summit on the Bay of Bengal Initiatives for the Multi-Sector, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in Nay Pyi Taw.

Excellencies,

As Myanmar goes through the process of political, economic and administrative reforms, interaction with the international community is growing day by day.

Quite recently, Myanmar has successfully hosted a number of international and regional events. These include the 4th Greater Mekong Sub-region Summit, the 1st and 2nd Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum, the 22nd World Economic Forum on East Asia and the EU-Myanmar Task Force Meeting.

Regional Sports events such as the 27th South Asian Games and the 7th ASEAN Para Games have also been held successfully.

This year, as the rotating Chairman of ASEAN, Myanmar will be organizing two Summits and series of related meetings.

And today, we are proud to host the third BIMSTEC Summit to which Myanmar also attaches great importance.

Excellencies,

In this age of globalization, regional or sub-regional groupings of nations with common culture and interests are no longer a matter of choice, but the need of the hour.

And the dynamics of international politics have transformed the economic relations to become a crucial variable in inter-state relationships. Consequently, those issues now have transnational dimensions and forms. Against this backdrop, BIMSTEC is directed towards bringing a harmonious and cooperative growth among its member states.

Faced with new threats of non-traditional and transnational challenges of climate change, natural disasters, energy and food security, we have to combine our strengths and resources under the banner of BIMSTEC to engage with other international bodies in addressing these problems.

Our top priority is, and always has been, to alleviate poverty in the region and improve the quality of life and well-being of our peoples. Since the inception of BIMSTEC, we have been committed to striving to achieve progress in all identified areas of cooperation. In response to the needs and expectations, the areas of our cooperation are expanding.

We are now working together in (14) sectors namely trade and investment, technology, energy, transport and communication, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, cultural cooperation, environment and disaster management, public health, people-to-people contact, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, and climate change.

Through our collective endeavours and in a spirit of equality and partnership, we will certainly be accelerating economic growth and social progress in the sub-region.

Cooperation and support by individual member states to BIMSTEC is always invaluable. In this connection, I would like to express our appreciation to Thailand for its constant support through BIMSTEC Working Group.

Excellencies,

At this very important juncture, we have the opportunity to increase our efforts for a stronger cooperation that will sustain the momentum of BIMSTEC, thus leading towards a better future of our peoples.

We, the leaders and the whole BIMSTEC community, must strive together to achieve this end.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express our firm commitment to BIMSTEC in forging ahead with our collective efforts to promote and realize further cooperation towards our shared goals.

Our common objective is to move forward the development and prosperity agenda of the peoples of BIMSTEC member states. I believe that, together, we can continue to advance towards that goal.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, I would like to reiterate my profound gratitude to all Heads of State, Heads of Government and the Special Envoy for making yourselves available to this ceremony and the Summit itself despite your tight schedule and very important domestic priorities at home.

I thank you.
