

Speech delivered by Ms. Syeda Hameed, Member, Planning Commission

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here in this historical moment. It is historical moment, in the sense, the first of its kind, because it is a virgin attempt to explore the possibilities of moving together with the BIMSTEC countries comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and India precisely for development of small and medium industries. This international seminar, as I see, is a more precision one, banking upon for the development of ancillary industries, and I believe ancillary industries are to play instrumental role in the global scenario. Certainly, I find, it has got a deep impact to have a continuity of production in the manufacturing sector on the basis of free exchange of trade of sub-assemblies/components, which is the order of the day. Since subcontracting and outsourcing are the modalities of globalised business trend then why not explore the possibilities at this seminar? The ancillary industries, though not seem to be insignificant one, but they are the base who are providing the components as per requirement of the large sector. Even I see, the small industries, assuming it is a segment, then ancillaries are its sub segments. Therefore, the impact of the ancillaries in the manufacturing process are wide and varied and after all, this is an employment provider, rather a vehicle for employment, and if, this endeavour is pursued with appropriate guidance, each home will turn into industrial unit like Japan which is at commanding height. It was also not rare in India as in the case of industrial belt of Howrah in West Bengal, industrial belt Peenya, Bangalore in the state of Karnataka, Faridabad and Ghaziabad for auto parts and many other items and many more clusters are there. As I believe, Thailand is also moving fast in similar direction. I wish others should also follow suit and the combined effect will be multiplied to consolidate the regional base.

So far India is concerned, development of small enterprises is an integral part of the planned economy and we from Planning Commission are making every endeavour to support the SSI sector through policy planning. I am not going more niceties of the area.

I am extremely happy to see that here the representatives from BIMSTEC countries are here to deliberate on the relevance of ancillarisation in the context of globalization and emerging trade relations. As I understand, BIMST-EC Free Trade Negotiations are going on for recognizing the need for development of developing and least developing countries in the region and the need to accord special and differential treatment commensurate with their development needs. As I also understand, this endeavour is primarily aiming at and striving to develop into a free trade agreement, and as such to focus on activities that would facilitate, increase investment and promote technical co-operation amongst member countries.

It is indeed a novel attempt and novel gesture to harmonise with the changing global economic environment and the catalytic role that the regional trading arrangement can play towards accelerating global liberalization as building blocks in the framework of multilateral trading system. Here, the seminaries are and deliberation should be made to institutionalize the system, and let there be suggestions and recommendations from the participating countries.

As I find, though the BIMSTEC talk is ongoing, there is no permanent secretariat for BIMSTEC co-operation in India and still there is no institutional framework. I wish there should be institutional framework and support system to make the contemplation of BIMSTEC co-operation into a reality, which will benefit immensely the member countries in reduction of poverty by generating employment with the best utilization of the local talent and resources.

With these few words, I conclude and wish the seminar will explore new dimension. So far Planning Commission is concerned, I assure all out assistance and co-operation will be forthcoming as and when needed.