

Press Release

### Bay of Bengal Forum is Officially Launched

#### **CSOs expect a new initiative in establishing People to People Contact in the Bay of Bengal Region**

Dhaka, 03 November 2016. The American Center Dhaka and the Coastal Association for Social Transformation (COAST) Trust have jointly launched a new platform for the CSOs from the BIMSTEC member countries. The platform named Bay of Bengal Forum (BBForum) has been launched today at the Edward M Kennedy (EMK) Center in Dhanmondi, Dhaka. According to the organisers, the main aim of the forum is to revive the historical relation and cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region, to promote regional connectivity and it is for the interest of marginalized section of population of the area. Its efforts will be to strengthen the relationship among the CSOs and Medias to influence the policy makers of the BIMSTEC countries to take decisions in favour of the mass people.

On the occasion a book titled “Advancing Sustainable Socio-Economic Development through Education in the Bay of Bengal Region” was also unwrapped. It can be downloaded form the official website of the BBforum website [www.bbforum.net](http://www.bbforum.net).

The book is in fact the accumulation of write ups of United States Fulbright Alumni among the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) member countries. The objective of this book publishing is to establish the “People to People Contact” among the BIMSTEC member countries.”

Mr. George Mesthos, The Cultural Affairs Officer of The American Center Dhaka, moderated the launching session while Professor Shariful Islam, Professor of Department of the Political Science of the Dhaka University, Professor Dr. Lailufar Yasmin, Professor of the Department of International Relation of the Dhaka University and Dr. Hasib Irfanullah of IUCN presented their papers on Education, Blue Economy and Climate Change. Many US alumni and COAST staff participated and spoke on the occasion.

In the welcome speech, Mr. George Mesthos said, the publication and launching has delayed due to terrorist attack in Dhaka which impedes our objectives of these activities. However a new initiative has been taken and CSO platform named “Bay of Bengal Forum” has been formed. I am hopeful to establish the CSO connection and People to people contact in BIMSTEC countries through this new initiative.

Syed Aminul Hoque of COAST Trust appreciated the initiative of publishing of this book. He says, these write ups are necessary for us and will give us a pave to understand the education sector of the BIMSTEC Countries. It will also help us to explore the possible opportunities to ensure state-to-state cooperation. He also thanks The American Center Dhaka for enhancing cooperation to this initiatives and hope to continue the support in future.

**Reported by:**

Mostafa Kamal Akand +8801711455591

Syed Aminul Hoque +8801713328815

