

Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains: Role of Efficient Connectivity and Trade Facilitation Measures for Food and Nutrition Security in the BBIN Sub-region

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In the context of recurring challenges to food supply chains, ensuring their resiliency and sustainability is critical to ensure food and nutrition security. Seamless connectivity and robust trade practices are required to ensure the resiliency of supply chains.

The Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) sub-region is one of the least integrated and connected sub-regions in the world. Standing at a mere four percent, the intra-regional trade within the BBIN sub-region is significantly less than its potential due to several infrastructural and trade facilitation challenges. Two members of the grouping are landlocked and face additional trade constraints. All these factors together make supply chains in this region highly vulnerable to shocks. Therefore, it is important for the sub-region to develop seamless intra-regional connectivity to ensure both the resiliency and the sustainability of supply chains, particularly those which facilitate security of critical necessities such as food.

Developing a robust multi-modal transport system can facilitate seamless movement of goods across the borders in the sub-region. This should be complemented by adequate trade facilitation measures such as digital connectivity, paperless trade initiatives, harmonisation of standards and easier customs procedures. Sustainable practices such as building green infrastructure and shifting to green transport need to be adopted. The aim must be to pursue trade-promoting measures with minimum carbon emission costs. An efficient, environment-friendly multi-modal transport system in the sub-region, along with the measures highlighted above, will promote both the resiliency and sustainability of supply chains.

In addition to ensuring food and nutrition security through resilient and sustainable supply chains, enabling seamless connectivity and intra-regional trade will bring significant welfare gains to the people of the sub-region. It will provide new employment opportunities, better choices for consumers, speedy and reliable deliveries, and low prices.

