High-Level Panel Discussion on
“Leaving No One Behind: Inclusion of Persons with Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders in the 2030 Agenda”

Venue: Apartment Building- Small Meeting Room 1

Date: 30-Nov

Time: 13:15-14:30

Organizers: Bangladesh Government & UNESCAP

A. Description

Bangladesh Embassy in Bangkok has taken the initiative to host a side event titled “Leaving No One Behind: Inclusion of Persons with Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders in the 2030 Agenda” in partnership with UNESCAP during High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022) to be held in Beijing from 27 November to 1 December 2017.

The world is projected to witness a 12% increase in the global population affected by Autism/Neurodevelopmental disorders by the time we expect to realize 2030 development agenda. Children and adults with autism tend to be uncounted and under-recognized by many Governments in Asia and the Pacific, thus facing difficulties in getting due policy and program attention. Prejudices against their typical behaviour also marginalize their economic and social positions in society. But it is imperative to include the voices and challenges of this deeply marginalized demography into the disability inclusive development agenda.

Given this scenario, the Bangladesh side event aims at introducing the importance of promoting the cause of persons with disabilities, especially children and adults suffering from Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders in the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022). The Bangladesh side event will create a platform to foster a dialogue between governments, Autism and NDD experts and Persons with Disabilities, including ADD and NDD from the Asia-Pacific regions to identify challenges and sharing best practices from the region. The discussions will identify challenges, share the best practices from Bangladesh and other countries in the region towards realization of the rights of Persons with intellectual disabilities.

Government of Bangladesh, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has been championing advocacy for improved policy attention to persons with autism and NDD nationally, regionally and globally. Bangladesh was the first country to table a resolution at WHO and UN General
Assembly on “Addressing the socio-economic needs of individuals, families and societies affected by autism spectrum disorders, developmental disorders and associated disabilities” in 2012. Bangladesh’s Chair for National Advisory Committee for Autism Neurodevelopment Disorders Saima Wazed Hossain has been leading from the front to prioritize the rights of the Persons with Disabilities, including ADD and NDD in the development programs.

Bangladesh delegation and UNESCAP look forward to achieving participation of Ministerial Panellists, disability/autism/NDD experts, International Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and persons with disabilities to reaffirm their political commitment, moral and ethical support in prioritizing the challenges at the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022) in Beijing and their national SDG implementation plans, programs and resource mobilization.

The event is open to all and proposes to forge an alliance with organizations dealing with other forms of disabilities and regional organizations. Bangladesh hopes that the decisions and recommendations of this side event will be reflected in the Chair’s Summary and circulated to all concerned.

Bangladesh also hopes that organization of the side event will be recognized in Beijing Declaration/Meeting Report.

B. Format

1315 hrs: Welcome remarks by H.E. Ambassador Saida Muna Tasneem, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Thailand and Permanent Representative to UNESCAP and Moderator

1319 hrs: Remarks by Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary for Sustainable Development, UN ESCAP

1323 hrs: Introductory Remarks by Chair, Ms. Saima Wazed Hossain, Chairperson of Bangladesh National Advisory Committee for Autism and Neurodevelopment Disorders and WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in South-East Asia Region

1328 hrs-1340 hrs: Key note presentation by Ms. Aloka Guha, Special Educator in Intellectual Disability and Consultant, SEARO-WHO, Disability and Mental Health Unit and to Autism Speaks

Panel Discussion: 1340-1405 hrs) 25 mins

Panel Discussants:
- Mr. Lv Shiming, Vice Chairman China Disabled Persons' Federation
- H.E. Mr. Vong Sauth, Minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Cambodia
• **HE Ms. Merresini Vuniwaqa**, Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Fiji
• **Dr Nazneen Anwar**, WHO SEARO
• **Ms. Erlinda Koe, President**, ASEAN Autism Network (AAN)
• **Ms. Panyasirimongkol Supaanong**, Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD Foundation)

1405 hrs – 1420 hrs: Interventions from the floor /Q&A) 15 mins

Designated Speaker: **Ayşe KARDAŞ** Acting Deputy Undersecretary, Government of Turkey

1420-1425 hrs: Concluding remarks by the Chair

1425-1430 hrs: Vote of Thanks by **Mr. Zillar Rahman**, Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh

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**C. Contact Person**

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