

8th APFSD: Country Statement on SDGs Implementation of Bangladesh

Respected Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon.

1. At the outset, on behalf of the Bangladesh delegation, let me offer you the greetings of “Mujib Year” as we have been celebrating the centennial birth anniversary of our “Father of the Nation”, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Concurrently, we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of our independence.
2. Now, I would like to thank the UNESCAP for organizing the 8th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development which is a unique opportunity to share experiences of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, best practices, and lessons learned as well. The experience of the APFSD helped us a lot in conducting the Voluntary National Reviews for High-Level Political Forum held in July last year.

Respected Chair,

3. Last month in the second tri-annual reviews, the UN-CDP provided the final recommendation for Bangladesh to be graduated from LDC in 2026, which revealed the sustained and inclusive growth in social, economic, and environmental spheres in Bangladesh, particularly in the last decade under the dynamic and visionary leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. It will give us an impetus in fulfilling the commitment of SDGs by 2030, graduating to an upper-middle-income country by 2031, and realizing the dream of 168 million people to be a developed nation by 2041 as envisioned by the Government of Bangladesh.
4. Recently, the Government has approved its flagship strategic document viz. the 8th Five Year Plan (FY 2021-2025), which like the 7th Five Year Plan has incorporated the targets of SDGs in a befitting way, which depicts the strong political commitment for achieving the SDGs. The Government has been following the “Whole of the Society Approach” to ensure wider participation of NGOs, Development Partners, Private Sector, Media, CSOs in the process of formulating the SDGs Action Plan in implementing the SDGs. The Action Plan is now being reviewed to prepare a revised version conducive to the 8th FYP.
5. Presently, localization of SDGs has been given more emphasis in the country by identifying 40 (39+1) national priority indicators to be implemented at the local level in achieving respective targets of SDGs. We are creating a space where people at the grassroots level continuously working with each other in terms of sharing knowledge and involving themselves with SDGs. With a view to ensuring that no one is left behind, one spatial indicator is selected at the local level where they are relatively worse off or vulnerable. To address this, some mechanism is being crafted to finance this particular issue of vulnerability of the sub-districts.
6. There is no denying the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic is taking lives, spreading human sorrows, and seriously disturbing people's livelihood. However, the

farsightedness of our Hon'ble Prime Minister and her timely intervention focusing on lives and livelihood is showing positive signs in the economy. The Government has been implementing different stimulus packages of USD 14.6 Billion, (4.44% of GDP), for immediate, short, and mid-term up to the financial year 2023-2024 for 23 economic sectors. The policy has been to (a) increasing government expenditure focusing on 'employment creation, (b) assisting financial package, (c) increasing social security activities, and (d) increasing money supply with a view to minimizing loss of lives, widening social protection, retaining jobs and reinvigorating the economy.

7. The VNR Report of 2020 of Bangladesh shows that before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh could achieve or was on-track in some of the nationally determined targets related to SDGs to be achieved by 2020. Reduction of poverty and hunger, declining neonatal and under-five mortality rate, achieving gender parity at primary and secondary levels, access to electricity to every house, the growth rate of GDP of per employed persons, enhancing manufacturing value addition in relation to GDP are some of the examples.
8. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for developing countries to achieve SDGs by 2030 and hence transformative actions are required. We need to work together to mitigate the challenges. Now we need to create new ways of doing things. For Bangladesh, we believe that coordination, partnerships, and sharing experiences and good practices among Asia-Pacific countries at all levels will be the key to achieve our goals.
9. We have a few challenges ahead. The absolute number of poor people is a challenge despite the reduction rate of the poverty. Even though we are now self-sufficient in food production, ensuring food security maintaining proper nutrition for all in a densely populated country like Bangladesh is a challenge also. The COVID-19 has shown some structural bottlenecks in the health sector albeit the Government has taken some initiative to resolve them. Likewise, ensuring quality education at all levels is also a daunting task. Being a climatically vulnerable country, though Bangladesh has taken many actions to reduce exposure, adaptation, and mitigation of climate change will be challenging. More target-oriented efforts are needed to facilitate domestic resource mobilization at the desired level.
10. The VNR 2020 of Bangladesh shows that Bangladesh incorporates some good, innovative and collaborative practices that other countries can benefit from. Bangladesh is sharing of those practices to other Asia-Pacific countries, and hope discussion from this forum will give us the opportunity to take others' good experience also to address our challenges.
11. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister has ten special initiatives for ameliorating the fate of the common people. Each of these initiatives has strong linkages to one or more targets of SDGs. These are all examples of people-centric development efforts keeping in mind that "no-one is left behind"; digitization as the panacea for ensuring good governance is a glaring example to be highlighted. Bangladesh is open to sharing all these best practices with all member countries.
12. I thank you all for your attention.