Country Statement

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Session Theme:
"Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific"

Madam Chair,
Respected Representatives,
Distinguished Delegates,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum,

And a very good morning/afternoon to you all.

First of all let me convey my sincere appreciation and thanks to the Government of Thailand and UNESCAP for arranging this 81st session of UNESCAP and hosting us in this beautiful city Bangkok.

I feel deeply honored to have the opportunity to speak before the distinguished audience at the 81st Session of UNESCAP, on behalf of Bangladesh, a nation committed to building an urban future that is sustainable and resilient.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

As one of the fastest urbanizing countries in the region, we recognize that resilient and sustainable urban development is not just a necessity but a fundamental driver for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring a livable future for our citizens.

Bangladesh is experiencing rapid urbanization, with over 40% of its population now residing in urban areas. By 2050, this is projected to exceed 56%. While urbanization has contributed to economic growth, employment generation, and poverty reduction, it has also led to challenges such as housing shortages, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and vulnerability to climate change-induced disasters.

Distinguished delegates,

The Government of Bangladesh is implementing a comprehensive approach to urban resilience. One of our key interventions includes the Decarbonization Roadmap for the Building and Construction Sector, which promotes energy-efficient building technologies and the adoption of sustainable materials. Our commitment to reducing carbon emissions is further strengthened through a roadmap for circularity in building materials, ensuring resource efficiency and waste reduction.

Urban readiness is a crucial element in our development strategy. The Urban Readiness Guidelines developed by the Urban Development Directorate (UDD) provide a framework for ensuring cities.

Planned urban expansion is central to our strategy. The Detailed Area Plan (DAP) developed by RAJUK is guiding structured urban development through land use planning, zoning regulations, and infrastructure integration.

A critical aspect of Bangladesh's urban development is ensuring access to affordable housing. Several low-income housing projects are in the pipeline to address the growing demand for affordable homes, prioritizing sustainability and accessibility. The Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) 2020 has been updated to incorporate modern construction standards, ensuring safer and more resilient infrastructure.

Incorporating nature-based solutions in urban planning is a priority for Bangladesh. Green corridors, urban wetlands restoration, and afforestation projects are enhancing biodiversity, improving air quality, and reducing climate risks in cities. These initiatives are part of a broader effort to integrate sustainable and nature-friendly practices in urban expansion. To enhance urban mobility, Bangladesh has made significant investments in sustainable transport infrastructure, including the Dhaka Metro Rail and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Bangladesh prepares to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026, sustainable urbanization is more critical than ever. While this milestone reflects commendable progress, it brings new challenges—particularly the phase-out of international support measures such as concessional finance, preferential trade access, and special WTO provisions. Following the student-led uprising in August 2024, the interim government inherited a fragile economy left by the previous autocratic regime. Coupled with external shocks like the Ukraine war and global trade disruptions, this demands enhanced international cooperation and institutional resilience.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh's commitment to creating sustainable urban prospect is unwavering, but the pathway is not without hurdles. Ensuring effective governance, enhancing data systems for monitoring, and fostering policy coherence are essential to address implementation gaps. As global community is aware, Hon'ble Chief Adviser of Bangladesh, Nobel Laureate Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus's development vision centers around "Three Zeros" – zero poverty, zero unemployment and zero net carbon emission. The vision provides a focused, socially inclusive approach that directly supports multiple SDGs, addressing poverty, employment, and environmental sustainability in an integrated manner. It also strikes a deep chord with our urban development initiatives.

Distinguished delegates,

Urbanization is a regional and global phenomenon that requires collective efforts. We call upon the international community to:

- Strengthen regional collaboration in sustainable urban development through knowledge sharing, capacity building, and technology transfer.
- Increase climate financing for urban resilience projects in climate-vulnerable countries like Bangladesh.
- Promote public-private partnerships to enhance infrastructure investment and sustainable housing solutions.
- Enhanced technical assistance to build the capacity of LDCs and advocate for Continuation of International Support Measures for a certain period beyond graduation.

ESCAP plays a crucial role in fostering regional cooperation. We urge ESCAP and its member states to enhance technical assistance, research collaboration, and investment in smart, green, and resilient urbanization projects across the Asia-Pacific region.

In conclusion, I call upon our esteemed partners and stakeholders to join hands with Bangladesh in leveraging technology and innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. Together, let us harness the transformative power of collaboration to build a future that is equitable, inclusive, and sustainable for generations to come.

Madam Chairman, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to participate with my thoughts at this outstanding event.

Thank you all for your kind attention.