



SELECTED
SPEECHES OF
PRIME MINISTER
**SHEIKH
HASINA**
DURING OFFICIAL VISITS

(2009-2018)



Published by
External Publicity Wing
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SELECTED SPEECHES OF PRIME MINISTER
SHEIKH HASINA
DURING OFFICIAL VISITS (2009-2018)



Published by
External Publicity Wing
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
www.mofa.gov.bd

SELECTED
SPEECHES OF
PRIME MINISTER
**SHEIKH
HASINA**
DURING OFFICIAL VISITS
(2009-2018)

SELECTED
SPEECHES OF
PRIME MINISTER
SHEIKH
HASINA
DURING OFFICIAL VISITS
(2009-2018)

Published in
November 2019

Published by
External Publicity Wing
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
www.mofa.gov.bd

All rights reserved. This book contains material protected under copyright and publishing law of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electrical or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without express written permission from the copyright owner, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh.



SELECTED
SPEECHES OF
PRIME MINISTER
SHEIKH
HASINA
DURING OFFICIAL VISITS

(2009-2018)

Contents

জাতিসংঘ সাধারণ পরিষদের অধিবেশনে জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের বাংলায় প্রদত্ত ভাষণ Speech of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the General Assembly of United Nations	9
The 65 th Session of the UNGA New York, 25 September 2010	22
Facing Climate Change: Bangladesh's Efforts Sweden, 19 December 2009	28
16 th SAARC Summit 28 April 2010	32
66 th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 13–19 May 2010	36
Ministerial Session of ESCAP Monday, 17 May 2010	39
Luncheon Hosted in Honour of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) 17 May 2010	43
Dinner Hosted by Hon. Park Jin, Chairman Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification Monday, 17 May 2010	45
Luncheon Hosted by President Lee Myung-bak Cheong Wa Dae Tuesday, 18 May 2010	47
Seventeenth SAARC Summit 10 November 2011	49
Banquet in Honour of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Hosted by U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Tuesday, 06 December 2011	53
Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit Monday, 20 May 2013	55
Third BIMSTEC Summit 4 March 2014	58
Dinner Hosted by Hon'ble Prime Minister of Japan His Excellency Shinzo Abe 26 May 2014	62
Waseda University Education and Empowerment of the Youth 27 May 2014	64

9 th China-South Asia Business Forum 06 June 2014	68
Second China-South Asia Exposition Opening Ceremony 06 June 2014	71
<u>Bangladesh Marching Ahead</u> Bangladesh–China Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum Hosted by China Council for the Promotion of International Trade 10 June 2014	74
Inauguration Ceremony of the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka 13 September 2014	78
18 th SAARC Summit Wednesday, 26 November 2014	81
Seminar on Socio-Economic Achievements of Bangladesh in Recent Years and Partnership with China 7 March 2015	85
Asian-African Summit Conference Plenary Session 22 April 2015	91
Business Council for International Understanding 25 September, 2015	95
Business Seminar at Hotel Amarth Kurhas 5 November 2015	98
Global Women Leaders' Forum 18 May 2016	102
11 th ASEM Summit 15 July 2016	107
ASEM Summit Retreat Theme: Enhancing the Three Pillars of ASEM 16 July 2016	108
BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat 16 October 2016	110
BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit 16 October 2016	113
Budapest Water Summit 2016 28 November 2016	116
Closing Ceremony of Bangladesh–Hungary Business Forum 29 November 2016	118

Honouring Indian Martyrs of 1971 08 April 2017	121
Reception by India Foundation 10 April 2017	123
At the Business Event with the Indian Chambers of Commerce 10 April 2017	126
Arab–Islamic–American Summit 21 May 2017	129
IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme – 60 Years and Beyond: Contributing to Development 30 May 2017	131
High Level Meeting on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 18 September 2017	134
Meeting of OIC Contact Group on Rohingya Muslim Minority 19 September 2017	136
Roundtable of UN Secretary General’s High-Level Panel (HLP) on Women’s Economic Empowerment led by Group of Champions for Women’s Economic Empowerment 19 September 2017	137
Business Council for International Understanding 20 September 2017	139
Security Council Open Debate on ‘Reform on UN Peacekeeping: Implementation and Follow-up’ 20 September 2017	142
Creating a Policy Vision for SDG Finance Facilitating Private Sector Investment in the SDGs 20 September 2017	144
SDG Implementation, Financing and Monitoring: Sharing Innovations through South-South and Triangular Cooperation 20 September 2017	146
High Level Panel Water in the Sideline of 72 nd UNGA 21 September 2017	148
The 72 nd Session of the UNGA 21 September 2017	150
63 rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) Inaugural Ceremony Sunday, 5 November 2017	156

Meeting with the Business Leaders of MEDEF International
Wednesday, 13 December 2017 160

41st Session of the IFAD's Governing Council
13 February 2018 162

Luncheon hosted by the Prime Minister of Singapore
12 March 2018 167

Bangladesh-Singapore Business Forum
organized by the Singapore Business Federation
Tuesday, 13 March 2018 169

Bangladesh's Development Story:
Policies, Progresses and Prospects
Tuesday, 17 April 2018 172

Global Women's Leadership Awards Gala Dinner 2018
Global Summit of Women
Friday, 27 April 2018 177

Visit to Western Sydney University
Saturday, 28 April 2018 180

4th BIMSTEC Summit
30 August 2018 183

High-level Event on the International Finance Facility for Education
Monday, 24 September 2018 187

Leaders' Dialogue: Together for Girls' Education in Conflict-Affected and
Fragile Contexts
Monday, 24 September 2018 189

Business Roundtable Hosted by US Chamber of Commerce
24 September 2018 191

High-Level Event on the Global Compact on Refugees:
A Model for Greater Solidarity and Cooperation
Monday, 24 September 2018 194

Nelson Mandela Peace Summit
Monday, 24 September 2018 197

Luncheon Roundtable Meeting with US Chamber of Commerce
Monday, 24 September 2018 199

High-level Side-Event on Cyber Security and International Cooperation
Tuesday, 25 September 2018 202

High-Level Event for Action for Peacekeeping
Tuesday, 25 September 2018 204

High-Level Leaders' Dialogue on Climate Change Implementation of
the Paris Agreement Towards COP24 and Beyond
26 September 2018 206

Global Hope Coalition 2018 Special Recognition for
Outstanding Leadership Award
Thursday, 27 September 2018 208

High-Level Discussion on Economic Growth
Through Women's Empowerment
Thursday, 27 September 2018 210

Meeting of OIC Contact Group on Rohingya Muslim Minority
Thursday, 27 September 2018 212

The 73rd Session of the UNGA
Thursday, 27 September 2018 214



২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ১৯৭৪ জাতিসংঘের ২৯তম অধিবেশনে জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান
Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressing the 29th Session of the
UNGA on 25 September 1974

জাতিসংঘ সাধারণ পরিষদের
অধিবেশনে জাতির পিতা
বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের
বাংলায় প্রদত্ত ভাষণ

Speech of the Father of the Nation
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
at the General Assembly
of United Nations

মি. প্রেসিডেন্ট, সম্মানিত প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দ,
ভদ্রমহিলা ও ভদ্রমহোদয়গণ,

আজ এই মহান পরিষদে আপনাদের সামনে দুটো কথা বলার সুযোগ পেয়ে আমি নিজেকে ভাগ্যবান মনে করছি। মানবজাতির এই পার্লামেন্টে বাংলাদেশের সাড়ে সাত কোটি মানুষ প্রতিনিধিত্ব লাভ করায় আপনাদের মধ্যে যে গভীর সন্তোষের ভাব

Mr. President, Distinguished
Delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Today as I stated before this Assembly, I share with you the profound satisfaction that the seventy-five million people of Bangladesh are now represented in this Assembly. For the Bangalee nation this is a historic moment,

আমি লক্ষ করেছি আমিও তার অংশীদার।
বাঙালি জাতির জন্য এটা এক ঐতিহাসিক
মুহূর্ত। কারণ তার আত্মনিয়ন্ত্রণের অধিকার
অর্জনের সংগ্রাম আজ বিরাট সাফল্য চিহ্নিত।

একটি স্বাধীন দেশের স্বাধীন নাগরিক
হিসাবে মুক্ত ও সম্মানজনক জীবনযাপনের
অধিকারের জন্য বাঙালি জাতি বহু শতাব্দী
ধরে সংগ্রাম চালিয়ে এসেছে। তারা
চেয়েছে বিশ্বের সকল জাতির সাথে শান্তি
ও সৌহার্দ্যের মধ্যে বসবাস করতে।

জাতিসংঘ সনদে যে মহান আদর্শের কথা
বলা হয়েছে তা আমাদের জনগণের আদর্শ
এবং এ আদর্শের জন্য তারা চরম ত্যাগ
স্বীকার করেছেন। এমন এক বিশ্বব্যবস্থা
গঠনে বাঙালি জাতি উৎসর্গীকৃত, যে
ব্যবস্থায় মানুষের শান্তি ও ন্যায়বিচার
লাভের আকাঙ্ক্ষা প্রতিফলিত হবে। এবং
আমি জানি আমাদের এ প্রতিজ্ঞা গ্রহণের
মধ্যে আমাদের লাখো শহীদের বিদেহী
আত্মার স্মৃতি নিহিত রয়েছে। আমাদের
জন্য বিশেষ সৌভাগ্যের কথা, বাংলাদেশ
এমন এক সময়ে জাতিসংঘে প্রবেশ করেছে
যখন এই পরিষদের প্রেসিডেন্ট পদ
অলংকৃত করেছেন এমন এক মহান ব্যক্তি
যিনি ছিলেন একজন সক্রিয় মুক্তি সংগ্রামী।

মাননীয় প্রেসিডেন্ট,

গত বছর আলজিয়ার্সে অনুষ্ঠিত জোট
নিরপেক্ষ শীর্ষ সম্মেলন সফল করে তোলার
কাজে আপনার মূল্যবান অবদানের কথা
স্মরণ করছি। যাঁদের মহান আত্মত্যাগে
বাংলাদেশ আজ জাতিসংঘে স্থান লাভে
সক্ষম হয়েছে এই সুযোগে আমি তাদের
অভিনন্দন জানাই। বাংলাদেশের মুক্তি
সংগ্রামে যে সব দেশ ও জাতি সমর্থন

marking the consummation of the
struggle to vindicate its right of
self-determination.

The Bangalee people have fought
over the centuries so that they may
secure for themselves the right to live
in freedom and with dignity as free
citizens of a free country. They have
aspired to live in peace and friendship
with all the Nations of the world. The
noble ideals enshrined in the United
Nations Charter are the very ideals for
which millions of our people have
made the supreme sacrifice. I know
that the souls of our martyrs join us
in pledging that the Bangalee nation
fully commits itself to the building of
a world order, which the aspiration of
all men for peace and justice will be
realized. It is particularly gratifying
that Bangladesh has been admitted to
this Assembly when its Presidency
has been assumed by one who has
been an active fighter for freedom.

Mr. President,

I recall the valuable contribution
made by you to the success of the
Summit Conference of Non-Aligned
Nations held in Algiers in September
last year.

I should like to avail myself of this
opportunity to salute all those whose
sacrifices have earned for Bangladesh
a place in the committee of nations. I
express our deep sense of gratitude to
all those nations and people who
supported Bangladesh in its struggle.
We would also like to thank all those
who have been rendering valuable

জানিয়েছে আমি তাঁদের প্রতিও জানাই আমার অন্তরের গভীর কৃতজ্ঞতা। নবলব্ধ স্বাধীনতা সংহত করার কাজে যুদ্ধ-বিধ্বস্ত দেশ পুনর্গঠনে এবং জনগণের জন্য অধিকতর কল্যাণকর কাজে চ্যালেঞ্জ গ্রহণ করার কাজে যেসব দেশ ও জাতি বাংলাদেশকে সাহায্য করেছেন আমি তাঁদেরও আমার আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জানাই। জাতিসংঘে আমাদের আসন গ্রহণকে যাঁরা অভিনন্দন জানিয়েছেন আমি তাঁদেরও বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণের আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ পৌঁছে দিচ্ছি। বাংলাদেশের সংগ্রাম ন্যায় ও শান্তির জন্য সার্বজনীন সংগ্রামের প্রতীকস্বরূপ। সুতরাং বাংলাদেশ শুরু থেকে বিশ্বের নিপীড়িত জনগণের পাশে দাঁড়াতে এটাই স্বাভাবিক।

জাতিসংঘের জন্মের পর তার এক চতুর্থাংশ শতাব্দীর অভিজ্ঞতায় দেখা যায় যে, তার আদর্শ বাস্তবায়নের বিরাট বাধার মুখে অবিরাম সংগ্রাম চালাতে হয়েছে। জাতিসংঘের সনদে যে আত্মনিয়ন্ত্রণ অধিকারের প্রতিশ্রুতি দেওয়া হয়েছিল, তা অর্জনের জন্য এশিয়া, আফ্রিকা ও ল্যাটিন আমেরিকার লাখো লাখো মুক্তি সেনানীকে আত্মাহুতি দিতে হয়েছে। এই সংগ্রাম এখনও চলছে। গায়ের জোরে বেআইনিভাবে এলাকা দখল, জনগণের ন্যায়সঙ্গত অধিকারকে নস্যাৎ করার কাজে শক্তির ব্যবহার ও বর্ণবৈষম্যের বিরুদ্ধে চলেছে এই যুদ্ধ। এ যুদ্ধ ব্যর্থ হয়নি। আলজেরিয়া, ভিয়েতনাম, বাংলাদেশ ও গিনি বিসাঁউ-এ বিরাট জয় অর্জিত হয়েছে। এ জয় দ্বারা প্রমাণিত হয়েছে যে ইতিহাস জনগণের পক্ষে ও ন্যায়ের চূড়ান্ত বিজয় অবধারিত।

assistance to Bangladesh in consolidating our independence, in reconstructing our war-ravaged land and in meeting the formidable challenge of building a better future for our people. To all those who have welcomed us into the United Nations, I offer the most sincere thanks of the people of Bangladesh.

The very struggle of Bangladesh symbolized the universal struggle for peace and justice. It was, therefore, only natural that Bangladesh, from its very inception, should stand firmly by the side of the oppressed people of the world. The experience of quarter of a century since the United Nations was established has shown how a relentless struggle has had to be waged against daunting odds in pursuit of these ideals. The right of self-determination which the United Nations Charter promised could only be redeemed through the supreme sacrifice of millions of valiant fighters for freedom in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The struggle still continues against the illegal occupation of territory by aggression, against use of force to negate the legitimate rights of people, against the practice of racial discrimination and apartheid. Great victories have been won in Algeria, in Vietnam, in Bangladesh and in Guinea-Bissau. Such victories prove that history is on the side of the people and that justice ultimately triumphs.

However, injustice and oppression still persist in many parts of the

পৃথিবীর বহু স্থানে অন্যায়-অবিচার এখনো চলছে। আমাদের আরব ভাইয়েরা এখনো লড়াইয়ে তাঁদের ভূমি থেকে জবরদখলকারীদের সম্পূর্ণ উচ্ছেদের জন্য। প্যালেস্টাইনি জনগণের ন্যায়সঙ্গত জাতীয় অধিকার এখনো অর্জিত হয় নাই। উপনিবেশবাদ উচ্ছেদের প্রক্রিয়া ত্বরান্বিত হলেও চূড়ান্ত লক্ষ্যে এখনো পৌঁছেনি। এ কথা আফ্রিকার জন্য আরো দৃঢ়ভাবে সত্য। সেখানে জিম্বাবুয়ে ও নামিবিয়ার জনগণ জাতীয় স্বাধীনতা ও চরম মুক্তির জন্য চূড়ান্ত সংগ্রামে এখনো ব্যাপৃত। বর্ণবৈষম্য এই পরিষদে চরম অপরাধ বলে চিহ্নিত হওয়া সত্ত্বেও মানুষের বিবেককে তা এখনো ধ্বংস করেছে। একদিকে অন্যায় অবিচারের ধারাকে উৎখাতের সংগ্রাম, অন্যদিকে বিরাট চ্যালেঞ্জ আমাদের সামনে। আজ বিশ্বের সকল জাতি পথ বেছে নেয়ার কঠিন সংগ্রামের সম্মুখীন। এই পথ বাছাই করার প্রজ্ঞার উপর নির্ভর করেছে আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎ। অনাহার, দারিদ্র্য, বেকারত্ব ও বুদ্ধিমত্তার তাড়নায় জর্জরিত, পারমাণবিক যুদ্ধের দ্বারা সম্পূর্ণ ধ্বংস হওয়ার শঙ্কায় শিহরিত বিভিন্নিকাময় জগতের দিকে আমরা এগুব না, আমরা তাকাব এমন এক পৃথিবীর দিকে, যেখানে বিজ্ঞান ও কারিগরি জ্ঞানের বিস্ময়কর অগ্রগতির যুগে মানুষের সৃষ্টিক্ষমতা ও বিরাট সাফল্য আমাদের জন্য এক শঙ্কামুক্ত উন্নত ভবিষ্যৎ গঠনে সক্ষম। এই ভবিষ্যৎ হবে পারমাণবিক যুদ্ধের আশঙ্কা থেকে মুক্ত। বিশ্বের সকল সম্পদ ও কারিগরি জ্ঞানের সৃষ্টি বস্তুনের দ্বারা এমন কল্যাণের দ্বার খুলে দেওয়া যাবে যেখানে প্রত্যেক মানুষ সুখী ও সম্মানজনক জীবনের ন্যূনতম নিশ্চয়তা লাভ করবে।

world. Our Arab brethren are still fighting for the complete vacation of all illegally occupied territories and the legitimate national rights of the people of Palestine have yet to be restored. The process of decolonization, though greatly advanced, has yet to reach its ultimate goal. This is particularly true in Africa where the heroic people of Zimbabwe and Namibia are still engaged in a grim struggle for freedom and national liberation. Apartheid, which this Assembly has repeatedly declared to be a crime against humanity, continues to outrage the conscience of human beings.

While the legacy of injustice from the past has to be liquidated, we are faced with the challenges of the future. Today, the nations of the world are faced with critical choices. Upon the wisdom of our choice will depend whether we will move towards a world haunted by fear of total destruction, threatened by nuclear war, faced with the aggravation of human suffering on a horrendous scale, marked by mass starvation, unemployment and the wretchedness of deepening poverty or whether we can look forward to a world where human creativity and the great achievement of our age in science and technology will be able to shape a better future from the threat of nuclear war and based upon a sharing of technology and resources on a global scale so that people everywhere can begin to enjoy the minimum conditions of a decent life.

সাম্প্রতিককালে গোটা বিশ্বে যে অর্থনৈতিক বিপর্যয় দেখা দিয়েছে তার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে একটি ন্যায়সঙ্গত আন্তর্জাতিক অর্থনৈতিক ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তোলার কাজে আমাদের আরো ত্বরিত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা উচিত। এ বছরের গোড়ার দিকে অনুষ্ঠিত এই পরিষদের বিশেষ অধিবেশনে বিশ্বের বর্তমান গুরুতর অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা সম্পর্কে আলোচনা হয়েছে। আমি এমন একটি দেশের পক্ষ থেকে কথা বলছি যে দেশটি বর্তমানে অর্থনৈতিক দুর্যোগে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত দেশগুলির তালিকার শীর্ষস্থানে রয়েছে। এ ক্ষতি কতটা গুরুতর আমি সে সম্পর্কে কিছুটা আলোকপাত করতে চাই।

যুদ্ধের ধ্বংসস্তূপের উপরই বাংলাদেশের জন্ম হয়েছিল। তারপর থেকে আমরা একের পর এক প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয়ের সম্মুখীন হয়েছি। সর্বশেষে এবার নজীরবিহীন বন্যা। সাম্প্রতিক বন্যা বিপর্যয় কাটিয়ে উঠার উদ্দেশ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রতি সাহায্যের হাত বাড়িয়ে দেয়ার ব্যাপারে সক্রিয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করার জন্য আমরা জাতিসংঘ, সংশ্লিষ্ট সংস্থাসমূহ ও সেক্রেটারি জেনারেলের কাছে কৃতজ্ঞ। আলজেরিয়ার প্রেসিডেন্ট বুমেদীন ও পররাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী বুতেফ্লিকা বাংলাদেশের সাহায্যের জন্য জোট নিরপেক্ষ দেশসমূহের প্রতি আবেদন জানিয়েছেন।

বন্ধু দেশসমূহ ও মানবকল্যাণ সংস্থাগুলোর কাছ থেকেও ভালোই সাড়া পাওয়া যাচ্ছে। প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয় বাংলাদেশের অগ্রগতি শুধু প্রতিহত করেনি দেশে প্রায় দুর্ভিক্ষ অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। একই সঙ্গে বিশ্বব্যাপী মুদ্রাস্ফীতির দরুণ আমাদের মতো একটি

The great economic upheavals which have recently shaken the entire world should generate a sense of urgency about building a just international economic order. The special session of this Assembly earlier this year took note of the grave implications of the present international economic situation. Speaking for a country which heads the list of those described as being 'most severely affected' by the current economic situation, I can only underline how grievous these effects are on Bangladesh which was born on the ruins of a devastating war have, ever since liberation, been plagued by a series of natural disasters, the latest one being the unprecedented floods we have experienced this year. We are grateful to the United Nations, its agencies, and to the Secretary General for their active interest in helping Bangladesh to meet the situation. President Boumediene and Foreign Minister Bouteflika of Algeria have appealed to the Non-aligned group of countries to come forward to help Bangladesh. Friendly countries and humanitarian organizations all over the world have not only impeded Bangladesh's march towards economic progress, but have also left the country in a state of near famine condition. At the same time global inflation has meant, for a country such as ours, a balance of payments gaps in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars. Translated in terms of human suffering, this means

দেশের জন্য দায় পরিশোধের ক্ষেত্রে কোটি কোটি টাকার ঘাটতি সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। জনসাধারণের জীবনধারণের মান নিছক বেঁচে থাকার পর্যায় থেকেও নিচে নেমে গেছে। মাথাপিছু যাদের বার্ষিক আয় ১০০ ডলারেরও কম তাদের অবস্থা আরও শোচনীয়। বিশ্বস্বাস্থ্য সংস্থার হিসাব অনুযায়ী বেঁচে থাকার জন্য যে ন্যূনতম খাদ্য প্রয়োজন তারও থেকে কম খাদ্য খেয়ে যারা বেঁচে ছিল তারা সম্পূর্ণ অনাহারে দিন কাটাচ্ছে। দরিদ্র অভাবী দেশগুলোর ভবিষ্যৎ সম্পর্কে যে আভাস দেওয়া হয়েছে তা আরও হতাশাজনক।

ক্রমাগত মূল্যবৃদ্ধির ফলে খাদ্যের দাম গরিব দেশগুলোর ক্রয়ক্ষমতার বাইরে চলে গেছে। অন্যদিকে ধনী ও উন্নত দেশগুলিই হচ্ছে খাদ্যের মূল রপ্তানিকারক। কৃষি যন্ত্রপাতি ও উপকরণের অসম্ভব দাম বাড়ার ফলে গরিব দেশগুলোর খাদ্য সংগ্রহের চেষ্টাও তেমন সফল হতে পারছে না। বিশ্বব্যাপী মুদ্রাস্ফীতির ফলে উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলোর উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনার ব্যয় বহুগুণ বেড়ে গেছে। তাদের নিজেদের সম্পদ কাজে লাগানোর শক্তিও হ্রাস পেয়েছে। ইতিমধ্যেই যেসব দেশ ব্যাপক বেকার সমস্যায় ভুগছে তারা তাদের অতি নগণ্য উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনাগুলোও কেটে ছেঁটে কলেবর ছোট করতে বাধ্য হয়েছে। এই পরিকল্পনাগুলো বাস্তবায়িত হলে মাত্র পাঁচ থেকে ছয় শতাংশ হারে আয় বৃদ্ধির সম্ভাবনা ছিল। বিশ্বের সকল জাতি ঐক্যবদ্ধভাবে এই পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলা করতে অগ্রসর না হলে মানুষের দুঃখ-দুর্দশা এমন বিরাট আকার ধারণ করবে, ইতিহাসে যার তুলনা পাওয়া যাবে না। অবশ্য বর্তমানে অসংখ্য মানুষের পুঞ্জীভূত দুঃখ-দুর্দশার পাশাপাশি

that people with a meager annual per capita income of less than \$100 are now faced with the prospect of severe reduction in even their current subsistence level of living.

People who are consuming less than the minimum considered necessary for mere survival by the World Health Organization, now face starvation. The forecast for the future of the poorer countries is even gloomier. Food grains, of which the developed industrial nations are the main exporters, are gradually going out of their reach as a result of steadily increasing prices. Their efforts to attain self-sufficiency in food production are also being severely affected because of rising cost and growing scarcity of vital agricultural inputs. Side by side, as a result of global inflation, which has not only increased manifold the cost of development projects but has also adversely reduced their ability to mobilize their own resources, countries already faced with grinding poverty and massive unemployment are threatened with the dire possibilities of cut backs in their modest development plans envisaging growth rates of 5 to 6 percent per annum.

Unless the nations of the world can concert their action to meet this situation, human misery will be aggravated on a scale unknown in history. Indeed, there would be no recorded parallel of such human misery having to be endured by so

মুষ্টিমেয় মানুষ যে অভূতপূর্ব বৈষয়িক সমৃদ্ধি ও সুখ-সুবিধা ভোগ করছে তার তুলনা ইতিহাসে বিরল।

এ অবস্থার পরিবর্তন ঘটাতে পারে আমাদের মধ্যে মানবিক ঐক্যবোধ, ভ্রাতৃত্ববোধের পুনর্জাগরণ। পারস্পরিক নির্ভরশীলতার স্বীকৃতিই কেবল বর্তমান সমস্যার যুক্তিসঙ্গত সমাধান ঘটাতে সক্ষম। বর্তমান দুর্যোগ কাটাতে হলে অবিলম্বে ঐক্যবদ্ধ প্রচেষ্টা দরকার। বর্তমানের মতো এত বড় চ্যালেঞ্জের মোকাবিলা জাতিসংঘ অতীতে কখনো করেনি। এ চ্যালেঞ্জ হচ্ছে একটা ন্যায়সঙ্গত আন্তর্জাতিক ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তোলার জন্য যুক্তির শক্তিকে কাজে লাগানোর চেষ্টা। এ ব্যবস্থায় থাকবে নিজের প্রাকৃতিক সম্পদের উপর প্রতিটি দেশের সার্বভৌম অধিকারের নিশ্চয়তা। এ ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তুলবে আন্তর্জাতিক সহযোগিতা, বাস্তব কাঠামো, যার ভিত্তি হবে স্থিতিশীল ন্যায়সঙ্গত অর্থনৈতিক ব্যবস্থায় বিশ্বের সকল দেশের সাধারণ স্বার্থের স্বীকৃতি। এখন এমন একটি সময় যখন আমাদের দ্ব্যর্থহীন কণ্ঠে ঘোষণা করতে হবে যে, আমাদের একটা আন্তর্জাতিক দায়িত্ব রয়েছে। এ দায়িত্ব হলো বিশ্বের প্রতিটি মানুষ যাতে তার ব্যক্তিত্বের বিকাশ ও মর্যাদার উপযোগী অর্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক অধিকার ভোগ করতে পারে তার ব্যবস্থা করা। মানবাধিকার সংক্রান্ত সার্বজনীন ঘোষণায় এ অধিকারের গ্যারান্টি দেওয়া হয়েছে। মানবাধিকার সংক্রান্ত ঘোষণা অনুযায়ী আমাদের আন্তর্জাতিক দায়িত্ব এমনভাবে পালন করতে হবে যাতে প্রতিটি মানুষ নিজের ও পরিবারের সুখ-

many side by side with such unprecedented level of affluence and prosperity enjoyed by so few. Only a regeneration of the feeling of human solidarity and brotherhood and an acknowledgement of interdependence can bring about a rational solution and the urgent action needed to avoid this catastrophe.

No greater challenge has been faced by the United Nations than that of marshaling the forces of reason to bring about a just international economic order. This order must not only ensure sovereignty of each state over its natural resources but should also seek to establish a framework of international cooperation based upon recognition of the overriding common interest of the countries of the world in a stable and just economic system. This is the moment when we must reaffirm in unequivocal terms that there is an international responsibility to ensure that everyone everywhere should enjoy the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for human dignity and the free development of one's personality as guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This responsibility, according to the Universal Declaration, should extend to ensuring to everyone the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family.

সমৃদ্ধির জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় জীবনধারণের মান প্রতিষ্ঠা অর্জনের নিশ্চয়তা লাভ করে।

আন্তর্জাতিক অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা, সমঝোতা ও শান্তিপূর্ণ পরিবেশই যে অর্থনৈতিক দুরবস্থা দূর করতে সক্ষম, সে সম্পর্কে আমরা সম্পূর্ণ সচেতন। এ প্রসঙ্গে বলা প্রয়োজন, বর্তমান অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতা নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার জন্য জরুরি ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা দরকার। অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতা হ্রাস করা সম্ভব হলে অর্থনৈতিক সঙ্কট দূর করার পরিবেশই শুধু গড়ে উঠবে না এ প্রতিযোগিতায় যে বিপুল সম্পদ অপচয় হচ্ছে তা মানবজাতির সাধারণ কল্যাণে নিয়োগ করা সম্ভব হবে।

বাংলাদেশ প্রথম থেকেই জোট নিরপেক্ষ বৈদেশিক নীতি অনুসরণ করেছে। এই নীতির মূলকথা শান্তিপূর্ণ সহ-অবস্থান এবং সকলের সঙ্গে মৈত্রী। শান্তির প্রতি যে আমাদের পূর্ণ আনুগত্য তা এই উপলব্ধি থেকে জন্মেছে যে একমাত্র শান্তিপূর্ণ পরিবেশেই আমরা আমাদের কষ্টার্জিত জাতীয় স্বাধীনতার ফল আন্বাদন করতে পারব এবং ক্ষুধা, দারিদ্র্য, রোগশোক, অশিক্ষা ও বেকারত্বের বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রাম করার জন্য আমাদের সকল সম্পদ ও শক্তি নিয়োগ করতে সক্ষম হব। সুতরাং আমরা স্বাগত জানাই সেই সকল প্রচেষ্টাকে, যার লক্ষ্য বিশ্বে উত্তেজনা হ্রাস করা, অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতা সীমিত করা, এশিয়া, আফ্রিকা ও ল্যাটিন আমেরিকাসহ পৃথিবীর প্রত্যেকটি স্থানে শান্তিপূর্ণ সহ-অবস্থান নীতি জোরদার করা। এই নীতি অনুযায়ী ভারত মহাসাগরকে শান্তি এলাকা রাখার প্রস্তাবে আমরা অবিরাম সমর্থন জানিয়ে এসেছি। ভারত মহাসাগরকে শান্তি এলাকা রাখার

We are fully conscious that the current economic crisis can be dealt only in an environment of peace, international amity and understanding. In this context, urgent measures to control the present arms race assume special importance not only for the creation of such an environment but also for releasing for the common good of mankind the massive resources currently being wasted on armaments.

Bangladesh from its very inception, has adopted a non-aligned policy based upon the principles of peaceful coexistence and friendship towards all. Our total commitment to peace is born of the realization that only an environment of peace would enable us to enjoy the fruits of our hard-won national independence and to mobilize and concentrate all our energies and resources in combating the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment. We therefore, welcome every effort aimed at advancing the process of detente, relaxation of tension, limitation of armaments and the promotion of peaceful coexistence in every part of the world, whether it is in Asia, Africa and Europe or in Latin America. In pursuance of this policy we have consistently supported the concept of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean area which has received powerful endorsement of this Assembly. We have also supported the concept of South East Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.

প্রস্তাব এই পরিষদেও সক্রিয় শক্তিশালী অনুমোদন লাভ করেছে।

আমরা দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়াকে শান্তি, স্বাধীনতা ও নিরপেক্ষতার এলাকারূপে ঘোষণার অকুণ্ঠ সমর্থন জানিয়েছি। আমাদের বিশ্বাস জোট নিরপেক্ষ সম্মেলনে বিশ্বের যে উদীয়মান জাতিসমূহ একত্রিত হয়েছিলেন, তাঁরা শান্তির পক্ষে শক্তিশালী সমর্থন জুগিয়েছেন। তাঁরা বিশ্বের বিপুল সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ মানুষের অভিন্ন প্রতিজ্ঞার কথাই আবার ঘোষণা করেছেন। এই ঘোষণার লক্ষ্য জাতীয় স্বাধীনতার রক্ষা এবং শান্তি ও ন্যায়বিচার প্রতিষ্ঠা করা।

মানবজাতির অস্তিত্ব রক্ষার জন্য শান্তি একান্ত দরকার। এই শান্তির মধ্যে সারা বিশ্বের সকল নর-নারীর গভীর আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষা মূর্ত হয়ে রয়েছে। ন্যায়নীতির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত না হলে শান্তি কখনও স্থায়ী হতে পারে না।

আমরা শান্তিকামী বলে আমাদের এই উপমহাদেশে আমরা আপস-মীমাংসা নীতির অনুসারী। আমাদের দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস, বাংলাদেশের অভ্যুদয় উপমহাদেশে শান্তি ও স্থিতিশীলতা প্রতিষ্ঠার সহায়ক হয়েছে এবং অতীতের সংঘাত ও বিরোধের বদলে আমাদের তিনটি দেশের জনগণের মধ্যে কল্যাণকর সহযোগিতা ও বন্ধুত্বের সম্পর্ক প্রতিষ্ঠা করা সম্ভব হবে। আমরা আমাদের মহান নিকট প্রতিবেশী ভারত, বার্মা ও নেপালের সাথে বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ সম্পর্ক প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছি। অতীত থেকে মুখ ফিরিয়ে পাকিস্তানের সাথে নতুন সম্পর্ক স্থাপনের প্রচেষ্টায়ও লিপ্ত রয়েছি।

অতীতের তিক্ততা দূর করার জন্য আমরা

We believe that the nations of the emerging world assembled in the Non-aligned Conference provide powerful support to the cause of peace. They have reaffirmed the common determination of the over-whelming majority of the people of the world to preserve national independence and to promote peace and justice.

Peace is imperative for the survival of humanity. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world. Peace to sustain must be based upon justice.

Consistent with our own total commitment to peace, we have striven to promote the process of reconciliation in our own sub-continent. It was our firm belief that the emergence of Bangladesh would materially contribute towards creating a structure of peace and stability in our sub-continent and that the confrontation and strife of the past could be replaced by relations of friendship and cooperation for the welfare of all our peoples. We have not only developed good relations with our immediate neighbours— India, Burma and Nepal, but also have striven to turn away from the past and open a new chapter of relations with Pakistan.

We have spared no efforts towards liquidating the legacies of the past and made our ultimate contribution by granting clemency even to those 195 prisoners of war against whom there

কোনো প্রচেষ্টা থেকেই নিবৃত্ত হই নাই। ১৯৫ জন যুদ্ধাপরাধীকে ক্ষমা প্রদর্শন করে এই উপমহাদেশে শান্তি ও সহযোগিতার নতুন ইতিহাস রচনার কাজে আমরা আমাদের আন্তরিকতার প্রমাণ দিয়েছি। এই ১৯৫ জন যুদ্ধাপরাধীর বিরুদ্ধে মানবতা বিরোধী অপরাধে লিপ্ত থাকার অসংখ্য সাক্ষ্য প্রমাণ ছিল, তবু সকল অপরাধ ভুলে গিয়ে আমরা ক্ষমার এমন উদাহরণ সৃষ্টি করতে চেয়েছি, যা এই উপমহাদেশে শান্তি, সমৃদ্ধি ও সহযোগিতার এক নতুন অধ্যায়ের সূচনা করবে। উপমহাদেশের শান্তি নিশ্চিত করার কাজে আমরা কোনো পূর্বশর্ত দিই নাই কিংবা দর কষাকষি করি নাই। বরং জনগণের জন্য আমরা এক সুকুমার ভবিষ্যৎ প্রেরণা দ্বারা উদ্বুদ্ধ ও প্রভাবান্বিত হয়েছি। অন্যান্য বড় বিরোধ নিষ্পত্তির কাজেও আমরা ন্যায়বিচার ও পারস্পরিক সমঝোতার উপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেছি। ৬৩ হাজার পাকিস্তানী পরিবারের দুর্গতি একটি জরুরি মানবিক সমস্যা হয়ে রয়েছে। পাকিস্তানের প্রতি আনুগত্যের কথা তাঁরা আবার প্রকাশ করেছেন এবং স্বদেশে প্রত্যাবর্তনের জন্য তাঁদের নাম রেডক্রসের আন্তর্জাতিক কমিটির কাছে তালিকাভুক্ত করেছেন। আন্তর্জাতিক বোম্বাপড়া ও আইন অনুসারে স্বদেশে প্রত্যাবর্তন করার অধিকার তাঁদের রয়েছে। এই সঙ্গে মানবতার তাগিদে তাঁদের সমস্যার আশু সমাধান প্রয়োজন। সাবেক পাকিস্তানের সম্পদের ন্যায়সঙ্গত বাটোয়ারা আর একটি সমস্যা, যার আশু সমাধান দরকার। বাংলাদেশ আপস-মীমাংসার জন্য প্রস্তুত। আমাদের প্রত্যাশা এই উপমহাদেশের জনগণের বৃহত্তম স্বার্থে পাকিস্তান আমাদের আস্থানে সাড়া দেবে

was overwhelming evidence of having committed grave crimes, including crimes against humanity. This was our investment towards opening a new chapter and towards building a future of peace and stability in our tormented sub-continent. In doing this, we insisted on no pre-conditions nor did we seek to strike any bargain for we were influenced only by the vision of better future for all our peoples.

We look forward to the resolution of other outstanding problems in a spirit of fair play and mutual accommodation. The plight of the 63,000 Pakistani families, who have reaffirmed their allegiance to Pakistan and have registered themselves with the International Committee of the Red Cross for repatriation to their country, remains a pressing humanitarian problem. Not only is their right to be repatriated to the country to which they retain allegiance, based on the strongest foundations of law and international agreement, but also the dictates of humanity call for an urgent solution of their problem. The just division of the assets of former Pakistan is the other problem which awaits urgent solution. Bangladesh on its part was, and remains, ready to move forward towards reconciliation. We expect that in the overriding interest of the welfare of the peoples of the Sub-continent, Pakistan will reciprocate by coming forward to resolve these outstanding problems in a spirit of fair play and mutual accommodation

এবং ন্যায়াবিচার ও পারস্পরিক বোঝাপড়ার ভিত্তিতে অমীমাংসিত সমস্যার সমাধানে এগিয়ে আসবে। তাহলে উপমহাদেশে পরিস্থিতির স্বাভাবিকীকরণের প্রচেষ্টা সফল হওয়ার পথে আর কোনো বাধা থাকবে না। বাংলাদেশ তার সকল প্রতিবেশী দেশের সঙ্গে সৎ প্রতিবেশীসুলভ সম্পর্ক প্রতিষ্ঠার প্রচেষ্টা চালিয়ে যাবে। যে সম্পর্কের ভিত্তি হবে শান্তিপূর্ণ সহ-অবস্থান, পরস্পরের সার্বভৌমত্ব ও আঞ্চলিক অখণ্ডতার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা প্রদর্শন এবং একে অন্যের অভ্যন্তরীণ বিষয়ে হস্তক্ষেপ না করা।

বিশ্বের এ এলাকায় এবং অন্যত্রও শান্তি প্রতিষ্ঠার প্রচেষ্টায় আমাদের সমর্থন অব্যাহত থাকবে।

এই দুঃখ-দুর্দশা, সংঘাতপূর্ণ বিশ্বে জাতিসংঘ মানুষের ভবিষ্যৎ আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষার কেন্দ্রস্থল। নানান অসুবিধা ও বাধা বিপত্তি সত্ত্বেও জাতিসংঘ তার জন্মের পর সিকি শতাব্দী কালেরও বেশি সময় ধরে রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক এবং সাংস্কৃতিক ক্ষেত্রে মানবজাতির অগ্রগতিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান রেখেছে। এমন দেশের সংখ্যা খুব কম, যারা বাংলাদেশের মতো এই প্রতিষ্ঠানের বাস্তব সাফল্য ও সত্তাবনা অনুধাবনে সক্ষম হয়েছে। ড. কুর্ট ওয়াল্ডহাইম এবং তাঁর যোগ্য ও নিবেদিতপ্রাণ সহকর্মীবৃন্দের প্রেরণাদানকারী নেতৃত্বে এই জাতিসংঘ আমাদের দেশে বিরাট ত্রাণ, পুনর্বাসন ও পুনর্গঠনের কাজ করেছে। বাংলাদেশের বুক থেকে যুদ্ধের ক্ষত দূর করা, যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত অর্থনীতির উৎপাদন ক্ষমতার পুনরুজ্জীবন এবং মুক্তিযুদ্ধের সময় ভারতে আশ্রয়গ্রহণকারী

so that the process of normalization can be carried to a successful conclusion.

Bangladesh will maintain friendly relations with her neighbours following the principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We will also continue our support for the pursuit of regional and global peace. In a world that is marked by strife and human misery, the United Nations remains the focus of Man's hope for the future. Despite many difficulties and obstacles placed in its way, the United Nations, during more than a quarter century of its existence, has significantly contributed towards human progress in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. There are few countries in the world that have a better realization than Bangladesh of the concrete achievements and the potential for good of this organization. It was under the inspired leadership of Dr. Kurt Waldheim and his able and dedicated colleagues that the United Nations mounted a major relief and reconstruction programme in our country to heal the wounds of war, to restore the productive capacity of our war ravaged economy and to rehabilitate millions of returning refugees from India who had to take shelter there during our struggle for liberation. To the Secretary General, members of his staff and the various

কোটিখানেক উদ্বাস্তুর পুনর্বাসনের ব্যবস্থা করা এ কাজের লক্ষ্য। সেক্রেটারি জেনারেল, তাঁর সহকর্মীবৃন্দ এবং বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থা এই বিরাট দায়িত্ব পালনে সমন্বয় সাধনের প্রেরণা জুগিয়েছেন ও নেতৃত্ব দিয়েছেন। বাংলাদেশের সরকার ও জনগণের পক্ষ থেকে তাঁদের প্রতি কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাই। আমার দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস, উপমহাদেশে অবশিষ্ট যে মানবিক সমস্যা রয়েছে, তার সমাধানেও জাতিসংঘ এই রকমের গঠনমূলক মনোভাব নিয়ে এগিয়ে আসবে।

বাংলাদেশের সাম্প্রতিক সর্বনাশা বন্যায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত লোকদের সাহায্যের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় ত্রাণসামগ্রী আহরণের কাজে জাতিসংঘ যে প্রচেষ্টা চালাচ্ছে, তার জন্যও আমরা কৃতজ্ঞ। প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগের কবলে পড়ে যে সব দেশ বার বার ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়, বাংলাদেশ তাদের অন্যতম। তাই প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগ থেকে উদ্ধৃত পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলায় এবং বিশ্ব সমাজের দ্রুত এগিয়ে আসার উপযোগী নিয়মিত প্রতিষ্ঠান গঠনে বাংলাদেশের বিশেষ স্বার্থ নিহিত রয়েছে। অবশ্য, সূচনা হিসেবে এই ধরনের একটি ব্যবস্থা ইতিমধ্যেই হয়েছে। এই ব্যবস্থা জাতিসংঘের বিপর্যয় ত্রাণ সমন্বয়কারী অফিস স্থাপন। সংস্থাটি যাতে কার্যকরভাবে তার ভূমিকা পালন করতে পারে, সেজন্য তাকে শক্তিশালী করে গড়ে তোলা একান্ত দরকার। জাতিসংঘের সকল সদস্য দেশেরই এ ব্যাপারে বিশেষ দায়িত্ব রয়েছে।

প্রিয় প্রেসিডেন্ট,

সর্বশেষ আমি মানবের অসাধ্য সাধন ও দুরূহ বাধা অতিক্রমের অদম্য শক্তির প্রতি আমাদের পূর্ণ আস্থার কথা আবার ঘোষণা

humanitarian agencies who have contributed to the success of this gigantic operation, I would like to offer the sincere expression of gratitude of the government and of the people of Bangladesh. We are confident that the United Nations in the solution of the remaining humanitarian problem in sub-continent.

As I mentioned earlier, we are grateful to the United Nations for the efforts in mobilizing assistance in aid of the victims of the current catastrophic floods in Bangladesh. As a country which has repeatedly been exposed to the ravages of natural calamities, Bangladesh has special stake in the creation of an institutional arrangement by which the international community can move effectively to meet and prevent such calamities. Indeed a beginning, though modest, has already been made in this respect by the establishment of the office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator. However, in order that it can effectively play the role assigned to it there is an imperative need to strengthen the organization. The members of the United Nations have a special responsibility to concert their efforts for the achievement of this objective.

Dear President,

I should like to conclude by re-affirming my faith in the indomitable spirit of human beings,

করতে চাই। আমাদের মতো দেশসমূহ, যাদের অভ্যুদয় সংগ্রাম ও ত্যাগের মধ্য দিয়ে, এই আদর্শে বিশ্বাসই তাদের বাঁচিয়ে রাখবে। আমাদের কষ্ট স্বীকার করতে হতে পারে। কিন্তু আমাদের ধ্বংস নাই। এই জীবনযুদ্ধের মোকাবেলায় জনগণের প্রতিরোধ ক্ষমতা ও দৃঢ় প্রতিজ্ঞাই শেষ কথা। আত্মনির্ভরশীলতাই আমাদের লক্ষ্য। জনগণের ঐক্যবদ্ধ উদ্যোগই আমাদের নির্ধারিত কর্মধারা। এতে সন্দেহের কোনো অবকাশ নাই যে আন্তর্জাতিক সহযোগিতা এবং সম্পদ ও প্রযুক্তিবিদ্যায় অংশীদারিত্ব আমাদের কাজকে সহজতর করতে পারে, জনগণের দুঃখ-কষ্ট লাঘব করতে পারে। কিন্তু আমাদের ন্যায় উদীয়মান দেশসমূহের অবশ্যই নিজেদের কার্যক্ষমতার প্রতি আস্থা রাখতে হবে। মনে রাখতে হবে, শুধু জনগণের ঐক্যবদ্ধ ও সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টার মাধ্যমেই আমরা আমাদের নির্দিষ্ট লক্ষ্যে পৌঁছতে সক্ষম হতে পারি, গড়ে তুলতে পারি উন্নততর ভবিষ্যৎ।

in the capacity of the people to achieve the impossible and to overcome insurmountable odds. This is the faith which sustains nations like us which have emerged through struggle and sacrifice. Our nations may suffer but they can never die. In facing the challenge of survival the resilience and determination of the people is an ultimate strength. Our goal is self-reliance, our chosen path is the united and collective efforts of our people. International cooperation and the sharing of resources and technology could no doubt make our task less onerous and reduce the cost in human suffering. But for us in the emerging world, ultimately we must have faith in ourselves, in our capacity through the united and concerted efforts of our peoples to fulfill our destiny and to build for ourselves a better future.



The 65th Session of the UNGA

UNHQ, New York
25 September 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Mr. President,

I warmly congratulate you on your well deserved election as the President of the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I believe your wise and experienced leadership will bring great success to the Assembly proceedings. I also congratulate Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his laudable contribution to the 64th UNGA as its President. I also thank Secretary General Ban Ki Moon for his tireless service to the United Nations and for world peace.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh is a secular, progressive nation fulfilling the promise of democracy, good governance, human rights, and the rule of law made by my father, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bengali of all times, from this podium thirty six years ago. This has also been in consonance with the objectives of the United Nations, which has been serving as the last abode towards fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the hapless people of the world. Bangladesh has also been extending support to the United Nations' efforts in establishing democracy, human rights, peace and security also by taking effective steps in combating terrorism and external threats worldwide. I, too, am committed to ensure this continuity.

Bangladesh has established an International Crimes Tribunal to try persons responsible for war crimes and crime against humanity, including genocide, arson and rape committed during our war of liberation in 1971, and immediately thereafter. This action is in accord with the rule of law as reflected in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which we have ratified and which aims at bringing perpetrators of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, to justice. I believe that only justice can heal the unforgivable, deadly wrongs of the past.

Here, I sadly recall the evil act of terror on 15 August 1975 that took the life of my father and the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and eighteen members of my family, including my mother, sister-in-laws, my three brothers, one of whom was only 10 years old. Even I had been a target of a series of assassination attempts ever since my return home from exile in 1981. The most horrendous period was when our secular,

democratic party, the Awami League, was in opposition from 2001 to 2006. At that time, thousands of our party workers, supporters, and followers of the religious minority who voted for our secular party were mercilessly killed by systematic terrorist acts of the BNP-Jamaat-e-Islami alliance government. The most audacious one was the open dastardly grenade attack on 21 August 2004 directed against me at a public rally. It was being held to protest against those terrorist attacks and killings, and by the time a dozen grenades had taken their toll, 24 innocent people, including our party's Secretary for Women's Affairs, Mrs. Ivy Rahman, the wife of our current President of the Republic, lay dead, with over 500 seriously injured.

Besides, there have also been attempts on members of my family but never have we bowed before the forces of terror. Being victims of repeated terrorist acts, my family and myself know this menace well. Clearly our rejection of terrorism is total as is our determination to eliminate it in all its forms. I want to unequivocally state that terrorism will not be allowed in the soil of Bangladesh. Precisely why we are a party to all terrorism-related UN Conventions, and accord them our full support.

Our firm policy against terrorism and love for peace had led me to negotiate the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord, ending decades of internal conflict; and negotiate peaceful resolution of the violent uprising of our para-military border forces in 2009. In international sphere, our commitment to peace, essential for development, is reflected in our unflinching support of UN peacekeeping missions. Since 1988, Bangladesh has sent 97,000 troops to 24 countries on 32 such missions. In the period, we have lost the precious lives of 92 valiant soldiers. Our present troop contribution has made Bangladesh number one among UN peacekeeping troop contributing countries. Sadly, despite these involvements, our presence in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations remains negligible, as is also our voice in planning strategies of peacekeeping missions. Therefore, in all fairness, this calls for our proportionate representation in the DPKO.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh has been adversely affected by global warming. Food security, displacement of people, depleting biodiversity, among others, is faced with serious threats due to climate change and global warming. Though our share of carbon gas emissions is negligible, we are its worst victim. Increasing frequency and ferocity of floods, cyclones, droughts, and other natural disasters, caused by this phenomenon, are creating havoc in the lives lost and the resources destroyed. Consequently, attaining the Millennium Development Goals is becoming a more difficult challenge. Climate migrants are already crowding our cities, putting a great stress on our limited infrastructural facilities, and causing social disorders. The situation would become catastrophic with a one meter rise

of sea level due to global warming. This would inundate a quarter of Bangladesh, directly impacting 11 percent of our population, and leading to mass migration.

To meet these challenges, we have adopted a 134-point adaptation and mitigation action plan. They include dredging of major rivers to restrict flooding, recovering cultivable lands for settling displaced people, and increasing capacity for producing more food grains. Other plans include afforesting 20% land area by 2015, thus creating a huge carbon sink; protecting biodiversity, strengthening coasts and river banks with green belts; modernizing disaster management with community participation; developing crop varieties attuned to climate change, changing agricultural practices; using clean coal technology; and adopting nuclear power and renewable energy. Meanwhile, over 14,000 shelters for cyclone victims have been strategically constructed to cope with cyclonic disasters.

Materializing the action plans needs enormous funds. An immediate measure has been the establishment of a Climate Change Trust Fund with our own resources, and a Climate Change Resilience Fund with assistance from development partners. At international level, in COP 15 last year, we worked hard for a legally binding agreement, and an international "Climate Fund" for assisting countries most vulnerable to climate change. The compromise was the Copenhagen Accord which has so far failed to deliver its promises. Therefore, I urge the world leaders that at COP 16 this year, in their wisdom, conclude a positive agreement, based on the Bali Plan of Action, with agreed cuts on green house gas emissions, and real contribution to the international "Climate Fund". I also urge them to adopt at COP 16 measures to ameliorate the adverse impacts of climate change faced by the most vulnerable countries, like Bangladesh; small island countries like the Maldives; and landlocked countries like Bhutan and Nepal, among other LDCs.

Mr. President,

The world is yet to recover from the world economic crisis. LDCs as well as developed countries are suffering from reduced exports. The crises are due to inequity and injustice resulting from an unfair international structure, which still remains mostly unchanged. The Bretton Woods Institutions (BHI) must now accommodate stronger presence of developing countries, especially LDCs. While the BHI can cater to long term development assistances, Bangladesh proposes establishment of a special fund under the United Nations to deal exclusively with SDRs and Grants. We also propose that all stakeholders respect country-led ownership of all development projects as enshrined in the Accra Agenda for Action.

The LDCs surely welcome the development assistance they receive from the developed world. They would, however, be benefited more through receiving

liberal trade concessions such as duty and quota free market access, trade capacity building, etc. LDCs also seek speedy end of the Doha Round of WTO trade negotiations, and fulfillment of OECD countries' ODA commitment to developing countries of 0.7% of GNI, with 0.2% to LDCs as reaffirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action. The LDCs have also been affected by unemployment at home, and by obstacles to migration for jobs abroad. Since remittances form a significant part of their GDP, economic recovery measures should assure employment opportunities and all rights of migrant workers, especially those from LDCs.

However, amidst the travails of the past years, Bangladesh has fared reasonably well in maintaining an annual GDP growth rate of 6%. This was possible for our pragmatic policies on food production, agriculture, rural development, inflation control, and keeping food and essentials prices within reach of the poor. Our policies on food security, during our previous government (1996 to 2001), had then made Bangladesh self sufficient in food, leading to our winning the FAO's "Ceres Award". This time around with the implementation of the National Food Policy, aimed at stable prices of fuel, fertilizer, seeds and other farm inputs, our government has succeeded again in ensuring sustained food supply to all.

Our government's aim is also to use ICT to accelerate our socio-economic development. Therefore, we are implementing ICT Act 2009 and ICT Policy 2009 to build the requisite infrastructure, and reach ICT to every nook and corner of Bangladesh. Already educational, local government institutions and rural communities are being connected to Internet services. The process includes an "e-Center for Rural Community" connecting 8,500 post offices; a "High-Tech Park"; a network of e-governance; strengthening of telecommunication network; and satellite communication. Our e-services is now focused in improving agricultural information delivery, market access, education, healthcare, disaster early warning, law and order, and social safety net payments. Also, being implemented is an aggressive e-leadership programme among Members of Parliament, top policy makers, field administrators and local administrators. We have already transformed 100 Union Parishads to host e-centres in 2009, and expedited to process to cover all 4,500 Union Parishads by this year. In short, our government is determined to achieve a "Digital Bangladesh", and transform it into a middle income country by 2021, the 'Golden Jubilee Year' of our nation's independence.

Simultaneously, our government's drive is to attain 100% primary school enrollment by 2011, and 100% literacy rate by 2014. Our highest budget allocation is on education. Tuition, books are now free for school students of up to Grade 12. Computer and Internet facility are being provided free of cost to schools for familiarizing students with their use. To encourage school

attendance, we have started providing lunch to students, and cash incentives to parents. Though Bangladesh has achieved the MDG target of gender equality at secondary level, our plan is to provide free tuition to girls up to undergraduate level. It is because I firmly believe women's equal involvement is vital for a nation's development. Gender equity and human development are our top priority concerns.

Our government has revived the "National Women Development Policy" adopted during our last tenure of office (1996-2001). At present, beside the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader, and a Whip, there are 5 women cabinet ministers and 45 MPs against reserved seats. Moreover, 19 women MPs have been directly elected. Women also occupy 30% reserved seats in all local governments. They are encouraged to participate in politics and administration, and are recruited in all professions, including the armed services. They are also serving in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

We have also made arrangements to provide pension to distressed and widowed women, as well as residential accommodation for both genders in Old Peoples Homes. Our social safety nets also include programs for minorities, the marginalized, disabled, and mentally challenged. Ashrayan or homes for the homeless; "One Home, One Farm" policy to alleviate poverty; cash and food transfer programs etc. are the other programs.

A new policy provides for employment of one member from every poor family. Another new initiative is the National Services Policy for providing youth and female with employment and skill development. Moreover, research opportunities have led to new discoveries, particularly over climate change resilient crops. A recent success is genome sequencing of jute fibre assuring improved quality of jute products, a biodegradable option to hazardous synthetic products.

Health is another area receiving special attention with the implementation of the National Health Policy adopted during our previous term. This policy provides for establishment of one community clinic for every 6,000 people. Our plan is to locate 18,000 such clinics, in the first phase, to reach basic health services to people's homes. For safe motherhood, a National Strategy for Maternal Health has also been adopted, with programme to reduce infant mortality rate to 15 from 54 per thousand live births. Our target is also to complete 100 percent immunization by the end of our present tenure of government. Since my government assumed office, maternal mortality rate has been reduced from 2.9 to 2.6, and infant mortality to such a significant extent that our successes have been recognized with an award by the United Nations.

Indeed, despite the world food, energy, economic and climate change crises of the past years, Bangladesh, with the support of the UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral partners, has made satisfactory progress. In fact, our achievement

on MDG-1 on poverty alleviation, MDG-2 on universal primary education, MDG-3 on gender equality and women empowerment are encouraging and on track. In fact, our government with all its sincere efforts intends to raise 12 million people out of poverty, which would be half of the number now living in that sad state, by the MDG time frame of 2015.

Mr. President,

Our unflinching commitment to peace finds expression in our annual flagship resolution “Culture of Peace” in UNGA sessions. Recent years have shown an extraordinary record of co-sponsorships because of the reference to the International Mother Language Day. Ever since this “Day” was adopted by UNESCO, in recognition of language martyrs who gave their lives in 1952 for their mother tongue “Bangla,” it is celebrated worldwide with growing fervour every year. Since “Bangla” is spoken by nearly 300 million people worldwide, has a rich heritage in literature, history and in other fields, our parliament adopted a resolution requesting the UN to declare “Bangla” as one of its official languages. I fervently appeal to you all for acceptance of our very legitimate request.

Mr. President,

Every passing day the peoples of the world are being drawn closer as one village with the fast developing technologies, and new challenges like climate change, terrorism, and economic interdependence. Indeed, our destiny is now one, as is our burdens and responsibilities. It is now obvious that only by mobilizing, and optimizing our synergies, it is possible for us to create a world of shared peace and prosperity. We have no alternative but to discard our self-centred, shortsighted interests, and work in unison for a world, which our children, and theirs, would inherit, and remember us with fondness and in gratitude.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Khoda Hafez.
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever
Long live the United Nations



Facing Climate Change: Bangladesh's Efforts

Lund University
Sweden, 19 December 2009

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Vice Chancellor,
Distinguished Faculty Members,
Scholars and Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning.**

It is a wonderful feeling to be here at the Lund University campus. Forty years ago in 1969, I was here with my late husband and physicist Dr. M.A. Wazed as a young couple, and tourists. Today, as I approached the city itself, I was suffused with nostalgic memories of my youthful yesteryears. I thank you most sincerely for this beautiful experience, and the invitation to speak you.

Since my visit here in 1969, there had been historical developments in South Asia. A war of liberation against foreign military occupation led by my father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation, ended with an independent Bangladesh in 1971. Then on 15 August 1975, in a brutal act of horror, my father, mother and 18 close members of my family, were murdered by a small group of military mutineers. Only my sister, Rehana, and I were spared, as we were abroad at the time. From exile, we began our struggle for restoration of democracy in Bangladesh. Our painful struggle continued for years, even after our return home in 1981, against dictators and quasi-dictators. It culminated with the elections of 1996, and our party, the Awami League's election, and formation of our government.

From 2001 till 2008, Bangladesh again experienced quasi-dictatorial-cum-military rule. This period was most trying with several assassination attempts being made on my life. The most heinous one was a grenade attack on me while I was addressing a public rally that left 24 party workers, including our leading woman leader, Ivy Rahman, dead, and over 400 injured. I miraculously escaped but with damaged ears from the blasts. At one stage, I even suffered forced exile, and eleven months of solitary confinement. However, it was people's will that prevailed. I was released and a historic free and fair election was held on 29 December 2009, restoring democracy in Bangladesh. The secular, democratic alliance, led by my party, the Awami League, won the election with 58 percent vote, and I was elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh. In that capacity, I am before you today.

The sole aim of my life since my family's martyrdom was to materialise my father's dream of 'Sonar Bangla' or 'Golden Bangladesh', a country of peace, prosperity and happy people. During our first government from 1996 to 2001, we adopted some innovative poverty alleviation programmes, besides micro-credit that helped millions having better lives. Our efforts, which included free and compulsory primary education for all children; gender equality in primary and secondary schools, saw literacy rate jump from 45% to 65%. In health sector, a National Health Policy was adopted that reduced mother and infant mortality rates, increased children immunization programmes to 87.2%, and established 4,000 health centres reaching health services to people's homes.

Our government focused on safety net programmes like cash and food transfer programmes; special programmes for minorities, marginalized, disabled, physically challenged and underprivileged; old age pension; Karma Sangshthan Bank for productive employment of the young; and Ashrayan or homes on government land for homeless people with sustainable jobs. Our food security programmes made Bangladesh self sufficient in food. In recognition of this extraordinary success, Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome presented Bangladesh with its prestigious 'Ceres Award'. Women empowerment reached laudable level with women appointed as ministers, judges, permanent secretaries; positions in all tiers of local government, armed forces, police and civil service.

An outstanding home achievement during our tenure was the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord. It ended a long, drawn out 20 years civil war, which left over 20 thousand people dead in the south eastern hill region, with the voluntary surrender of arms before me by over two thousand guerillas. An outstanding foreign relation achievement was the 35-years Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with neighbour India that resolved sharing of water of the river Ganges.

The major concerns of our present government are food security, strengthening democracy, counter terrorism, adapting to climate change, among others. An immediate step had been to apply government intervention in reducing price of food and other daily essentials, and keeping the price within common people's reach; establishing parliamentary standing committees with seven chairmen from other parties in the first session of the parliament; strengthening law enforcing agencies in detecting and eliminating terrorism which had increased dramatically with the patronage of the then government in the last seven years; and initiating early measures in meeting the difficult climate change challenges.

As a low-lying deltaic country at the foot of the Himalayas, crisscrossed by 310 rivers and exposed to severe monsoon rains, scientific findings indicate a meter rise in sea level due to global warming would submerge one fourth of

Bangladesh, including the world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Clearly, though our greenhouse gas emission is negligible, we have become one of its worst victims. Global warming have subjected Bangladesh to increased frequency and erratic pattern of floods, cyclones, droughts; colossal tidal surges along its southern coasts; unreasonable high level of monsoon rainfall causing landslides and heavy river erosions; and absence of seasonal rain in the country's north causing desertification.

Most alarming is the rapid melting of the Himalayan glaciers by over 35 meters annually affecting 2 billion people in South Asia, China, and Indo-China. This meltdown has increased frequency of floods in short term; would cause rapid climate shift in medium term; and result in acute water shortage in long term. This trend would kill most of the region's rivers: change agricultural production pattern, and end some of the world's great cultures. On the discharge route of the three great Himalayan rivers, Bangladesh would face erratic flood surges that would leave 40 million people without livelihood, and 20 million displaced by 2050. The effect is already being felt. Our cities are already swelling with climate migrants whose presence are causing social disorders, overloading existing infrastructure, and increasing poverty. Therefore, we want adoption of a new legal regime under UNFCCC Protocol to ensure overall rehabilitation of climate refugees.

Bangladesh is already adapting to climate change. An immediate adaptive project is dredging of rivers to keep them on their natural course; deepen to hold more water; contain flooding; reduce flood induced damages; reclaim inundated land; maintain navigability; use excavated silt to raise river and coastal embankments and land to build homes for the displaced.

As protection against cyclones and floods, 14 thousand shelters have been constructed with more to come. Bangladesh is also adapting to changing agricultural practices; developing crop varieties attuned to climate change; covering 20% of land with forests by 2015; strengthening coastal belts with mangrove plantations; modernizing disaster management system with people's participation.

Bangladesh has also established a Climate Change Trust Fund with own resources and approved 134 climate adapting and mitigation action plans. Though mitigation is the prime responsibility of developed and major developing emitters of Greenhouse Gas, Bangladesh is preparing a strategic energy plan for following a low carbon path to development; social forestry; green belts for large carbon sink; clean coal technology; nuclear power; and renewable energy. Already 6 hundred thousand solar home systems have been installed; vehicles converted to using compressed natural gas as fuel; industries producing toxic waste relocated equipped with effluent treatment facilities; and biodegradable material used as alternate to synthetics. I believe our experiences and research in adaptation and mitigation is invaluable. I also believe

establishment of an International Centre for Adaptation Research and Training in Bangladesh under UNFCCC would benefit all climate change affected countries.

In COP 15 at Copenhagen, Bangladesh and other most vulnerable countries (MVCs), small island countries, low-lying coastal countries and LDCs would like following outcomes:

1. The core principle of common but differentiated share of responsibility must be upheld;
2. Adherence to and implementation of the Bali Plan of Action;
3. Assured, adequate, and easily accessible funding for adaptation;
4. Access to scientific information on climate change in areas of risk reduction, water resources, agriculture, energy, urban planning, and health disorders;
5. Affordable eco-friendly technology transfer to developing countries, particularly to the most vulnerable countries;
6. Maximum specific commitment for deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions for atmospheric stabilization;
7. Predictable and legally binding commitments for addressing adaptation needs of most vulnerable countries, low-lying, coastal, small island developing states, and LDCs;
8. UNFCCC Fund with annual contribution of 1.5 % of GDP of developed countries to meet adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries;
9. Separate specific percentage of the fund for adaptation and mitigation programmes of the most vulnerable countries (MVCs), low-lying, coastal, small island countries and LDCs;
10. Financing should be grants. This should be distinct from ODA targets of 0.7% GNI of developed countries meant for developing countries, and 0.25 for LDCs by 2010 as reaffirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action;

I would like to conclude here by thanking you all for your patient listening. I hope the statement was not too long. It was my wish to inform you as much as I could on specific aspects of Bangladesh, particularly our struggle for democracy and our struggle against the adverse impacts of climate change. I take this opportunity to also thank the organizers for arranging this event and for inviting me to make my presentation in the esteemed Lund University of Sweden.

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



16th SAARC Summit

Thimphu, Bhutan
28 April 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Chairperson,
Your Excellency Prime Minister Jigmi Y. Thinley,
Hon'ble Presidents and Prime Ministers of SAARC Member States,
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning and Tashi Delek.**

It was in November last year, when I was here in the serene, picturesque Kingdom of Bhutan, on a bilateral visit. The magnificent hospitality and the complete sense of peace that I experienced at that time left me with a lingering desire to return. To my delight, I am here now again, having a similar sensation, and relishing the rare and unique experiences, once more.

Today morning, I have immense pleasure in warmly congratulating the Kingdom of Bhutan for the immaculate arrangements on its first ever SAARC Summit, and also Prime Minister Jigmi Y. Thinley on his assumption of its Chairmanship. I firmly believe that under his wise and able leadership of the Summit proceedings, in the peaceful ambience of Thimphu valley, the outcome would be many, and fruitful.

I also express my deep gratitude to Sri Lanka, and President Mahinda Rajapaksa, for their invaluable contribution towards revitalization of the SAARC, during their stewardship. I also cordially welcome the distinguished SAARC observers present here, and thank them for their productive engagement with funds and technology in implementing a number of vital projects in the region.

Mr. Chairperson,

The South Asian economies have shown remarkable resilience in the face of recent global meltdown. Still, they have suffered from economic slowdown, soaring oil and food prices, and climate change. Global warming and climate change have already impacted our nations with melting of the Himalayan glaciers, rising sea level, erratic precipitation, land degradation, desertification and salinity.

These adverse geophysical changes, with increasing frequency of cyclones and floods, have been retarding our economic growth, poverty alleviation efforts, and

millennium development goals. To face these challenges, I believe, a holistic approach is imperative at regional and global levels.

At global level, COP-15 at Copenhagen last November has given hope of a comprehensive, long term programme. There is now need to lock in the key global players in COP-16 at Mexico City later this year for concrete commitments covering greenhouse gas emissions cuts, and guaranteeing fund and technology. At the regional level, a unified approach is of essence, and calls for the SAARC to establish a Himalayan Council in the model of the Arctic Council, for assisting affected countries in the region.

An International Adaptation and Research Centre for recommending adaptive measures also needs to be established, perhaps in Bangladesh because of its years of experience in adaptation. The Centres could facilitate exchange of scientific data, eco-friendly technologies, experience in renewable energy and assist the relevant SAARC Regional Centers to realize their mandates. It could also help implement the SAARC Convention on Cooperation on Environment.

To meet the challenges of climate change, Bangladesh has adopted 134 action plans under the National Adaptation Programme of Action, and the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Authorities have been designated for Clean Development Mechanism. A plan in progress is dredging of rivers to hold more water, restrict flooding and reclaim inundated land. River banks are being raised with excavated silt to contain rising water, create green belts, and provide homesteads for the displaced. Moreover, 14,000 cyclone shelters have been constructed with more on the way.

To reduce greenhouse gas, a low carbon path to development is being followed. Our plans also include creation of a large carbon sink through social forestry and green belts, use of clean coal technology, nuclear power and renewable energy. To meet the costs, we have set up a Climate Change Fund with our own resources. Climate change is also responsible for declining agricultural land, thereby threatening food security. An answer here is high yielding seeds, resistant to pest attacks and climate variations for enhancing productivity. Therefore, the need is for a SAARC Seed Bank with necessary legal framework for quality seed production, harmonized seed testing, certification, seed trade and exchange of germ-plasm and plant genetic resources.

Tariff liberalization under SAFTA, operation of SAARC Development Fund (SDF), and now SAARC Agreement on Trade in Service (SATIS), and other trade facilitation measures over the last twenty five years have enabled the SAARC to cross significant milestones. Yet intra-regional trade among our countries measures up to a low single digit percentage of global trade of the region. Though sensitive lists of trade items are being reduced, greater efforts are needed to make SAFTA and SATIS meaningful. Hopefully, once the South Asian Regional Standards

Organization (SARSO) is established, it would efficiently work in harmonizing our standards to facilitate trade.

In recent years, our South Asian countries have displayed increasing focus in regional connectivity, and on a greater sense of regional identity. Success here is possible through enhanced people to people contact by means of easy communication, and education services. It is, indeed, high time to agree on equivalence of education standards and mutual recognition of degrees. A productive start could be prioritizing disciplines that may initially include science and technology, engineering, medical, law, and financial management. The inauguration of the South Asian University could prove to be a successful vehicle in achieving this objective.

Our economies, in the last decade, have registered commendable growth, thereby raising huge demand for energy. Recent trends indicate immediate need for cooperation at bilateral, sub-regional, and regional level to harness each other's capacities and resources. This includes developing a regional power-grid, harnessing renewable energy sources like hydropower, solar, bio-fuel, wind, and reducing dependence on fossil fuel. It is here SDF, whose secretariat is to be inaugurated today, could play its role in generating funds from within and outside the region for projects on energy production.

As the SAARC strive at intensifying connectivity to draw member states closer for mutual gains, certain wrong-doers and terrorists are out to undo our good intentions and the growing trust among ourselves. Bangladesh, a nation committed to peace and involved in UN peacekeeping efforts, is firmly opposed to terrorism, insurgency, organized crimes and religious extremism. We categorically reject claims of those who cloak themselves in the rhetoric of Islam, or any other faith to justify violence. We are also committed against the use of Bangladesh territory for launching terrorism elsewhere.

SAARC's success also lies in building bridges among our peoples. It is possible through close and free interaction of our peoples from all walks of life. Here, tourism could play a catalytic role. These would mean free movements and while there is rationale for immigration control, a reasonable balance could be worked out. Though SAARC could have, in its quarter century of existence, achieved more for our peoples and nations, the opportunity is still there. Indeed, through SAARC, we could forge greater trust and confidence among ourselves, help each other in the spirit of collective self-reliance, and move towards a prosperous, progressive, integrated South Asia.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we, the leaders of the SAARC member states gather here today amidst the pure and tranquil atmosphere of beautiful Thimphu Valley, let us take a moment to ponder on the plight of our 1.5 billion people. An awesome majority of them live in

poverty craving for food and other basic necessities. Is it not fair that we, as their entrusted leaders, consider seriously their dilemma, determinedly rise above all our differences, and plunge with fixated resolve to change their life? I firmly believe we can, and do so we will, with some bold decisions here. I am convinced that this maiden Summit of the Kingdom of Bhutan under its Chair, would lead us across the threshold to a new era of peace and prosperity of our peoples.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



66th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Inchon, Republic of Korea
13–19 May 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Hon'ble Heads of State and Government,
Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of ESCAP,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning to you all.**

1. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, for inviting me to address the sixty-sixth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The theme of the session– ‘Addressing Challenges in the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: Promoting a Stable and Supportive Financial System and Green Growth’ is most timely.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. Bangladesh emerged as an independent state in 1971 under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the nation. He was also my father. As the war ravaged nation was on way to recovery, Bangabandhu and 18 members of my family were brutally murdered on 15th August 1975 by some misguided military personnel. Thereafter for many years, Bangladesh was ruled by military and quasi-authoritarian regimes. I lived in exile till the support of the people and the goodwill of the international community enabled me to return home. Then the election of December 2008–widely acclaimed as free and fair, restored democracy in Bangladesh, and elected my party, the Awami League, to form the current government with as Prime Minister.
3. Bangladesh is now a democratic, secular, progressive nation engaged in eradicating hunger, poverty, illiteracy and all forms of deprivation. Bangladesh abides by established global values, norms, and standards, including human rights and the rule of law. Bangladesh also contributes to international peace and security with sustained participation in UN peacekeeping and UN peace building efforts. We are now pledged to transform Bangladesh into a peaceful and prosperous country.

4. Despite recent world wide economic recession, Bangladesh was able to maintain 6% growth rate. This was due to our economic policy which focused on agriculture, food security, rural development, employment generation, investment in infrastructure, health, education and social safety nets. Our major initiatives targets elimination of illiteracy by 2014; free education up to graduation level; increased pension for old people, widows; building more Shanti Nibash or old people's homes; cash and food transfers; national service for educated young people; more 'Ashrayan' or homes for the homeless; increased support to 'one home-one farm' programme; ensuring seeds, fertilizer, fuel; national Strategy for Maternal Health to reduce also infant mortality from 54 to 15; etc.

Distinguished Guests,

5. LDCs, low lying and small island developing countries are being severely affected by the impacts of climate change. Though our greenhouse gas emission is negligible, we are its worst victims. Bangladesh has adopted 134 climate change action plans, which include dredging of all rivers; planting crops resilient to drought, salinity and floods; among others. We have set up a Climate Change Fund with US \$ 100 million from our own resources, and a Multi-Donor Trust Fund with the help of our friends. We are following a low carbon path to development, and creating a large carbon sink through forestation.
6. In COP 15 last December, the outcome did not meet our expectation but we supported the Copenhagen Accord as a forward step towards a legally binding agreement in COP 16 at Mexico City. The agreement must include all elements of the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Plan of Action, particularly specific greenhouse emission cuts by all major emitters. The principle of differentiated responsibility must be upheld, and the fund promised in Copenhagen must be disbursed immediately under separate arrangement for the most vulnerable the LDCs like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, among others.
7. Moreover, the recent global crises have affected the LDCs of the Asia Pacific Region with negative impact on trade, FDI, remittances, unemployment, ODA, and financial markets, reduction in capital flows and government revenue. Thus, most LDCs' efforts were held back in alleviating poverty and reaching their Millennium Development Goals. Now with the turnaround in global economy, more support and assistance must be given to the LDCs, landlocked and small island countries, for restoring their confidence, economies, and to set them on the track of sustained and scaled up development.
8. It is high time for development partners to come forward to help these vulnerable countries in their efforts. It is time for those who have not yet

done so to meet their ODA of 0.7% of the GNI for developing countries, and 0.25 for LDCs by 2010, as reaffirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action. Based on our experience, I would stress on 'investment in people' especially in empowering the weak to free themselves from poverty, hunger, ill health, gender discrimination, inequity and illiteracy.

9. We also need an early and fair conclusion of the Doha Development Round and a trade regime ensuring effective access of products of LDCs to the market of the developed economies. The discontents of developing countries, especially LDCs, have to be addressed for achieving a sustained open world trade regime. FDI need to flow more in LDCs' productive sectors to generate employment. LDCs should also have adequate representation in the governing structures of the IMF and the World Bank. In short, LDCs and development partners must work as honest and strong partners to attain success.
10. In January this year in Dhaka, the High-Level Asia- Pacific Policy dialogue on the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs was held. It produced the Dhaka Outcome Document, which indicates that the Brussels Programme has remained an unfinished agenda for Asia-Pacific LDCs, and that LDCs have lagged behind others in the region in achieving the MDGs. This session of ESCAP was requested to endorse the document, and to send it as regional input to the global review of the 4th UN Conference on the LDCs to be held at Istanbul in May 2011. I would urge the distinguished delegates to kindly consider favourably and endorse the Dhaka Outcome Document for the said UN conference. It is imperative that we all speak with a single voice on our development aspirations for the decade 2011-2020.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. In conclusion, let me emphasize that a democratic and secular Bangladesh is endeavouring its utmost for attaining the aspirations of our people. I believe with the valuable support of our friends and well wishers within our region and beyond, in ESCAP and in all UN agencies and international organizations, Bangladesh will succeed in doing so, and thus realize 'Sonar Bangla' a land of happy people as envisioned by the Father of the Nation.

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu



Ministerial Session of ESCAP

Incheon, Republic of Korea
Monday, 17 May 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**His Excellency Mr. Chung Un-chan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea,
His Excellency Mr. Edward Natapei, Prime Minister of Vanuatu,
Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning to You All.**

It is indeed a great honour for me to be with you today and address the sixty-sixth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. At the outset, please allow me to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP for inviting me to the session and address this august body. The theme – ‘Addressing Challenges in the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: Promoting a Stable and Supportive Financial System and Green Growth’ is the most critical in the current context.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for cooperation and the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation, which made this visit possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh emerged as an independent state in 1971 under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation. He is my father. As most of you know, Bangabandhu and 18 members of my family were brutally murdered on 15th August 1975 by some misguided army personnel. The military regime granted indemnity to the assassins by promulgation of law and gave it constitutional sanctity. For many years thereafter, Bangladesh had been ruled by military and authoritarian or quasi-authoritarian regimes. I had lived in exile. The support of the people and goodwill of the international community brought me back to my home—and enabled me to restore democracy, which was my father’s dream.

The elections in December 2008 acclaimed universally as free and fair—returned my party to government with strong popular support: We won more than two-thirds seats in parliament. It gives us a chance to consolidate the values and principles of democracy which were enshrined in the constitution i.e.

democracy based rule of law, freedom to practice one's religion and faith, equality of all citizens regardless of faith, race or gender and dignity of human beings.

Distinguished Guests,

Our economy needs to grow at 7-8 percent to alleviate poverty within a decade or so. During late 1990s, we achieved accelerated growth, aided by agriculture in particular; and had the trend continued, it would be easier for us to attain the desired rate of growth. There were reversals thereafter, however. The current global economic crisis impeded growth of our economy. Fortunately, however, our economic policy helped to contain the severity of the impact. The focus of our policy is agriculture and rural development, employment generation and rural off-farm employment in particular, investment in infrastructure, investment in human resource including health and education, and ambitious programmes for food security and social safety net.

Let me briefly mention some of our major initiatives which include: elimination of illiteracy by 2014; free education up to graduation level to be achieved progressively; financial assistance for people without income and too old for engaging in productive labour; allowances for old and distressed women; Shanti Nibash (Abode of Peace) for old people; social safety net programme including cash and food transfers; programme for employment for 100 days and National Service for the educated young people (provides training & income); food security; government support for investment in agricultural input such as seeds, fertilizer, fuel; National Strategy for Maternal Health aiming at reducing infant mortality from 54 to 15. It is an ambitious programme for socially responsible and compassionate development, which needs substantial fiscal resources, including external support as reflected in the commitment of the development partners to MDG.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Asia and the Pacific Region is going through a period of great promise, considerable uncertainty and formidable challenges notwithstanding. The global economic crisis affected the LDCs of the region through different channels, including through trade in goods and services, FDI flows, remittances, ODA, and financial markets. These effects in turn reduced employment, capital inflows and government revenue, thus limiting the policy space of these countries to address the structural impediments to development.

Nevertheless, these countries have done reasonably well and achieved satisfactory economic growth, though below what they need to alleviate poverty and could achieve but for the global crisis. We must not forget that the Asia-Pacific LDCs are home to vast numbers of people who are mired in poverty, illiteracy and ill-health. Development efforts need to be sustained and scaled up in order to address wide-spread poverty.

The worst period of the global economic crisis is behind us, largely due to the quick turnaround in Asia and the Pacific. But there are concerns that this

recovery could be fragile and uneven if we fail to act in a coherent and coordinated manner in order to consolidate the gains and protect those who suffered most from the crisis. In particular, the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing states remain highly vulnerable to external economic environment and climate change. The triad of food-fuel-financial crisis, which preceded the global economic downturn, left behind some long lasting adverse effects on the region's LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. And should such economic downturn recur, our prospects for sustainable development and poverty reduction will be further undermined.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate Change is a critical threat to our efforts for socio-economic development. Though our greenhouse gas emission is negligible, we are amongst the worst victims. The sheer need for self-preservation urged us to put in place adaptation measures, which include dredging of our major rivers, land reclamation, shelter for those displaced by natural calamities on land elevated by excavated silt, successful research for development of salinity resistant crop varieties.

We have already established a Climate Change Trust Fund with initial contribution of US \$ 100 million from our own resources. We are committed to increase the resources of the Trust Fund. Our own resources will remain limited and inadequate, given the enormity of the impact which has accumulated over a long period. We urge that the Multi-Donor Trust Fund be established and made operational at the earliest.

In Copenhagen in December 2009, we laid out before the world community the dire predicament that we face as well as the measures urgently needed for our survival. The outcome at COP 15 did not meet our expectations but we endorsed the Copenhagen Accord, hoping that it will serve as a building block towards a legally binding agreement in COP 16 scheduled this year in Mexico City. We hope that the COP 16 outcome will address our critical concerns-particularly those of the least developing countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal-and will give adequate consideration to the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Plan of Action.

Distinguished Guests,

The performance of the LDCs, however satisfactory under the constraints, remains fragile. To sustain the momentum and to build on it, the development partners have to work with - and, more important, fulfill their promises to LDCs. There is still more work to be done to improve the institutional and productive capacities of the LDCs. Based on our experience and policy priority, I would stress particularly 'investment in people', which will empower and enable them to realize a society free from poverty, hunger, ill-health and illiteracy. Special attention is needed to empower the weaker segment of people in the society and to remove gender discrimination and inequity.

We need to see an early, fair and satisfactory conclusion of the Doha Development Round and a trade regime that ensures effective access of products and services of LDCs to the market of the developed economies. Globalization has increased world trade on the aggregate, but the share of the benefits to the low income countries has been anything but equitable. The discontents of the developing countries—of the least developed countries in particular— have to be addressed for achieving sustained open world trade regime.

Much needs to be done to increase the quantity of assistance as well as to improve its quality. Foreign direct investments need to flow more to LDCs' productive sectors, which can generate employment for the local populace. LDCs also should have adequate representation in the governing structures of multilateral institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.

We need to build strong partnerships amongst LDCs and with the development partners for coherent and coordinated action for a happy future and better world.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may know, the Dhaka Outcome Document emerged at the high-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries that had been co-organized by Government of Bangladesh and ESCAP in Dhaka in January 2010. One significant conclusion reached by the Dhaka Outcome Document is that the Brussels Programme remained an unfinished agenda for the Asia-Pacific LDCs, despite significant progress in several areas such as targeted growth rate and increased investment in productive sector for a number of countries. Further, the LDCs have also generally lagged behind others in the region in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

This session of the Commission was requested to endorse the Dhaka Outcome Document and transmit it as the regional input to the global review to be conducted by the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to be held in Istanbul in May 2011. I would urge the Distinguished Delegates to consider favourably the Dhaka Outcome Document and endorse it for the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs. We need to speak with a single voice to articulate our development aspirations for the decade 2011–2020. Solidarity gives strength.

Thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Luncheon Hosted in Honour of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI)

Seoul, Korea, Monday
17 May 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Kyung Shik Sohn, Chairman,
Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry,
Distinguished Business and Industry Leaders of Republic of Korea, Ladies
and Gentlemen,
A very Good Afternoon to you all.**

I thank the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry for hosting this luncheon meeting, Chairman Mr. Kyung Shik Sohn for inviting me to address the august gathering, and the leaders of Korean commerce and industry for their participation.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, 37 years ago, trade and investment became the two important pillars of our two countries' relation. The two way trade between our two countries has crossed the billion dollar mark in 2008 with the balance heavily in favor of Republic of Korea. Indeed, your products are popular in Bangladesh because of their high quality. We want our trade relations to expand our mutual benefits. However, we want you to import more from Bangladesh for reaching a fair trade balance.

I am pleased with your investors growing investment in Bangladesh. As of March 2010, your investment proposals worth US \$ 682 million were registered with our Board of Investment. Currently, your investment is on textiles and garments. We want you to expand your investment to other areas as shipbuilding, IT industry, automobiles and agro-based industry. We also invite you to set up power plants, explore oil and gas, build roads, highways and bridges. Hyundai, as you know, built the largest bridge in Bangladesh- the Bangabandhu Bridge on the river Jamuna.

At present, there exist huge unexplored potentials for your investments in our country. Bangladesh is a market of 160 million consumers, abundant cheap skilled labour, inexpensive cost of transportation, with a home grown entrepreneur class, a politically stable environment with a government committed to welcoming investment. The size of our market can be understood by the 55 million mobile users, a number more than the population of many countries.

Countries have already signed an Agreement on Investment Promotion and Protection, and an Agreement on Double Taxation to facilitate your investment. We have also created an attractive investment climate with liberal fiscal policies, which include (1) Tax holiday; (2) Concessionary duty on imported machinery; (3) Remittance of royalty, technical knowhow, technical assistance fee; (4) 100% foreign equity; (5) Unrestricted exit policy; and (7) Full repatriation facilities of dividend and capital on exit.

Interestingly, during the recent global recession, Bangladesh continued to have a growth rate of 6 percent in 2009. My government is determined to raise the annual growth rate to 8 percent by 2014. The good news is Bangladesh is today listed among the next eleven promising economies. Recent rating by S&P and Moody's also place Bangladesh above all South Asian nations, other than India. Bangladesh is also transforming itself into a regional hub by promoting road, railway connectivity with countries in and neighbouring regions.

At present, Bangladesh is working to establish operational road and railway connectivity with India, Nepal and Bhutan. Bangladesh is also working to develop road connection with China and South Asian countries, via Myanmar. Our proposed deep sea port in the Bay of Bengal would be open to all our friends and neighbours, including India and China. Indeed, investment in Bangladesh today would ensure return of high dividend tomorrow. Our friends here hopefully appreciate the potential for investment in Bangladesh.

Let me conclude by saying that my government and I welcome you all present here today to come and invest in Bangladesh, and also to participate in increasing our bilateral trade. I believe Bangladesh and the Republic of Korea have the potentials to grow together and thereby bring prosperity to our business community, our people and our two countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again let me thank you most sincerely for organizing this important business meeting and for hosting today's luncheon.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh-Korea Friendship.



Dinner Hosted by Hon. Park Jin, Chairman Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification

National Assembly, Seoul, Korea
Monday, 17 May 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Hon'ble Park Jin, Chairman on Foreign Affairs
Trade and Unification;
Distinguished Members,
National Assembly of the Republic of Korea;
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

A very Good Evening to you all.

I thank you. Chairman Park Jin, most sincerely for your cordial and gracious words addressed to me and to the members of my delegation. I am greatly pleased to meet you and the distinguished leaders of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.

Chairman Park Jin, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Both our countries have made painful sacrifices for freedom and democracy. But, in one generation your great country has also achieved economic emancipation.

Bangladesh achieved independence after a bloody struggle in 1971 under the leadership of my father and the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Before he could entrench democracy and emancipate our people from economic deprivation, he was assassinated with 18 members of our family on August 15, 1975. My younger sister Rehana and I were saved as we were abroad at the time. It was on 17 May, 1981 when I could come home with the popular support of the people.

Thereafter my life was a bitter struggle against military autocracy in pursuit of democracy. I escaped 19 attempts on my life, including a grenade attack on 21st August in 2004 that left 22 dead and nearly 500 people injured. My struggle continued, and for a time I again was exiled abroad. Again it was people's support that enabled me to return home. A free and fair election was held on 29 December 2008 under the supervision of international observers,

restoring democracy in Bangladesh. Our Grand Alliance won with and overwhelming majority in the Parliament, and I was elected as Prime Minister.

To strengthen democracy, we have for the first time established all 44 parliamentary standing committees, offering chairmanship of seven to other parties. I have reintroduced the Prime Minister's Weekly Question Hour, so long shelved by the past government. The establishment of Korea-Bangladesh Parliamentarian's Friendship Association has also added to the strength of our democracy. I thank Hon'ble Kim Choong-Whan for his visit of Bangladesh early this year. On my return, I shall request our Hon'ble Speaker to establish a similar association in Bangladesh to interact with the Korean counterpart.

Indeed, Bangladesh attaches great importance to our relations with the Republic of Korea. Given the rapid growth and expansion of our trade, investment, people to people contact, we would like to elevate our relations to the level of comprehensive partnership. I would seek your committee's support in deepening our friendship in the coming days. Let us be partners in promoting democracy globally.

Hon'ble Chairman,

I thank you once again for your warm hospitality. I invite you and your colleagues in the National Assembly to visit Bangladesh at a time of your convenience. I also wish you and all present here good health, long life and happiness, and to the Republic of Korea, peace, progress and prosperity.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh-Korea Friendship.



Luncheon Hosted by President Lee Myung-bak Cheong Wa Dae

Seoul, Korea
Tuesday, 18 May 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Your Excellency President Lee Myung-bak
Excellences,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
A very good afternoon to you all.**

I am grateful to you, Excellency, for the kind words you have addressed to me and my country. I am also grateful to you for hosting this wonderful luncheon for me and my delegation.

Korea and its friendly people, Excellency, have always had a special place in our hearts from the time when Bengali Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore termed Korea as the 'Lamp of the East' in a poem he dedicated to your beautiful country in 1929. Allow me to quote a few lines from the poem:

'In the golden age of Asia,
Korea was one of its lamp-bearers,
And that lamp is waiting to be lighted once again
For the illumination in the East'.

Thus, the lamp lit nearly a century ago today illuminates much of Asia and beyond.

For me, this is my first visit to the Republic of Korea. I am overwhelmed truly by the beauty of your country. I also see a country which has creatively woven a social tapestry finely blending traditional culture with modernism. Your warmth and hospitality retains its traditional character, and imbues me with the feeling of being at home in Seoul.

The Republic of Korea is a special friend of Bangladesh deeply involved in our socio-economic development. The Korean International Cooperation Agency has been providing sustained financial and technical assistance to our poverty alleviation efforts, infrastructure and other areas of development. Your invaluable support since the establishment of diplomatic ties has raised our countries' relations to an enviable level.

In recent years, our relations have translated in enhanced bilateral trade, and investment in Bangladesh. Our meeting today was fruitful particularly in identifying new areas of cooperation. Our agreement to upgrade our relationship to the level of comprehensive partnership would assuredly deepen our friendship and cooperation. I am convinced the people and the Republic of Korea will be with Bangladesh in her quest for progress.

Excellency, I foresee today a beautiful future in our two countries' relations and this makes me happy. Indeed, the years of our mutually beneficial efforts have come to fruition beckoning a future of prosperity and peace for our countries and peoples.

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

I conclude by wishing President Lee Myung-bak and his family good health, long life and happiness and the warm friendly people of the Republic of Korea, peace, progress and prosperity. May Bangladesh and Korea enjoy friendship forever!

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh-Korea Friendship.



Seventeenth SAARC Summit

Addu, Maldives
10 November 2011

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Your Excellency President Mohamed Nasheed
Hon'ble Presidents and Prime Ministers
Distinguished representatives from the Observer States Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon.**

I am delighted to be here in the exotic city of Addu. I express our deep appreciation to the government and the people of the beautiful Maldives for the warm hospitality, flawless arrangements and the unmatched experience of a Summit meeting south of the equator. I warmly congratulate President Nasheed on his assumption of the chairmanship of SAARC. I am confident that he will lead the SAARC processes successfully with his skill and wisdom. I would also thank our distinguished colleague and friend Prime Minister Jigme Thinley of the Kingdom of Bhutan, for his laudable leadership of SAARC.

Mr. Chairperson,

Our association was launched a quarter century ago based on our belief in cooperation for mutual benefit and shared prosperity. Today, we see in SAARC a potential for South Asia to share common values, aspirations and initiatives as well as economic gains. The theme of the Summit, 'Building Bridges', is, therefore, appropriate. Under SAARC's guidance, South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) so far made a modest beginning towards these common goals. But, we all agree that economic integration with trade is a vital element for long term process and more needs to be done in this regard.

While the cumulative trade in goods under SAFTA has crossed one billion dollar mark, it is way below the potential. Our intra-regional trade is around 5% of our total trade as against 25%-35% in other nearby regional blocs. We have made some progress in reducing the Sensitive Lists of traded goods more recently, but many of the exportable goods still remain outside the ambit of the Agreement. Non-LDC members should, in the true spirit of regionalism, take the lead to hasten more robust efforts. A faster and synchronized opening of each others' markets, reduction in tariff and non-tariff barriers will benefit all our economies.

Collaboration over quality higher education across member states can effectively cement regional relationship among generations of South Asians. As

a step in that direction, mutual recognition of academic and professional degrees and harmonization of academic standards is required. Recently, University of Dhaka and Jawaharlal Nehru University of India have recently signed a long-term, broad-based collaborative and exchange programme. We are also in the process of collaborating with Maldives in establishing a University in the capital city of Male. Leading universities, research institutes and think tanks across the region should look at establishing cross-border institutional links for such collaborative initiatives.

In Bangladesh, we wish to establish connectivity with neighbouring countries to ensure all-round economic prosperity and overall social well-being of our peoples. Physical connectivity is crucial not only for intra-SAARC trade and movement, but also for wider regional trade and movement. Bangladesh has been hoping since the last Summit to see finalization of the SAARC Regional Railways Agreement, as a first step. On a pilot basis, this year, Bangladesh even facilitated shipment of commercial rail cargo from Chittagong to Nepal. We would encourage all countries to earnestly engage in completing the remaining work so that the railways agreement could be finalized at the earliest. We would request all member states to do the needful to conclude at the earliest.

It is clear to us all that transport connectivity is key in facilitating greater movement of people, goods and services across the region. Since 2006, at Bangladesh has therefore remained steadfast in implementing the priority recommendations e-summit of the 'SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study'. Last year, when the Summit agreed on the idea of a South Asia Forum, we realized that the South Asia of the future has to be a region connected by physical linkages as well as though ideas, individuals and initiatives within and beyond South Asia.

Besides, there needs to be freer movement of labour and peoples within our family of countries. At present, travel is driven by business, health, religious or educational purposes. But the potential for tourism remains untapped. Taking into consideration the new wave of trust, mutual respect and democratic values in the region, we should move forward in easing travel restrictions with the ultimate goal of complete free movement within the region. There should also be freer movement of labour to meet the needs of individual member states, but under a stronger to remove labour exploitation and control the cost of migration. After all, living standards and life style are not too different and there is a better chance of reduction of costs all around from such liberalization. Furthermore, as the SAARC countries form one of the largest labour sending blocs, I call for better cooperation to ensure the migrants' rights. Through cooperation rather than competition we can ensure that our migrant labour gets the best treatment when working in third countries. It's such a partnership of the people of the member states of SAARC which I envisage, forming the mosaic of future South Asia.

Mr. Chairman,

In recent years, our economies have been affected by global financial crises. Although we withstood some of the financial challenges, our economies still remain vulnerable due to two factors originating beyond region. Rising prices of food and fuel, combined with reduction in food production due to erratic climatic behaviour, have jeopardised sustainable livelihood for many of our people. Moreover, the adverse affects of climate change and global warming have visibly made our lives harder, restraining our progress in poverty alleviation and attainment of the MDGs. Despite the adversities, Bangladesh has strive earned global acclaim. However, many of these successes could be enhanced through greater regional cooperation.

During the sixteenth Summit, we placed considerable emphasis on addressing the climate change issues. We now need to operationalise the Convention on Cooperation in Environment, and the four specific initiatives, on South Asian Mountain, marine and coastal zones. Critically, we also need to collaborate on the water resources of our common rivers in the Eastern Himalayan region. While Bangladesh is actively engaged with countries at the bilateral level, we would propose the institutional cooperation of co-riparians of the Ganges and Brahmaputra river basins. This, we believe, would facilitate integrated development and management of water resources of the respective basins, which, among others, would nourish agriculture and consequently benefit more than a billion people in the region.

Agriculture is still the base of most of our economies and has to bear the brunt of the effects of climate change. However, with extensive research and crops attuned to changing climate, our countries may face the challenges with some confidence. Our focus should now be on 'Nutrition Security' of our peoples, towards which we proposed the establishment of a SAARC Seed Bank last year, on which an SAARC Agreement on Seed Bank is going to be signed at this Summit. As for the SAARC Food Bank establish to ensure food security of our people, we have not been able to tap its potential in full. It provided a unique regional mechanism to help our countries respond to short-term food shortages. We need to address the operational shortcomings to utilize its reserve. Towards this end, we also need to have a specific mechanism to facilitate greater cooperation among our research institutions in agriculture and related areas.

The two most dangerous maladies we face in South Asia are poverty and terrorism. To protect our social fabrics, our growth and development, we will have to cooperate and exert our combined efforts to eliminate both from our region. We also need to attune our attention to firmly tackle the more sordid by-products—poverty, particularly the smuggling of narcotics, fake currencies and, most importantly, the trafficking of women and children. In Bangladesh,

we are in the process of enacting a comprehensive law on trafficking to address the problem. But, trafficking is a cross-border issue and more comprehensive regional guidelines would be beneficial to all. Therefore, at SAARC level, we propose the expansion of the scope of the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children, which was signed in January 2002.

The Third Decade of SAARC, launched as the 'Decade of Implementation', should encourage the SAARC Development Fund, with a few regional projects in its portfolio, to undertake more projects. Operationalisation of its infrastructure and economic windows may be duly considered. A larger and diverse portfolio of projects in SDF is critical for the trust, goodwill and confidence of our people in 'SAARC'. In fact, time is ripe for bold decisions—to pledge and redeem our political commitment. We may also take a deep look into the prospects and possibilities of a more engaged role of the Observers in SAARC. With their knowledge and experience, they can support a faster development process in our region.

Mr. Chairperson,

The nations in South Asia, from the Himalayas through the deltaic plains to the Indian Ocean, have a common destiny. Our progress and prosperity demand that we support each other's capacities and commitments. Only then shall we be able to fulfill the aspirations of our peoples. Therefore a mutual commitment to shared prosperity and support be our solemn pledge to them as we launch the 17th SAARC Summit here in picturesque island atoll of Addu.

I thank you.



Banquet in Honour of
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
Hosted by U Thein Sein, President of the
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Myanmar
Tuesday, 06 December 2011

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Your Excellency U Thein Sein
President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum, Mingala Ba and Good Evening to you all.**

I thank you most sincerely for hosting this sumptuous banquet in this magnificent setting. It is my first visit to your great country of which I heard so much about during my growing years. I am also deeply touched by the generous hospitality that I and my entourage have received from the very moment of our arrival in the beautiful city of Nay Pyi Taw.

I take this opportunity to warmly congratulate you and the people of Myanmar on the successful general elections held in November 2010. I also felicitate Myanmar on its election as the Chairman of the ASEAN for 2014. Myanmar, will surely contribute to strengthening the ASEAN, and greatly contribute to building bridges between ASEAN with other regions and countries, as it has been doing as Chairman of the BIMSTEC over the recent years.

Bangladesh and Myanmar enjoy excellent bilateral relations based on mutual trust and respect, shared history, common cultural heritage and values, spirit of good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence. Myanmar had proved to be our friend in need when it recognized Bangladesh on 13 January 1972 soon after our independence. We attach great importance to our traditional relations and historical bonds with Myanmar. Our two countries, as next-door neighbours, are indeed bound by a common future.

Bangladesh and Myanmar can jointly prosper by collaborating in areas such as energy, trade, investment, banking, agriculture, telecommunication and tourism. Good connectivity by road, rail, water and air would also further

facilitate growth in these areas. Frequent exchange of cultural, sports and academic programmes, would also benefit our people. Our combined strength would help us mitigate the effects of climate change, and global economic crisis, while also raising to the challenges of globalization. Combined our similar views on many regional and international issues would reach a larger audience.

I believe our journey to a bright future has already begun. In the two and a half years of our government, our determination to deepen relations with our neighbours has led to a series of meetings with Myanmar at all levels, including Foreign Office Consultations and Joint Trade Commission meetings. A step further has been the signing today of the Agreements on the Establishment of Joint Commission, and on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investment. These have opened up exciting opportunities for business and investment.

I am happy with our discussions held today in an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect. Our discussions covered a wide range of issues, including the repatriation of Myanmar refugees living in Bangladesh, cooperation in the energy sector, creating direct road and air links, enhancing trade, combatting climate change and cooperating in education and tourism, to name a few. I believe early progress in these areas would boost our national development, improve the lives of our peoples, and have a positive impact in our region.

In Bangladesh, we have been observing with admiration the rapid economic development which Myanmar has been making under your sound and able leadership. Bangladesh too is moving forward despite our formidable challenges. Closer cooperation will allow us to move rapidly towards achieving our common goals of prosperity of our peoples, our nations and our region. Let us, therefore, take a fresh vow to prosper together as we should, as old friends and neighbours.

Your Excellency U Thein Sein,

Let me take this opportunity to warmly invite you to come and visit Bangladesh. I would be extremely happy if Mrs. U Sein were to accompany you on your visit. Such a visit would be a step in strengthening further the existing friendship of our two countries and peoples.

I wish you, President U Thein Sein, Mrs. U Thein Sein and all members of your family, good health and long life and for the friendly, neighbourly people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, peace, progress and prosperity.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh-Myanmar Friendship.



Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit

Chiang Mai, Thailand
Monday, 20 May 2013

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished Prime Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum.**

To be in Thailand is always a delightful experience. Then again to be in Chiang Mai and its pristine setting is truly inspirational. It would surely inspire the meet to openly reflect on the critical challenges facing water and livelihood of our peoples. I thank Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra for inviting me to the 'Second Asia-Pacific Water Summit'. I am also grateful to her and to the wonderful people of Thailand for the gracious hospitality extended to me and to my delegation since our arrival here.

Water security is a growing worldwide concern. Thus, 2013 is being observed as the 'Year of International Cooperation on Water'. As we meet today, we carry with us the burden of more than three-fourth of the Asia-Pacific countries facing serious water security situation. A recent ADB Study shows that although the Asia-Pacific Region has become an economic powerhouse, there is not one developing country that could be considered as water secure, in the entire region.

Today, the world is convinced that human security constitutes food, energy, and water security. And, that there exists an increasing inequality in access to water and sanitation. The situation is worsening due to the precarious state of the rivers and the wetlands. In our region, particularly in South Asia, water security is challenged by booming population, unplanned and rapid urbanization, pollution and over-extraction of ground water. Climate change is aggravating the situation even more.

The competing use of water can no longer be seen in isolation. They need to be balanced so that our individual and collective development and the quality of life of billions of people, especially the poor, continue to improve. Today, rising investment and consumption are transforming landscapes and lifestyle in our region. Asia accounts for 60 percent of the 7 billion world population. We are told that by 2030, the Asia-Pacific region will have a gap of up to 40 percent, between the demand for and supply of water.

Let me highlight a few critical areas that deserve our attention and urgent action.

First: National Development Planning must include improving agricultural water productivity, achieving energy objectives, and satisfying the growing industrial water requirements in an integrated manner. Agriculture accounts for around 70 percent of overall freshwater requirement. As our economies improve and the demand on agriculture increases, so does the demand for water. It shrinks our freshwater sources and depletes our groundwater resources. In countries like Bangladesh where land is scarce, we need to improve the efficiency of water use in cropping, in production and in processing. We also need to develop varieties of rice and cereals that are less dependent on water but tolerant to the existing stress.

Second: To address these challenges properly, we have to move beyond the limits of Intellectual Property Rights. This is critical for our collaboration in development and transfer of technology. For countries like Bangladesh, lack of access to technology often limits us in creating life saving options; effective tackling of arsenic contamination of groundwater; successful harvesting of rainwater and recycling of waste water. Therefore, access to water related technologies are essential for countries like Bangladesh to accomplish ‘green economy’ in the post Rio+20 World.

Third: Management of water is a governance challenge as well. Bangladesh has been successful in the development of thousands of small scale water user cooperatives at the grassroots. They have shown that water governance and management can be improved through local, homegrown initiatives. We are also encouraging use of traditional knowledge and practices, especially the community based ones, as these have been successful with minimum inputs. Aside policies on effective water governance, investment in reduction, reusing, and recycling of water would ensure judicious management of limited groundwater resources. In recognition of this, Bangladesh adopted the Water Act, 2013.

Fourth: Water is precious and the flowing rivers have contributed to economic growth; social development; social and cultural roots; political stability; and determined cross border engagements. For sustenance and navigability of our rivers, Bangladesh had from 2009 started dredging them. South Asian nations share water of trans-boundary Rivers to meet demand of their dense population, growing economies, and ecology. While sharing trans-boundary river water is complex, Bangladesh and India had agreed on long term water sharing of the River Ganges. For equitable sharing of water of other trans-boundary rivers, and to secure river basins and ecosystems, South Asian states are working on agreements and joint governing institutions. I believe if a network of Asia’s River Basin Organizations is established, all our countries could share each other’s experience and knowledge on this important issue.

Fifth: In Asia, more than one-tenth of the global population lives in coastal areas on a meter or less above sea level. In Bangladesh, one-fifth of its land area exists and 30 million of its people live in such a state. Bangladesh is also exposed to frequent floods, cyclones, salinity and sea level rise. These natural disasters have led us to create community based disaster risk preparedness and management, to make the communities resilient, and reduce fatalities. Vulnerability to climate change has also led us to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation plans. These plans come under the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted In 2009. Bangladesh's experience in this area is available to all to share.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The right to water is primary and not derived. Through ages water has led to human conflicts all over the world. Some are now still ongoing. Only judicious settlement of access to and management of water resources is the solution to these conflicts, and for peace. Also, various human rights call for sustainability of water resources. Water and human rights are linked, and sustainability of water resources is vital for economic, environmental and social benefits. Thus, there is an urgent need for water management frameworks, and knowledge sharing networks, for cooperation.

The United Nations and the Human Rights Council have pronounced the right to access water and sanitation. In the post-2015 Development Agenda, therefore, universal coverage of water supply and sanitation, on the basis of non-discrimination and equity, should be a key development goal.

Madam Chair,

Water is life. Water is common. Water is our wealth. These are not mere rhetoric. These are borne through ages in Bangladesh out of our conviction in everyday life in the cities and villages. I thank Prime Minister Shinawatra again for inviting me to share my observations on caring for precious water and its future to meet the need of our progeny. Our contributions in the Summit would surely strengthen our collective endeavour to achieve water for all. Bangladesh shall play its role in ensuring that access to water stay a guarded right for humanity and nature to sustain life in our mother earth.

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Third BIMSTEC Summit

Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
4 March 2014

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Chairman, Hon'ble President U Thein Sein,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.**

I have great pleasure to be in Myanmar for the Third Summit of the BIMSTEC. I have special pleasure in warmly congratulating President U Thein Sein for his astute leadership in moving forward the BIMSTEC agenda during the last five years. I also thank him, the government and the friendly people of Myanmar for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to me and to my delegation since our arrival in the beautiful city of Nay Pyi Taw.

Mr. Chairman,

In the past decades, neighbouring countries in many regions have been establishing organizations to intensify economic integration for their mutual benefits. The BIMSTEC is one such regional organization established on 06 June 1997 with Bangladesh as a founding member and myself on my first term as Prime Minister. These organizations have with years evolved mechanisms for cooperation among themselves for the interest of their states and peoples.

Purposeful connectivity ensuring free movement of peoples, goods, and services have been found from experience as one factor vital for quicker development of member states, overall well being of their peoples, and closer regional integration.

Therefore, soon after our past government took charge in 2009, I visited our immediate neighbours to develop such connectivity. It was received well by all as a realistic way to raise the quality of life of our peoples.

In this forum, our aspirations are similar as reflected in the recommendations contained in the 'BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistic Study'. The recommendations now need prioritizing with agreed timetable for their early implementation. The Study should also suggest innovative and practical modalities for faster implementation of the identified actions. The experience of other regions in this respect could be utilized in compiling the recommendations and the study.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the 3rd BIMSTEC Summit.

The connectivity strategy and the resulting economic activities would greatly support the BIMSTEC 'Poverty Plan of Action' for quickening the process of poverty alleviation in our region.

This action plan contains some useful measures for drawing up regional initiatives. The BIMSTEC Poverty Alleviation Centre in Dhaka could play a useful role in this as it is privy to the knowledge and experience of Bangladesh. I am happy that so far we have been successful in reducing poverty level from 40% to 26% in the last five years. Our aim is to have a poverty free Bangladesh by 2021.

A big contribution of meaningful connectivity would be the increase in trade among the BIMSTEC members. The 'Framework Agreement on BIMSTEC FTA' signed a decade ago would help further increase the trade.

The Trade Negotiating Committee needs to adopt the four inter-related agreements as a package under the Framework Agreement and complete all its work by 2014. It would assist the next Trade and Economic Affairs Ministers Meeting in Dhaka with commitment and flexibility to wrap up the TNC's work and move ahead to address the issues of non-tariff barriers and the flow of investment and finance, as part of wider economic cooperation.

The intensive economic activity generated at this time would obviously raise the demand for energy, which would pose a challenge for our countries to secure a steady supply of energy at affordable prices.

We would need to adopt sustainable energy development programmes as well as developing regional energy grids and energy markets. Our huge untapped energy potentials, particularly the hydro-power on bilateral or trilateral basis, would need to be developed for optimal utilization through collaborative projects.

The recent experience of cross border power sharing between Bangladesh and India would help finalize plans covering these efforts.

To ensure unimpeded development, we should need to mobilize collective efforts to monitor, and take unified stand to seriously consider the adverse impacts of climate change.

Global assessments indicate that natural disasters in our region would increase in frequency and intensity. A rise in 1 degree Celsius due to global warming would submerge a fifth of Bangladesh forcing 30 million people to become 'climate migrants'.

This was the reason why in the 64th UNGA and every year, thereafter, I have called for a legal framework to ensure social, cultural, and economic rehabilitation of climate migrants.

Other BIMSTEC members may also face similar situation, and therefore, voice their support to our proposal.

Sustainable development and reduction of poverty also demands beneficial conservation, development and tapping of water resources in the region. This is also vital for agriculture and food security.

Our countries are sometimes affected with production shortfall in key cereals. Modalities also need to be found for the sharing of water resources, especially of common rivers. As for example, Bangladesh and India is sharing the water of the river Ganges with the signing of the 30-year Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, with others to follow soon.

BIMSTEC could also explore our potentials in fisheries, livestock and horticulture. For food security we need to:

- (a) develop intra-regional food support mechanism to help countries overcome short term difficulties;
- (b) explore ways for increased investments in the farm sector and towards development and transfer of appropriate, climate resilient technology to increase agriculture productivity in our countries;
- (c) facilitate innovative initiatives in priority areas of farm mechanization, innovative agriculture services, water productivity and farming.

Mr. Chairman,

The reality today is a globalized world where we need to work with collective strength and capabilities in utilizing our combined natural endowments for beneficial economic integration and shared prosperity.

From BIMSTEC's initial six areas of cooperation in 1998, it has expanded to fourteen of which some are achieving notable progress, with others awaiting fresh impetus.

The BIMSTEC needs to move forward with efforts based on mutual respect, trust, mutual and equitable sharing of benefits.

I am confident that the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat would generate the momentum necessary for the implementation of all our decisions and the agreed agenda. I am happy that Dhaka was chosen as its seat and I thank you all again for the decision.

I assure you that it would receive all support from us for its operation and activities. We are also waiting to welcome the first Secretary-General in Dhaka. We thank too our friend Thailand for its continued valuable institutional support to the BIMSTEC.

At this stage, I would like to apprise you of a few indicators on our country's achievements during the last five years. Bangladesh, from 2009 to 2013, maintained a GDP growth rate of over 6% with 50 million people joining the middle income group. Our export earnings in the period have increased by 107%; remittances by 62%; foreign currency reserve by 217%; power capacity by 109%.

We are also on track in our MDGs. Thus, Bangladesh is often mentioned as a 'Model of Economic Development'.

In conclusion, I reiterate our government's total commitment to the BIMSTEC. It has the potential to move us all to our common goals. I see optimism in its vibrant role, to particularly help Bangladesh in fulfilling its 'Vision 2021' of a middle income country, which is a step to our journey to becoming 'Sonar Bangla' or 'Golden Bangladesh' as envisioned by the Father of our Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I call upon the fraternal members of the BIMSTEC to extend all cooperation in fulfilling our pledge to becoming a secure, stable and prosperous region where all our peoples would enjoy a life of dignity, security and peace.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Dinner Hosted by Hon'ble Prime Minister of Japan His Excellency Shinzo Abe

Tokyo, Japan
26 May 2014

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Your Excellency Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very good evening.**

I am delighted to be once again in 'Nippon, the Land of the Rising Sun.' Among my many memorable visits to your great country, the last was in March 2010. As in the past, I am overwhelmed by the hospitality and courtesies that I and my delegation have been receiving since our arrival in Tokyo. The generous words addressed to me and to my country reflect it all.

Excellency,

Bangladesh and Japan enjoy an enviable relationship that stems from our inherent belief in friendship, mutual support, and peaceful co-existence. The foundation of this relationship was laid at the time of our war of liberation in 1971 through the unstinting support and the sympathy of Japan and its people. I remember that in the hour of our distress, even the school-children in Japan saved, collected and contributed their pocket money to bring relief from our miseries. Our people remember these gestures with deep gratitude, even to this day. This was why the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman decided to visit Japan at the earliest opportunity in October 1973.

After that historic visit, our two countries' relationship deepened remarkably with Japan becoming our largest development partner and very important source of foreign direct investment. Our admiration of the resilient Japanese people and the nation's phenomenal growth out of the ashes of the Second World War has made a role model of development. Japan continues to move with greater zeal and energy inspired by your bold economic reform initiatives or 'Abenomics'. This augurs well for Japan and its friends as Bangladesh, and the world. Our two countries' friendship is also reflected in all international gatherings where we have cooperated, shared common positions, and supported each other's cause.

Bangladesh is moving forward to become a middle income country by 2021. During the last five years, we have either met or are on track to meet MDG-1 to MDG-6 by 2015. We have maintained an average GDP growth rate of over 6 percent; added 51 million people to the middle income group; attained



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets with Japanese Counterpart Shinzo Abe

self-sufficiency in food; raised per capita income by 67 percent; reached ICT services all across the country; attained huge progress in health and education. We want build a knowledge-based nation; develop our rich human resources and undertake massive infrastructural developments where Japan can contribute further. Japan can also support inclusion of international migration and the security climate vulnerable countries as Bangladesh in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

Japan has been our trusted and time-tested friend. We recall with gratitude that even when Japan was reeling from one of its worst natural disasters in March 2011, it never deviated from the flow of development assistance to Bangladesh. It is our earnest desire to consolidate the partnership with Japan. Today's extremely fruitful discussion on all spheres of bilateral relations has gained significant momentum. A visit by Your Excellency to our country would energize this momentum to reach our goal. On this special occasion, I would extend to you, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Madam Akie Abe, a very warm invitation to pay a visit to Bangladesh at anytime convenient to you, hopefully within this year.

I have now great pleasure in wishing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Madam Akie Abe, Good health, long life, and success in all your noble endeavours, and also to the friendly people of Japan, peace, progress and prosperity.

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh-Japan Friendship.



Waseda University Education and Empowerment of the Youth

Tokyo, Japan
27 May 2014

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**President of the Waseda University,
Distinguished Faculty Members,
Scholars and Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning.**

On entering this prestigious seat of learning, the animated faces of the students and the quiet dignity of the academia, reminded me of my previous visit here in 1997, a year after on my first term as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The esteemed Waseda University conferred on me on that occasion the Honorary Doctorate of Law and I cherish the wonderful memories of that special day.

Today, as I stand before you, I am thrilled in watching a generation of youth with hopes and dreams of a purposeful life glowing in their hearts. I thank you, Mr. President and also thank all the students, scholars and faculty members for their kind presence here to listen to me.

Bangladesh and Japan today enjoy excellent relations. It began when the people of Japan mobilized support and assistance to our Great Liberation War. At that time, even the school-children of Japan saved and gave their tiffin money for the distressed humanity. Our two countries' recent history of destruction and development is similar. Just as Japan rose for the devastation of World War II to where it is today, so did Bangladesh from a similar state, suffered during our war of liberation.

In the days of my childhood and in my college days, my father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in his relaxed moments with the family, used to tell us of his impressions of countries of his interest. He was fascinated and inspired by Japan and took the design of The Rising Sun Flag of Japan for our Bangladesh Flag. On both flags, the red sun depicts the blood of those who died for our nations. The green background in our case depicts the lush greenery of our Golden Bengal.

Bangabandhu also found similarity in the history of our two countries' development. He said: 'Japan was originally an agriculture-based country that

evolved through the years into an industrialized one. Likewise, Bangladesh too is an agriculture dependent economy today and should follow Japan into becoming an industrialized nation in the future.’

When Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971, Japan was one of the first few countries to recognize it on 04 February 1972. This bondage was cemented by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s historic visit to Japan in October 1973.

Since then Japan became our trusted partner in development. Japan’s economic assistance helped our socio-economic progress, reduce poverty and achieve many of the MDGs. Its’ involvement covers development of infrastructure, human resources, health and environment. Today, Japan has emerged as the largest development partner of Bangladesh.

Here I need to draw your attention to some of our major achievements during the last five years of my government. These are:

- (1) Self-sufficiency in food
- (2) Internet facility to 47.5 million users
- (3) Introduction of 3G technology and with 4G in the offing
- (4) Use of 110 million SIM cards
- (5) Establishment of 13,500 Community Health Clinics reaching medical treatment to the poor
- (6) Increase of life expectancy to 69 from 65 in 2005
- (7) Reducing infant mortality rate to 33 from 65 in 2005
- (8) Reducing maternal mortality rate to 182 from 322 in 2001
- (9) Ensuring social safety nets for low-income and distressed people.

Japan’s help, particularly, in education which is critical to poverty reduction and economic development has also been gratifying. I have always believed that education is vital to face all challenges.

A good schooling is the only way to empower the children and the youth to achieve their life’s dream. A nation of educated youth is best empowered to meet the challenges that surface before us. That is why education has always been receiving the highest allocation in our annual budgets covering 2.3 percent of our GDP and 14 percent of our government expenditure to ensure ‘Education for All’ and reach the MDGs.

Our progress in education has been significant with almost 100 percent school enrollment at primary level. School attendance is encouraged by providing free text books up to secondary level to all students every year. In January this year, 317 million text books among 37 million students were distributed.

School attendance is also encouraged by the gradual provision of free lunch to students, stipends to the poor and meritorious students at all levels, and even cash incentives to parents. These have also helped in achieving gender parity up to higher secondary level and it continues until graduation with free tuition for girls. A Trust Fund has also been established to support poor students pursuing education up to graduation level. These achievements compare very favourably with countries having similar levels of per-capita income.

Also, spectacular has been our progress with children challenged by autism and other developmental disorders. Bangladesh is unique in South and South East Asia in developing systems for these children. Our technical and vocational education is also being developed to suit the needs of the modern sector as well as that of our youths and underprivileged groups.

Of our total population of 160 million, 55 percent are young of whom a significant portion of them are students. Every year, a number of these students travel abroad for advanced education and research in countries as Japan. At present, we have about 1,600 students in Japan pursuing higher studies. Our past experience shows on completion of their studies they return home and contribute to Bangladesh's development in various fields of science, technology, medicine and ICT.

Japanese Overseas Cooperative Association has been sending young volunteers to Bangladesh over the last 40 years. It is an innovative way of acquiring practical knowledge as well as in bringing countries closer. The volunteers have been contributing to our rural economy, education and infrastructural development. On returning to Japan, they use their experience in Bangladesh, in their society.

Prime Minister Abe's new structure in the field of education is experience-based and also includes culture, traditions and morality. This is undoubtedly praiseworthy and we have no doubt that his education system would include in course of time global issues like environment, energy, earthquake, and tsunami, which are presenting new challenges to mankind.

Dear Students,

The globalized world that we share is dramatically changing into a 'global village' with increasing interdependence spurred on by new innovations and discoveries. I feel that your generation is excited with the unique developments. However, in the process, our lives are also changing and we are facing new challenges including climate change and natural disasters. I also see that you are preparing yourselves to meet the new challenges.

I believe, it is the duty and responsibility of our generation to ensure empowerment of your generation to face and overcome those challenges. Education is indeed the only answer for your empowerment. The day is not too

far when educated generations will sweep away all barriers and prejudices to work closely together as one family. For their combined survival, they would vie for a world of peace, not war; development, not destruction; and thus create a safe and secured world for future generations.

I wish you success in the careers that you choose to follow. I also wish you peace, happiness and prosperity in your lives.

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh-Japan Friendship.



9th China-South Asia Business Forum

Kunming, China

06 June 2014

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Distinguished Leaders of the Business and Industry,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Evening to you all.**

I thank the Governor of Yunnan for inviting me to the 2nd China-South Asia Exposition being held in the beautiful city of Kunming. I am happy to be here and I appreciate China's leadership to reach out to its neighbours for trade and commerce through this annual event.

Bangladesh and China's relationship is based on close and comprehensive partnership, which has evolved through cooperation based on mutual trust, respect and earnest desire to strengthen our two countries' relations.

China has attained tremendous economic and technological progress and is moving to becoming the largest economy in the world, with the economic emancipation of its people.

This has been possible due to China's dynamic and visionary leadership. The close proximity of Kunming and the Yunnan Province hold a special place in our relations with China. We also believe that early realization of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar-Economic-Corridor would bring socio-economic benefits for us all in the region.

Bangladesh is today poised to become a middle-income country, thus, fulfilling our 'Vision 2021', which will be a step towards realizing 'Sonar Bangla' or 'Golden Bangladesh' as envisioned by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Between 2009 and 2013, when we had the responsibility to govern the country, Bangladesh's achievements have been remarkable with, over 6 percent annual GDP growth rate; 50 million people joining the middle income group; export earnings increasing by 107%; remittances by 62%; foreign currency reserve by 217%; power capacity by 109%.

Our liberal investment policies; sound credit ratings; young workforce available at affordable wages; have been attracting more and more FDI every year. Chinese assistance in our infrastructure building like roads, bridges, highways, urban transportation, power generations etc have helped in moving our economy forward.

In respect of trade, China is one of our largest trading partners and the largest source of import. Our trade is growing and in the fiscal year 2012-2013, Bangladesh's export to China was only US \$ 458.12 million but imported goods worth as much as US \$ 6.307 billion.

To reduce the trade gap, more of our products need to get duty free access to its market. China also needs to import more of our garments, apparel, pharmaceuticals, handicrafts, ceramics, leather products and fish.

Also, more investment by Chinese entrepreneurs in Bangladesh could also help in reducing the trade gap. Their manufactures in Bangladesh could also benefit from our duty free and quota free access to the European Union, Canada, Australia and other developed markets.

Our investment regime is the most liberal in South Asia. Our National Industrial Policy 2010 allows 100% foreign equity with unrestricted exit policy; easy remittance of royalty; repatriation of profits: protection of foreign investment and steady energy prices.

Our young and industrious workforce with very competitive and affordable wages is also very attractive. Bangladesh's strategic geographic location also makes its' exports accessible to a huge market of 3 billion consumers of South and South East Asia and China.

Our existing Export Processing Zones are also attractive for investment. In addition, the Economic Zones Act 2010 has created seven exclusive economic zones across the country. These would be of interest to the Chinese investors for whom we are also considering, allocating a separate Economic and Industrial Zone in Chittagong.

Today, Bangladesh has now a vibrant trade, established manufacturing industries, undertaking human resources development private sector, infrastructure building; a sound macroeconomic management, robust banking and financial sector; increase in the flow of remittances and FDIs.

Moreover, our ever expanding multifaceted social safety nets and the use of ICT and delivery of e-services have energized our socio-economic activities, thereby creating an enabling environment for business and investments.

Bangladesh is now producing products from 'Ships to Chips'. Our seaports, land ports and airports are facilitating local and international business.

In fact, Bangladesh is moving, up the value chain by developing a knowledge-based economy, technical capacity building, enterprise development, and an integrated policy approach to investment.

I believe that China as our trusted friend would support our efforts in achieving our targets.

Other than involvement in infrastructure development and energy capacity building, I would invite Chinese participation in joint ventures or individual investment in pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals, shipbuilding, agro-based industries, textiles, ceramics, leather, tourism, manufacturing, ICT, training and development of human resources, design and planning in high valued added sectors, amongst others.

Chinese investors may also find interest in our special investment programmes like building international airports, seaports, waterways transport, expressways under our Public-Private-Partnership and Build-Own-Operate-Transfer schemes.

I, therefore, invite the leaders of business, trade and industry of the People's Republic of China to visit Bangladesh and appraise the realities first hand. I am sure you will find the environment and opportunities most attractive.

We, in Bangladesh, would very much like to have you with us as partners in sharing our profits and gains as we journey together on the road to progress and prosperity.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh-China Friendship.



Second China-South Asia Exposition Opening Ceremony

Kunming, China
06 June 2014

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Your Excellency the Prime Minister of Nepal,
Your Excellency the Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China,
Your Excellency the Vice President of the Maldives,
Your Excellency the Vice Premier of LAO PDR,
Your Excellency the Vice Speaker of Sri Lanka,
Your Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC,
Mr. Chairman, His Excellency Li Jiheng, the Governor of the Yunnan
Province,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon to you all.**

I am delighted to attend the opening ceremony of the 2nd China–South Asia Exposition at the beautiful city of Kunming. It is an exciting occasion, which is becoming a popular annual feature in drawing close business relations between South Asia and the People's Republic of China.

I thank you, Mr. Governor, for your kind invitation to me to be here. I congratulate the organizing committee of the Expo for this event and its excellent arrangements.

I also express my gratitude to them and to the wonderful people of the Yunnan Province for the warm hospitality accorded to me and to my delegation since our arrival here.

The close geographical proximity of Kunming to South Asia has made it the gateway to China for our countries from ancient times. Traders and travelers, through ages and dealings, have transformed Kunming, as a centre of business and commerce.

Today, the Expo is raising this historical interaction to a new level in our relations with Kunming. The Expo is becoming a catalyst for stimulating trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges between China and our countries in the region.

It is encouraging that these countries are showing keen interest in fostering this profit sharing cooperation. The impact on the economic relations between

China and the South Asian countries have been remarkable in the growth of economic activities and trade flow both ways.

Bangladesh holds China as a good friend and development partner. We laud China's 'Gateway Policy' launched in 2009. Here, Yunnan has been playing a pioneering role in opening up south western China to South Asia.

The heavy investment on infrastructure development by China in this area indicates the leadership's farsightedness in establishing good connectivity to facilitate rapid cooperation for development among the countries in the region.

With the policy of good connectivity among the countries in the region, Bangladesh hopes that it would accelerate our economic cooperation and overall ties with China and all our neighbouring countries.

Since centuries, Bangladesh and Yunnan Province of China through ages were connected by the southwestern Silk Route. Today, direct flights connect Dhaka and Kunming.

There is now a growing demand that the connectivity be strengthened by road and railway links. The Kolkata-Kunming Car Rally held last year has shown that road connectivity is feasible.

I firmly believe that the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC) in this regard is a very encouraging development and once implemented would bring our two peoples closer and help stimulate greater cooperation between our two countries in all spheres of our bilateral relations.

The strategic location of Bangladesh between the ASEAN and the SAARC holds huge potentials for itself and for the two economic blocs.

With a market of 160 million people, 60% of which are below the age of 40 years; socio-economic dynamism; attractive investment climate; private sector led economic growth strategy; GDP growth rate of over 6% during the last five years; growing foreign currency reserve; and emerging good connectivity with its neighbours, Bangladesh stands on the threshold to become an economic powerhouse in the region.

Our economy is today vibrant and with the help of your great country and friendly neighbours to the east and to the west, our future looks very promising.

The relationship between China and South Asia is based on mutual respect, commonality of values and cultures and historical links. Through thousands of years, these factors have continued to strengthen our friendship and our desire to improve the wellbeing of our peoples.

They can today also help us in fighting poverty, terrorism, climate change and other challenges unitedly. Our goal is a prosperous region based on knowledge, education and strong bonds of friendship, with China well placed

to harmonize our progress to prosperity, as our cooperation and development partner.

I have great pleasure to express, on behalf of the people and the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and on my behalf, our most sincere thanks to the government of the People's Republic of China and to the People's Government of Yunnan Province for the hosting of the 2nd China-South Asia Expo, and I wish the Expo a grand success.

Long live Bangladesh-China friendship! May the partnership between China and South Asia thrive and prosper for the benefit of all our peoples in the near future!

I thank you all. Xiye! Xiye!

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Bangladesh Marching Ahead
Bangladesh–China Economic and Trade
Cooperation Forum Hosted by China Council for
the Promotion of International Trade

Beijing, China
10 June 2014

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Chairman, China Council for the Promotion of International Trade,
Distinguished Leaders of Business and Industry from China and
Bangladesh,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.**

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the organizers for inviting me to speak before this distinguished gathering of leaders of business and industry of China and Bangladesh.

I also thank all of you for your presence here, which reflects your interest in enhancing business between our two friendly countries.

Bangladesh has great admiration for the remarkable economic progress made by China. China is now the second largest economy in the world and is poised to become the largest in the coming decades.

It augurs well that China is keen to do business with its neighbours, including Bangladesh. Premier Li Keqiang and I agree that our two countries' relationship is based on mutual respect and trust and: on equitable sharing of benefits for the socio-economic development of our two peoples.

I also expressed our deep appreciation of the great Chinese Dream which is to secure peace, stability and development through cooperation with the rest of the world.

China remains one of our key development and cooperation partners. China is supporting our infrastructure building efforts and has also given concessionary credit in some of our important initiatives.

These have contributed to our endeavour to become a middle income country through realization of our 'Vision 2021', which was a step forward towards 'Sonar Bangla' or 'Golden Bangladesh' as dreamt of by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In recent times, China's support for us has been gaining momentum. We had recently sought China's assistance for some of our key areas of development during the period 2014-18.

We have sought China's participation and assistance in some of our mega projects as listed in our joint statement. Our two sides have also signed some agreements, including the construction of power plants, a river tunnel and setting up of a Chinese industrial zone, to welcome Chinese investors to Bangladesh.

A very positive development is a contract awarded by Bangladesh to the China Major Bridge Engineering Company to build the core structure of the 6.15 km bridge over the Padma River. We have also involved Chinese companies to construct a 1,320 MW coal-fired power plant in Southern Bangladesh.

In respect to trade, the balance is hugely in favour of China. To bridge the gap, China will be importing more of our jute and jute products, leather and leather products, frozen fish, ceramics, lentils etc. China has also given us duty-free access to over 4,700 products under APTA since July 2010.

Hopefully the remaining key exportable items from Bangladesh would be included in China's duty-free and quota-free lists. In the fiscal year 2013-14, the total amount of our import from China was nearly US \$ 7 billion, making China our top bilateral trade partner, and since 2007 the largest source of our imports.

Chinese investments have also been on the increase with 49 Chinese Companies investing over US \$ 300 million in 8 of our EPZs till December 2013. Around 300 more Chinese investors with investment proposals, worth US \$ 2.3 billion have registered with our Board of Investment.

Chinese companies like Huawei, CMEC, ZTE, are today in Bangladesh. Chinese State-Owned Enterprises and private companies are making remarkable progress in power generation, infrastructure building, telecommunications, fertilizer, textiles, EMGs, leather, ceramics, packaging, accessories etc. Since the cost of production of certain products in China are increasing, factories producing those items can relocate in Bangladesh where the costs are a lot cheaper, particularly due to the very competitive and affordable wages of our young, energetic workforce.

Bangladesh is a lucrative destination for foreign investment. Our FDI policies offer the friendliest fiscal and financial incentives that include equal treatment of local and foreign investors, legal protection against nationalization and expropriation, guarantee for expatriation of capital and dividend, corporate tax holidays from 5 to 7 years, concessionary duty on the import of machinery, export incentives, allowing 100% foreign equity and unrestricted exit policy.

Moreover, Chinese investment is fully protected under the existing 'Bilateral Investment Protection Treaty' and a 'Bilateral Tax Convention'. Another added attraction is that as an LDC Bangladesh is enjoying duty-free and quota-free market access to the EU and almost all developed countries.

Bangladesh also provides a market of 160 million people, 60% of whom are below the age of forty years. This young population is enterprising, talented and smart and can adapt to newer trades and technologies. They have been the driving force behind the huge growth of cellular telephones and ICT products.

Today, over 115 million SIMs are used and 24% of the population has access to Internet. Bangladesh ranks third in global IT freelancing destination. Our government has spread ICT services in the entire country. E-services have helped employment of young people, raised the income level, reduced poverty, improved quality of education and health, amongst others.

Bangladesh is also uniquely placed between the markets of South and South East Asia and your great country, China, and is becoming a regional economic hub.

Bangladesh's involvement in numerous regional trading frameworks and development of multi-modal connectivity with the neighbours will soon make it a centre of bustling economic activity in the region. We are looking forward to the quicker progress of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor.

We are also increasing our power capacity to ensure that foreign investments thrive and prosper. At present, our current power need of 7,000 MW is met, though our production capacity exceeds 11,000 MW.

I would like to inform you of a few indicators on our country's achievements during the last five years. Bangladesh, during the period from 2009 till to-date, maintained a GDP growth rate of over 6% with 50 million people having joined the middle income group from the low income group.

Our export earnings during the period have increased by 107%; remittances increased by 62%; foreign exchange reserved improved by 217%; power capacity increased by 109%. Bangladesh is thus often mentioned as a 'Model of Economic Development'.

I firmly believe that Chinese investment in Bangladesh will be profitable and worthwhile, particularly in our manufacturing and service sectors.

Chinese investors may also participate in joint ventures with Bangladeshi entrepreneurs in sectors not yet tapped such as pharmaceuticals, ceramics, tourism, education, healthcare, road and rail communications, petrochemicals, agro-based industries amongst others.

The two-hour flight from Kunming to Dhaka should allow you the opportunity to see for yourself the potentials for business awaiting you in

Bangladesh. China Eastern Airlines has a daily flight from Kunming to Dhaka and two flights a week from Guangzhou.

Bangladesh Biman also has two flights a week to China.

**Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would request you all to visit Bangladesh to explore the possibilities of increasing trade and investment. Many of our businessmen are here with us today and they would be too happy to brief you about the business opportunities waiting in Bangladesh.

I welcome you all to be our partners in our business activities and to share together the gains and benefits, profits and prosperity as we journey forth as friends and partners to the future.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh-China Friendship.



Inauguration Ceremony of the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka

BIMSTEC, Secretariat in Dhaka
13 September 2014

**Hon'ble Chair,
Dear Colleagues,
Secretary General of BIMSTEC, Mr. Sumith Nakandala,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning, everyone.**

At the outset I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the member states of BIMSTEC for their selecting Dhaka as the seat of BIMSTEC Secretariat.

I also welcome most warmly the representatives of the BIMSTEC member states and other distinguished guests for joining us at this momentous occasion.

Bangladesh is a proud founding member of BIMSTEC. I fondly recall 6 June 1997, the date when BIMSTEC was established in Thailand. It was during my first term as the Prime Minister. Happily, during my third term, the BIMSTEC Secretariat is being established at Dhaka.

BIMSTEC has travelled a long way since 1997. Its membership has enlarged from four to seven and had an impressive addition of eight more sectors of cooperation to the initial six priority areas. Indeed, its achievements are commendable.

Distinguished guests,

Bangladesh attaches very high importance to regional cooperation. We are deeply committed to the objectives and goals of the organization which closely matches with our own foreign policy priorities.

BIMSTEC provides a formidable platform for developing deeper understanding and cooperation with our neighbors and work for progress and prosperity for the people of the region.

BIMSTEC represents a group of countries bound by nature and history with unique blending of commonalities and diversities. It has brought together over one-fifth of humanity under its umbrella whose combined GDP is close to 2.7 trillion US dollar.

Our shared historical and cultural linkages have naturally brought us closer importantly, the many common challenges that we face and the enormous opportunities that exist, provide the impetus for a stronger collaboration amongst our nation. BIMSTEC is the one which links us closely.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the inaugural ceremony of the BIMSTEC Secretariat

The establishment of BIMSTEC Secretariat is a major leap forwards regional cooperation and integration. I believe, the secretariat will not only play its rightful role in implementing the BIMSTEC's programmes and projects but also be creative in bringing new ideas and initiatives for cooperation in our region.

I congratulate Mr. Sumith Nakandala on his appointment as the first secretary general of BIMSTEC. I am confident that he would be able to provide the leadership in carrying out the mandates of the organization. I also assure his of our full support in his endeavours and in the effective functioning of the secretariat.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is true that the 14 priority areas identified for our cooperation are very important for deeper integration in the BIMSTEC region. We would like to see that progress is achieved in all these areas. However, we need to take pragmatic and realistic approach in setting our targets which achievable as well that brings in greater good for the region. I would like to share some of our thoughts in this context.

Firstly: Poverty alleviation should remain an overarching goal for this organization. Our region has the largest concentration of poor in the world, despite our high economic attainments. Unless we can address the issue of poverty most comprehensively, all economic gains will be meaningless.

Secondly: A large segment of our population depends on agriculture and fisheries. Apart from ensuring food security, this sector is also the source of major employment for our peoples. A key element of our engagement should focus on intensified cooperation in this area.

Thirdly: Cooperation in the area of trade and investment should remain high on our priority list. The 'Framework Agreement on BIMSTEC FTA' was signed almost a decade ago, it is yet to be operational. The agreement on trade in goods is at the final stage while the agreement in services and in investment are at their initial stages and we need to work with renewed commitment for their early conclusion. It would be a significant step toward a meaningful economic integration of our region.

Fourthly: Aritical to our economic integration is to strengthen connectivity in the region. Improving road and railway linkages would substantially contribute to greater trade and facilitate movement of people. Bangladesh is working closely with its immediate neighbours and other friends to improve the physical connectivity bilaterally as well as sub-regionally. The Asian Development Bank deserves our appreciation for its support and contribution in the finalization of BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study. I hope that concrete projects would be undertaken soon based on the recommendations of the Study.

Fifthly: Another critically important area of cooperation under BIMSTEC is energy for the sustainable development of our region. Given the huge potential for cooperation in energy sector, especially hydro-power potential in the Himalayan basin and potential hydrocarbon reserve in the Bay of Bengal, it is unacceptable that we should continue to face energy shortages. We need to work closely to enhance energy security in the region that is so essential for our economic development.

Finally: We must build strong partnership to address the challenges posed by climate change and build resilience and capabilities against natural disaster. We must also deepen our collaboration in the areas of security, tourism and technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is truly a historic day for Bangladesh and for BIMSTEC. It marks the beginning of a new journey towards greater and more intense cooperation for this unique regional organization that bridges South Asia and Southeast Asia. Opening the secretariat is the culmination of our collective resolve to create a better and more prosperous future. Let BIMSTEC Secretariat become a hallmark of proud partnership of the seven member states across the Bay of Bengal.

With this hope, I hereby, declare the 'BIMSTEC Secretariat' open.

I thank you.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



18th SAARC Summit

Kathmandu, Nepal
Wednesday, 26 November 2014

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Chairperson, Your Excellency Prime Minister Sushil Koirala,
Hon'ble Presidents and Prime Ministers of SAARC Member States,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning to all.**

I am delighted to be in this beautiful valley of Kathmandu for the 18th SAARC Summit. I would like to extend my warmest felicitations to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, on his election as the Chair of SAARC. I am confident that SAARC will attain greater heights under his wise stewardship.

I would also convey my deep appreciation to the government and the people of Nepal for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Summit.

I would also like to commend the leadership of the Maldives, our outgoing Chair.

Our association was created three decades ago with the core objectives of building partnership for the welfare and prosperity of the people. Looking back, one would have the impression that its achievements have been rather modest compared to our expectations and potentials.

Yet, I remain optimistic of what SAARC can actually attain given our collective political will and ambitions. What is needed is to set aside our differences and work on collective strength for bringing real progress to the people in the region. A candid assessment and frank conversation among us is the need of the hour to bring dynamism to SAARC and its activities.

Mr. Chairman,

For long, we have been talking about 'People's SAARC.' The new Global Agenda also requires that we place people first. Let me, therefore, share some of my thoughts on some of the critical areas that need our urgent attention.

First: poverty as our common and key enemy hinders peace and development in the region. Ensuring food and nutritional security of our ever-increasing population poses a big challenge. However, over decades, much of South Asia has attained self sufficiency in production of key cereals. This has helped us reduce abject poverty and improved our MDGs profile.

In Bangladesh, with an average growth rate of 6.2% for the last five years, we have reduced poverty to 24.4% by now from 40% in 2005. We have attained targets of universal safe drinking water and sanitation for the people. We need to do more as we have targeted to turn Bangladesh into a Middle-Income Country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041.

Cooperation in increasing productivity of key cereals, inland fisheries and livestock, improving water efficiency in agriculture are crucial for attaining nutritional security of our people and eradicating poverty. In this context, effective operation of SAARC Food Bank and Seed Bank are important.

Second: Each of our countries has a large youthful population. We now need to develop them as human resources - primarily by giving them quality education and effective training.

In Bangladesh, we have taken innovative steps to ensure education for all. Girls are getting free education up to graduation level. About 12.8 million students from poor families are getting monthly stipend. 75 percent of them are girls. Each year, we are distributing nearly 318 million textbooks free to all students up to the secondary level and it is increasing every year. Gender parity in primary and secondary schooling has been achieved. Now, we are focusing on ensuring 'Quality education' for our students.

We recognize that our education system should be need-based and innovative, with adequate exposure to scientific and technological advancement and comparable with the advanced countries.

Our women and men need easy access to affordable and quality technical and vocational education. Our education and skill development need to be linked to employment and entrepreneurship.

Sustainable development entails empowerment of women and their equal participation with men in all walks of life. In this context, Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in empowering women in social, economic and political arena. Pragmatic policies, resource allocation and strong commitment of our government are instrumental to this achievement.

Third: Technology, especially ICT, determines our everyday life in so many ways. It is changing our lives and livelihoods bringing solutions that we could not even thought of a few years back.

To fulfil our vision to build 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021, we have established 5 thousand 275 Digital Centres across the country. Rural people have been receiving more than 200 ICT-related services from the Centres. They are also getting health care services from 13 thousand 500 IT-connected Community Health Clinics with free medicine. We have, so far, set up over 3 million solar home systems. We have increased tele-density to 77.3% from 31.3% in 2008 and internet density to 27% from 2.8% during the last five years.

For achieving development faster, we must deepen our collective efforts to develop, use and apply science-technology-innovation at all levels. We need support in health, agriculture, food and climate change technologies. Bangladesh would call for deeper cooperation in these areas.

Fourth: Climate change poses serious challenge to much of our development enterprise. Intensity and frequency of disasters in our countries are rising. The risks are so grave that, for Bangladesh, climate change may wipe out 2 to 3% of our annual GDP, including displacement of more than 30 million people by 2050.

To address the challenges of climate change related risks effectively and comprehensively, we have adopted a National Climate Change Strategy and a National Plan of Action. We have, so far, allocated 385 million US dollars from our own resources for adaptation and mitigation.

At SAARC level, we need to secure result-oriented implementation of the regional agreements and plans through cross-border initiatives.

Fifth: Optimum supply of energy remains fundamental to ensuring steady growth and sustainable development of our people. Progress on the SAARC Framework Agreement on Electricity Cooperation is laudable.

Energy is a sector where we have much to tap in terms of regional hydro-power. There are aspects, like energy regulation, efficiency and conservation, regional power grid - where we can work beneficially. It is therefore, the time to commit ourselves on regional, sub-regional and bilateral initiatives for the development of energy sector in a comprehensive manner.

Sixth: The new Global Development Agenda requires us to focus on our fourth frontier - the Indian Ocean. There is so much to benefit through collaborative exploration of the living and non-living marine resources. The ocean resources-based 'Blue Economy' can play a critical role to sustainable development of the SAARC region.

We should collaborate on development of capacities, partnerships and research in utilizing our marine resources. Our common undertakings must secure protection, development and exploration of seas and oceans in a sustainable manner.

Seventh: Physical connectivity is important in ensuring overall peace, progress and stability across South Asia. Multimodal physical connectivity links territories and communities of SAARC.

Bangladesh approaches connectivity in a wider context. We believe in connecting ideas, knowledge, technology, culture, people, road-rail-air, movement of goods, services and investment.

Bangladesh will appreciate the early signing of the Regional Motor Vehicles Agreement and the Regional Railways Agreement. Beyond those, I would urge

all SAARC leaders at the podium to lend their support to advance implementation of the agreed regional outcomes on connectivity.

At the same time, we need to focus on increasing intra-regional trade. Early and effective implementation of SAFTA remains important. We will particularly need to address the non-tariff and para-tariff barriers. Our people want to see robust actions, on-the-ground. They are more focused on 'outcomes' than 'process.'

Mr. Chairman,

Over the years, some of the SAARC observers have brought in useful knowledge and support. Bangladesh value their contribution and engagement with SAARC.

In SAARC, a number of regional centres have generated important regional goods, knowledge and ideas. We must support them in all possible ways to develop them as centres of regional excellence.

Forty years ago, our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his maiden speech at the UN General Assembly said, 'The Bangalee nation is pledge-bound to establish a global order based on peaceful co-existence, social justice and freedom from poverty, hunger, exploitation and aggression.' That vision continues to guide Bangladesh's national development pursuits and our engagement in regional and global affairs.

Let us focus on undertaking more realistic, result-oriented and mutually beneficial partnership for cooperation to prosper together.

Let that be our contribution to redeem our pledge to our people to leave a more peaceful, progressive, connected and knowledge-based South Asia.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu



Seminar on Socio-Economic Achievements of Bangladesh in Recent Years and Partnership with China

China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)
7 March 2015

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.**

I am delighted to be in the magnificent city of Beijing again, with the last one being on March 2010. All these visits were memorable with the warm hospitality, the exquisite courtesies and the sincere gestures of friendship which I and my delegation received every time.

I am extremely happy to be here today at the esteemed China Institute of International Studies as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh having been elected three times, the last one being held on 5 January 2014.

The people's verdict is a testimony to the commendable socio-economic progress that had been achieved under our government during the period between 2009 and 2013.

It is, therefore, a great pleasure to speak to you about these achievements, and about the ever growing Bangladesh and China partnership.

Mr. President,

The relationship between China and Bangladesh of the South Asian sub-continent is ancient. It began with travelers and trade on the southern Silk Route and exchange of goods, knowledge and cultures between our peoples and regions.

The relationship rests on the solid foundation of our mutual respect for each other's state sovereignty, territorial integrity, friendly regional and international relations, and cooperation and assistance over economic, socio-political and cultural development, particularly in the areas of building infrastructure, agriculture, science and technology, defense, human resources development, amongst others.

Bangladesh is thus committed to 'One China Policy' supporting China on the issues of Taiwan and Tibet.

The people of Bangladesh are progressive and are committed to democracy, freedom, secularism, human rights and justice. Our 160 million people are

determined to protect these ethos and values that are deeply ingrained in our culture and way of life.

Our people of all religions are committed to living in peace and harmony and to building a democratic, modern and prosperous nation with respectable global standing through sustained economic development.

To ensure these, a committed leadership is needed and the people found it in our political party, the Awami League. It had led the struggle for liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 under the leadership of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In 2008, it won the elections and was reelected again for a second consecutive term in January 2014 during which period I had the privilege of heading the party.

During our 2009-2013 term, our government strengthened democratic institutions like the commissions on election, human rights, information, anti-corruption; separated the judiciary from the 'executive', adopted the National Integrity Strategy, among others, to ensure good governance, human rights, rule of law, transparency as well as nurture a vibrant civil society and media.

We framed a perspective plan called the 'Vision 2021' to realize a middle income 'Digital Bangladesh' by the 50th anniversary of our country's independence.

Our economy is founded on strong macroeconomic fundamentals. In the last five years, our GDP growth rate was over 6% with 50 million people joining the middle income group with the poverty level reduced 41% in 2005 to 26% in 2013.

Our per capita income was raised by 67%; export earning by 107%; remittances by 62%; foreign currency reserve by 217%; and power capacity by 109%. Our 64 districts and all the upazillas have been connected with internet and e-governance services, including health, agriculture, banking, education etc. 3-G technology has been introduced with 4-G in the offing. 48 million people are today using internet facility and 110 million SIM cards are in use.

Bangladesh is recognized as an investment friendly country. It offers the most liberal investment opportunities in South Asia, featuring 100% foreign equity with unrestricted exit policy; easy remittance of royalty; repatriation of profits; and protection of foreign investments.

Bangladesh also offers export-oriented Export Processing Zones for foreign investors. Seven new Exclusive Economic Zones are being established in selected areas of the country for foreign direct investment.

Investment is also being made by many of our own expatriate professionals and workers whose number currently stands at 8.2 million, spread over 155 countries.

In the last five years, 2.04 million workers went abroad for employment and in 2013, their remittance home was US \$ 14 billion.

Our energy prices are steady and we are hoping to generate soon 11,000 MW electricity compared to our current demand of 7,000 MW. New coal mines and gas fields have been discovered and gas production increased from 1,750 million cubic feet in 2009 to 2,250 million cubic feet in 2012 per day.

Our power crisis before we took office was overcome with short term rental power plants, followed by coal-fired power plants. A nuclear power plant is also being established with the help of the Russian Federation. Solar power generation has also been enhanced to a significant level.

Moreover, our workforce of young and industrious people and their availability to work at very competitive and affordable wages are an attraction.

We have also duty free and quota free access of products of Bangladesh origin to the markets of the European Union, Canada, Australia and other developed countries.

Goldman Sachs have included Bangladesh in its list of 'Next Eleven' after BRIC; JP Morgan in its 'Frontier Five'; Standard and Poor have rated us a 'BB'; Moody as 'Ba3' is also listing Bangladesh ahead of all South Asian countries except India.

We have 'zero tolerance' for terrorism and extremism and have succeeded in containing this malaise. We have also established the 'rule of law'. The trial of 6,041 personnel involved in the BDR Mutiny of February 2009 has been completed and the culprits have been punished.

The killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 18 members of the family have received due justice. The trial of the assassins involved in the grenade attack on the public rally I was addressing on 21 August 2004 that killed 24 people and wounded over 500, with me escaping with damaged hearing, is continuing.

So is the trial of the '10 trucks arms haul'. The trial of the war criminals for their role in crimes against humanity is also taking place under international law. We have also attained food security and are on track to meet all the MDGs by the stipulated deadline of 2015.

We are diversifying and expanding the reach of all the social safety nets to the low income and distressed people. We achieved singular success with the 'Ashrayan' or housing for the homeless; food and nutrition security to 1.04 million rural people through 'One House, One Farm' schemes; 'Shantinibash' for old people; monthly pensions for senior citizens, widows, destitute women, insolvent freedom fighters, the disabled, and maternity allowance for a total of 4.3 million people. We have also been successful in creating 10 million jobs.

I have always believed that education and good schooling is critical to empower the children and the youth to face all challenges, especially poverty

and deprivation. That is why our government has been allocating 2.3% of our GDP and 14% of our revenue expenditure in our annual budgets to ensure 'Education for All'.

Our progress in education has been significant with almost 100% school enrollment at primary school. School attendance is encouraged by providing free text books up to secondary level to all students every year. In January this year, 317 million text books were distributed among 37 million students.

School attendance is also encouraged by the provision of free lunch which we are gradually introducing to students, stipends to the poor and meritorious students at all levels, and even cash incentives to the parents to promote sending their children to schools.

These have helped achieve gender parity up to higher secondary level and it continues until graduation with free tuition for girls.

A trust fund has been established to support poor students pursuing education up to graduation level. We have also made good progress with children challenged by autism and other development disorders.

Our technical and vocational education is also being developed to suit the needs of the modern sector as well as that of our youths and underprivileged groups.

Our government has been actively trying to fulfill its election pledges to eradicate all endemic diseases, raising life expectancy at birth to 70.08 years and reducing maternal mortality rate from 3.8% to 1.5%.

Maternal mortality rate is now 1.94 per thousand of live births and child mortality rate is 36 per thousand. The annual population growth has been reduced to 1.37 %.

We have also constructed 13,500 health clinics in the rural areas reaching medical treatment to the needy people all across the country. These clinics are manned with doctors, nurses, medical workers and essential equipment.

One of our biggest successes was the verdict of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea on 14 March 2012 that settled the three decade old dispute with Myanmar on maritime boundary.

It ensured Bangladesh's claim to 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone and territorial rights in the Bay of Bengal.

Our intensive diplomatic efforts also drew attention of the world to Bangladesh's predicament with climate change. Our efforts also spread Bangla language and culture worldwide leading to the adoption of a UN resolution on 'International Mother Language Day'.

Our contribution to international peace and stability is proven by our role as a top troop contributor to UN peacekeeping and occupying the vice chairmanship of the UN Peace Building Commission.

Last year, we were the first in South Asia to sign the Arms Trade Treaty. In 2011, at the 66th UNGA in 2011, the UN resolution on 'People's Empowerment and Development Model' that I introduced was adopted and so were our resolutions on 'Autism' and the 'Culture of Peace'.

Bangladesh, in our tenure, earned an UN MDG Award; two South-South Awards; the Global Diversity Award; and the FAO Food Award 2013.

Bangladesh was also elected to different important bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Bangladesh is thus often mentioned in the UN and around the world as a 'Model of Economic Development', and 'the Standard Bearer of South Asia.'

To become a middle income country, we have to do more to increase our GDP growth rate to 8% by 2015, 10% by 2017 and sustain it till 2021; provide food, shelter, clothing, education and health to all citizens; ensure employment to 85% of the 105 million workforce expected by 2021; reduce poverty from 26% to 15% and ultimately to eradication; meet nutritional needs of 85% of the population by 2021; provide minimum daily intake of 2,122 kilo calories of food to all; eliminate contagious diseases; provide primary health care and sanitation; raise average longevity to 70 years; reduce child and maternal mortality to a minimum; 100% literacy rate; create a generation educated in science and technology.

Our 'Vision 2021' would then be on the road to 'Vision 2041' when Bangladesh would become a peaceful, prosperous and a developed nation.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh and China enjoy excellent relations based on mutual respect, shared values and people to people links from ancient times through trade and travel. In recent times, our countries have been drawn closer.

China considers Bangladesh as its partner of cooperation; our bilateral relations being forged without any ideological or regional bias; our total support on any issue affecting the interests of developing and least developed countries. China's Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and commitment to create a harmonious society on the basis of a just and fair international political and economic order and Bangladesh's endorsement to it; and importantly, both our keenness to advance our international relations for a better life of our peoples.

Our two countries are cooperating in many areas, including culture, industries, agriculture, water resources development, flood forecasting, earthquake warning, science and technology, space research and application and public security.

In the last five years, we have signed 17 agreements and MOUs. China is our largest trading partner source of import since 2007. Our trade reflects

Bangladesh's import of goods of over US \$ 6 billion from China and exports of less than half billion dollars to China.

This trade gap needs to be balanced. However, Chinese investment to Bangladesh is on the rise from US \$ 21.34 million in 2009 to US \$ 181.94 million in 2012. In 2013, some 49 Chinese companies invested US \$ 310 million in our export processing zones.

Chinese aids and grants to Bangladesh till December 2013 was US \$ 266.2 million and concessional and other loans were US \$ 1731.9 million.

Chinese grants, aids, and loans have helped implement in 17 projects in Bangladesh with 6 more in the process. A list of our 14 priority projects was handed to the Chinese government for consideration of concessional loan.

Bangladesh is also happy with Chinese proactive role in BCIM-EC whose first joint study group meeting identified physical connectivity; trade in goods, services and investment, including finance; environmentally sustainable development; and people to people contact, as areas of cooperation. The group's second meeting would be held in Dhaka later this year.

Mr. President,

At the time of our independence forty-three years ago, Bangladesh was a war ravaged, devastated country. Today, it is on the verge of a take off from a least developed country to a middle income one and will soon be on the way to being a fully developed country.

The UN Secretary General's comment in 2011 that Bangladesh is a model for the developing world has encouraged our government to pursue with vigour its 'Vision 2021' strategy.

I believe our government with its total commitment and dedication would succeed in achieving our goal and go beyond to make Bangladesh a country of prosperity, progress and peace. I know that we shall succeed with the help and support of our friends, especially the government and the people of the Republic of China.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangahandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long live Bangladesh-China Friendship.



Asian-African Summit Conference Plenary Session

Jakarta, Indonesia

22 April 2015

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon to you all.**

It is my great pleasure to attend this august gathering in this historic city. I would like to thank the government of Indonesia for hosting this important event and providing us warm hospitality.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Asian-African Conference, we must recall those leaders whose foresight paved the way for Asia-Africa cooperation. Together, they put forward a vision of an equitable and just world. In solidarity, they also pledged to fight against colonialism, poverty and inequality.

My father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation, had always dreamt of a peaceful world free from war, conflict and exploitation. He fought for the rights of the people of Bangladesh. He was equally keen to have a world where cooperation among nations would bring peace and prosperity for the mankind. With this conviction, in 1973 Bangabandhu attended the NAM Summit, which was a significant outcome of the Bandung Conference.

Excellencies,

The South accounts for half of the world's GDP, produces half of its economic output and conducts more than half of global trade. Therefore, the South-South cooperation is critical for attaining sustainable development and building resilience of Southern countries.

Mr. President,

Our own development paradigm in Bangladesh is based on peace and development. We believe, empowering people, particularly women, can add significant value to the progress and prosperity of the country. We are experiencing impressive results in reducing poverty from 40 percent in 2010 to below 24 percent today.

Bangladesh has already met most of the MDGs. Despite global recession, during the last six years, Bangladesh made on an average 6 percent GDP growth. Export earnings and remittance increased by three folds and foreign exchange reserve by 6.5 times.

Demographic dividend is a great strength of our economy and society. We are investing more in enhancing skill and capacity of our growing younger population.

We offer stipends to nearly 12.8 million students from poor families and free education for girls up to higher education. On the first day of this year, we distributed about 330 million free text books among the students upto secondary level all over the country. It is perhaps the biggest such undertaking anywhere in the world.

Today, our people receive over 200 different services from over 5,675 Digital Centres all over the country. People in the rural areas get access to health care services from over 16,000 IT-connected Community Health Clinics and Rural Health Centres. Through many similar pro-people initiatives, my government is making great strides to graduate Bangladesh to a middle income country by 2021 and thereby realize the dream of 'Sonar Bangla' or the 'Golden Bengal' of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Excellencies,

A set of transformative goals and targets are being identified in the context of the post 2015 development agenda. In this context, I would like to emphasize on three development issues:

First: Fight against hunger and inequality;

Second: Combat terrorism and violent extremism;

Third: Close and sustained cooperation.

Despite remarkable development gains, 2.2 billion people of the world still live below the poverty level; more than 800 million people suffer from chronic hunger, and over 200 million people hard-hit by climate change.

It is, therefore, critical that Southern economies work together to overcome the development challenges to ensure pro-people, pro-poor, pro-planet strategy.

With all these in mind, Bangladesh is organizing a 'High-level South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda' next month in Dhaka. We look forward to having, an engaged dialogue on all the above issues with your support, cooperation and participation.

Mr. President,

Durable peace and security are pre-conditions of sustainable development. Indeed, the volatile regional and global security situation, terrorism and violent extremism continue to challenge development gains and our efforts towards peace and prosperity.

My government maintains a ‘zero-tolerance’ policy towards all forms of terrorism and extremism. Terrorists have no religion or ethnicity. We remain firm in our resolve not to allow any terrorist individual or entity to use our soil against any heinous acts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I firmly believe that the South-South and triangular cooperation has immense potential to foster development, achieve peace and security, fight terrorism and violent extremism, as well as combat human trafficking and climate change consequences.

Nationally, we are steadfast in tackling the anti-liberation forces who continue to remain active in destroying the moderate, progressive and non-communal fabric of our nation. My Government is also re-enforcing the forces of democracy, secularism and women empowerment to ideologically defeat terrorism and extremism.

To uphold peace and ‘rule of law’ and end a ‘culture of impunity’, my government remains pledge-bound to bring, to justice those who committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide during our war of liberation in 1971.

Excellencies,

Today, we witness unprecedented human mobility and migration. These are recognized as key drivers and enablers of development process. In fact, the migratory forces are shaping economies and societies in many countries. In this context, South-South migration is a significant phenomenon. Cooperation among our countries in this area can bring significant development dividends.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To address climate change, we have introduced stress-tolerant crop varieties and set up the Climate Change Trust Fund with our own resources. However, it is not possible for a single country to tackle the climate change challenges. I look forward to seeing a strong commitment to address climate change in the region.

Finally: Mr. President, let us renew our commitment to work together in achieving a peaceful and prosperous global South.

I believe, together we could build a stable, prosperous and just world-free from oppression, intolerance, violence and extremism.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Business Council for International Understanding

New York, United States of America
25 September 2015

**Mr. Chairman,
Business leaders of the United States,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon to you all.

It is a pleasure to meet you all. I recall our meeting in September 2014, during the 69th UNGA. We had a good discussion then. I hope we shall continue it today. Your presence shows your abiding interest in Bangladesh and this makes me happy.

Bangladesh and the USA today enjoy the best of relations. It is based on common values, shared interests, and mutual respect. Since I was elected Prime Minister in 2009, our two countries' relations reached a higher plane. We established an Annual Partnership Dialogue, TICFA and regular dialogue on security, military and counter-terrorism. We feel US is our closest partner in combating terrorism and extremism.

Our relationship is reflected by our increasing bilateral trade that totaled US \$ 7 billion last year. RMG exports have been the driving engine of this increase. However, the suspension of the GSP privileges by US to Bangladesh has been an unfair and unkind gesture. GSP privileges has been restored to all the countries in South Asia, except Bangladesh. It has been a sad episode in our growing relationship.

The RMG sector employs 4 million workers of whom 90% are women from poor families. They contribute to household expenses and are able to send children to schools. They are thus transforming the society into a progressive one by supporting government's efforts to have every child in school, alleviate poverty and eliminate extremism and terrorism. Thus, increasing RMG exports to the USA means more women in job and quicker societal change. Hence, GSP suspension and inaccessibility of Bangladesh's exports duty-free/quota-free as an LDC to the US market is discriminatory and restraining Bangladesh's progress in women empowerment, poverty alleviation and the fight against extremism and terrorism.

Since our government assumed office in 2009, Bangladesh enjoyed average GDP growth of 6.2%; per capita increase of 65%; inflation reined to 6.5%; export earnings doubled to US \$ 32 billion; remittances doubled to US \$ 15 billion; foreign currency reserve increased to a staggering US \$ 26 billion; food and energy security achieved; Human Development Index increased at annually 1.6%, to name a few economic indicators.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Business Council for International Understanding of New York, United States of America.

These have helped Bangladesh achieve many of the MDG goals. The Indian Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen, in his book 'An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions', said, 'Bangladesh has overtaken India in terms of a wide range of basic social indicators. There are features of astonishing achievement in Bangladesh that cannot but excite interest, curiosity and engagement.' These has been duly recognized by many others, including Goldman Sachs listing Bangladesh in its list of 'Next Eleven' and JP Morgan in its list of 'Emerging Five'.

Bangladesh is no more an aid dependent but a trade dependent country. Foreign aid is 1.5% of Bangladesh's annual GDP. Therefore, UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon has often said, 'Bangladesh is today a role model of economic development.' Bangladesh is also a progressive, secular democracy with a homogenous population of which 60% is below the age of 40 and available at competitive wages. It has gas, coal, water, fertile soil and fast growing middle class consumers with increasing purchasing power.

Bangladesh has the most liberal investment policy in South Asia. It includes protection of foreign investment by law; generous tax holiday; concessionary duty on import of machinery; remittances of royalty; 100% foreign equity, unrestricted exit policy; full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit, to name a few. Moreover, five out of seven Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) are

ready for foreign private enterprises to set up labour intensive industry. To be noted, the USA is the second largest investor in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh invites investment in power and energy, shipbuilding and recycling, automobile and light engineering, chemical fertilizers, agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, ceramic and plastic goods, ICT, marine resources extraction, tourism, medical equipment, telecommunications and knowledge based hi-tech industries. Since Bangladesh enjoys duty and quota free access to the EU, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, China, Japan, India, amongst others, investors producing exportable items could benefit from marketing them to those countries.

Bangladesh has undertaken serious reforms in improving health, safety, wages and working conditions of the RMG workers. It adopted the National Tripartite Plan of Action with the ILO and the RMG buyers and retailers, the Occupational Safety and Health Policy, amended the 2006 Labour Act, and completed inspection of all garment factories. The phase of remediation of the inspected garment factories have also started.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh is on the way to becoming an industrialized, digitalized, middle-income country by realizing its 'Vision 2021' and a developed country by 2041. Bangladesh has already graduated to a Low Middle-Income Country. As Bangladesh strives to achieve those goals, I urge upon you, the leaders of the US business, commerce and industry to partner with us in investment, trade, share of profits and prosperity. Our mutual beneficial business would strengthen our two countries friendship, raising it to an enviable level.

I thank you all.



Business Seminar at Hotel Amarith Kurhas

The Hague, The Netherlands
5 November 2015

**Distinguished Leaders of Business and Industry of the Netherlands,
Members of the Bangladesh Business Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Very Good Morning to you all.**

I am pleased to be with you to speak about business opportunities in Bangladesh.

The Netherlands was one of the first European countries to recognize Bangladesh on 11 February 1972. Since then, she has been a reliable development and trading partner of Bangladesh. The relationship between our two countries has reached to a newer height through the exchange of a number of high level visits in the recent past.

Dutch-Bangla business tie started its journey by the Dutch East India Company in 1602 on spices. With a paradigm shift, the Dutch companies were active in Bangladesh in the early years following our independence. Currently, total investment by the Dutch investors in Bangladesh stands at US \$ 684 million. Around 30 Dutch companies including Unilever, Philips, Organon are presently active in Bangladesh.

Since our government assumed office in 2009, our GDP has been growing over 6.2% annually, export earnings reached to US \$ 32 billion, remittances doubled to US \$ 15 billion and foreign currency reserve increased to US \$ 27 billion. Bangladesh now ranks 37th largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP). Our economy is also among the five fastest growing economies of the world. Goldman Sachs has included Bangladesh in the list of 'Next Eleven' and JP Morgan in its list of the 'Emerging Five'.

Bangladesh has made significant progress in alleviating poverty, attaining food security, education, health and sanitation, gender mainstreaming, social safety nets, human rights and so on. Bangladesh is now widely recognized as a 'role model' for development.

Bangladesh is fast making an economic transformation. From subsistence agriculture, it is becoming a mechanized, process oriented, diversified and value added one. Technology and innovation is the hallmark of the present day agriculture in Bangladesh. The manufacturing and the service sectors occupy four-fifth of Bangladesh GDP.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the business seminar at the Hague, the Netherlands

We have the most liberal investment policy in South Asia. It includes protection of foreign investment by law, generous tax holiday, concessionary duty on import of machinery, remittances of royalty, 100% foreign equity, unrestricted exit policy, full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit and many more. Other advantages include the young, industrious and easily trainable abundant workforce with competitive wages, cheaper costs of establishing business and duty free quota free access to the EU, Australian, Canadian, Indian, Japanese and New Zealand markets.

Bangladesh made tremendous success in the Ready-made Garment (RMG) sector. We are now the 2nd largest garment exporter in the world. The industry employs four million workers, 90% of whom are women from the poor families. Their employment has been an instrument for women empowerment as well as keeping our society liberal and progressive. We have been making steadfast efforts and undertaken serious reforms in improving health, safety, wages and working conditions in the RMG sector. A responsible business conduct for sustainable supply chain is in operation in Bangladesh. We deeply appreciate the valuable support from the government and the businesses of the Netherlands in our efforts in this regard.

Like the RMG sector, other sectors are making significant progress. pharmaceutical is such a sector. After meeting up 97% of our domestic requirements, our pharmaceutical products are exported to 83 countries. The industry is now equipped to produce bio-tech products and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API). Bangladesh is fast emerging as a major global hub for high quality, low-cost generic medicines.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a bilateral agreement signing at the Hague, the Netherlands

Our knowledge industry, ICT and related industry is also expanding rapidly. Gartner has billed Bangladesh as one of the top 30 global destinations for software and IT services. Thousands of made in Bangladesh applications are running on iPhones, Samsung Galaxy, and other Android and Blackberry phones. Last year our IT companies and freelance IT professionals earned over US \$ 360 million. Every year, around 20,000 young IT graduates are joining the sector.

Ship-building is another fast emerging industry in Bangladesh. Our builders have drawn global attention by making world-class light to medium size ocean going vessels. The industry now commands 1% share of the US \$ 200 billion global market.

We welcome Dutch companies to invest in the emerging sectors like textiles, leather, jute, ceramics, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, shipbuilding, agro-processing, plastic goods, light engineering and electronics, telecommunications and IT, power, energy, water and marine and other infrastructure projects, hi-tech manufacturing and microprocessors.

We have eight fully operational 'Export Processing Zones' (EPZs) exclusively for 100% export oriented industries. We are now working to establish 100 'Economic Zones' (EZs) in different parts of the country as part of our new plan to industrialize Bangladesh. We are also developing a number of hi-tech parks in Bangladesh for IT industries. We offer competitive incentive packages for the investors in these Zones and Parks. Anyone can come as a 'developer' and 'operator' of an entire zone or an investor in these zones and parks.

Following the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to make a hunger free, poverty free and deprivation free Bangladesh, a ‘Sonar Bangla’, we are on the way to becoming a digitalized, knowledge-based middle income country by realizing our ‘Vision 2021’ and a developed country by 2041. We have already graduated to a lower middle income country. As we strive to achieve those goals, I request you, the leaders of Dutch business and industry to partner with us in investment, trade, profit sharing and prosperity. Together we can bring a change in the life of millions of people.

I thank you.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh–The Netherlands Friendship.



Global Women Leaders' Forum

Sofia, Bulgaria
18 May 2016

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Madam Chairperson,
Hon'ble Speaker,
Director General of UNESCO,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a Very Good Afternoon to you all.**

I am delighted to be here among fellow women leaders-it is truly inspiring! I thank UNESCO and Women Business Forum of Bulgaria for organizing this important event in this beautiful historic city. I also thank the Government of Bulgaria for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation since our arrival here.

Empowerment of women is an issue very close to my heart. I owe my conviction for gender equality and women empowerment from my father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, who led Bangladesh to independence in 1971.

Bangabandhu desired to transform the country into a prosperous 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) where women would participate side by side with men to build the nation. He realized at the outset that our development goals cannot be achieved if we leave behind our women, who account for a half of the population.

Taking inspiration from his vision, I have given top priority to gender mainstreaming in all spheres of national life. Our pro-women development strategy is showing excellent results, which is also recognized by the global community.

Madam Chair,

I am committed to breaking all barriers to achieve equality of men and women. One of the major steps taken by my government was to formulate and implement an ambitious and ground-breaking National Women Development Policy, which guarantees equal opportunity and entitlement for women. In this Policy, we have given the highest priority to education, and economic and social self-reliance of women.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the Global Women Leaders' Forum

Women's participation and engagement as one of the main drivers of national development is firmly embedded in the national development plans and budgets. We spend over 2% of our GDP for social protection coverage. Most of the beneficiaries of social protection are the less fortunate and destitute women.

We have made education free for girls up to Grade 12 and have plans to make it free up to the tertiary level. Nearly 17.2 million students from primary to post-graduate levels have been brought under various stipend programmes. We also offer free meals for students from poorer families, which have helped arrest drop-out rate and achieve gender parity at primary and secondary levels.

We have earmarked 60% of teaching positions at the primary level for women. These proactive policies and measures have led to almost 100% enrolment rate at primary school and achieve gender parity.

Distinguished Delegates, Madam Chair,

Alongside education, we have also prioritized on ensuring maternal health and nutrition. We provide reproductive healthcare services to women through 16 thousand 500 Community Clinics and Union Health Centres in addition to established hospitals across the country.

We have introduced Maternal Health Voucher Scheme, which provides a package of three antenatal check-ups, safe delivery by skilled birth attendants and one post-natal check-up among others.

Distinguished Delegates,

Economic empowerment of women can make significant contributions to achieving gender equality. And towards that end, we are emphasizing on creating a conducive work environment for women by ensuring their safety and security, providing them accommodation facilities and introducing day care centres in and around their work places. As a result, our female workforce has risen substantially over the last few years.

Bangladesh is the second largest exporter of readymade garments in the world and women represent 85% of the nearly 4.5 million workforce in that crucial sector.

Participation of women is also growing in other sectors and professions, such as the civil service, the judiciary, armed forces, elite security force and in other technical professions. The print and electronic media are now vibrant with the presence of many women journalists. We have sportswomen excelling in cricket, football and even in mountaineering.

Women are serving in UN peacekeeping operations; women are diplomats; fighter pilots; and leading business entrepreneurs. Bangladeshi women are making important contribution to foreign exchange earnings as migrant workers in various parts of the world. Thus, women in Bangladesh have truly broken all barriers and are now active development agents in the nation-building process.

Madam Chair,

Political empowerment is another area where we have made remarkable strides. We have some outstanding political role models in the country.

Bangladesh is perhaps the only country in the world today that has a woman Prime Minister and Leader of the House, Deputy Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition, and the Speaker. Presently, we have 70 women Members of Parliament (MPs) constituting 20% of the House. We have made it mandatory for all political parties to ensure 30% female membership in their party committees by the year 2020.

We have also introduced a system to elect women vice chairman in various level of local government bodies. One-third or 33% seats are reserved for women in the lowest tier of local government, the Union Councils. Currently, over 12 thousand 500 elected women representatives are serving in the local government bodies.

Through such pragmatic efforts, we have been able to change the traditional mindset of the society, which once looked down upon women's participation in elections. Now the families not only encourage their female members but also take active part in their electioneering.

Madam Chair,

Despite significant advancement, we also have challenges. We are yet to fully succeed in stopping incidents of violence against women, child marriage or trafficking of women and girls.

We have taken strong steps to end these social evils, through a number of strict laws and administrative measures. We are investing heavily in raising greater social awareness against such crimes and violence.

For instance, we have adopted laws which provide for compensations for victims of violence and trafficking. Child marriages too are being addressed strongly, and we have pledged to eliminate child marriage from Bangladesh at the earliest.

Dear Participants,

I am humbled when our work to address issues related to women's empowerment receive global recognition. This strengthens my resolve not to give up until we can truly relegate violence against women, child marriages and other such social and customary discrimination to the annals of history.

I am personally grateful to UNESCO for honouring me with the UNESCO 'Tree of Peace' Award, which was given for promoting girls' education and empowerment. I dedicated that to all the oppressed women and girls of my country and the world.

Madam Chair,

We have adopted a transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in New York last year. The new development agenda has placed strong emphasis on gender equality and empowerment of women. Goal 5 in particular and various other related targets added renewed impetus to bring positive changes in the lives of our women and girls.

We should seize this opportunity. I firmly believe that only through concerted efforts nationally and internationally, we can achieve the ambitious goals and targets we have set for ourselves.

We have to work together to create a safer environment for women and girls, equip them with the right skills and education, and empower them as agents of social transformation. And to achieve that, we need sincere commitments, and strong leadership.

I would like to renew my vow to continue to work for women's empowerment and advancement. And I hope that I will have the global women leaders as partners.

Let us today renew our commitment to make this world a better place for all; a better place for women, where we can live with dignity, free from all fear. Join me in saying that: We Can Do It!

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



11th ASEM Summit

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
15 July 2016

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to place on record my deep appreciation to the host, Your Excellency the President of Mongolia, for the excellent arrangement and gracious hospitality to me and my delegation.

Mr Chairman,

This historic city is a silent witness to inter-connections between the east and the west, the north and the south. It is apt that, at the turn of 20 years, ASEM reflects on deepening connectivity here in Mongolia in the wake of multiple transformations that we are witnessing now.

Connectivity is indeed no longer a ‘choice’ for any community, it is about seizing ‘strategic opportunity’. We must get all countries and communities connected seamlessly, to secure peace, stability and prosperity.

Today, new growth hubs and nodes are emerging across ASEM landscape. Long-known business patterns and industries are giving way for new ones. Principles like ‘sustainability’ and ‘responsible business conduct’ increasingly shape manufacturing and service across our economies. Regional and global supply chains deepen our regional cooperative engagements.

Our initiatives need to be based on our core values and principles like solidarity, friendship, mutual trust, and equitable sharing of benefits. Whatever be the modality of connectivity frameworks, these should aim at accelerating sustained, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Excellencies,

The Asia-Pacific region has witnessed advancement in multi-modal connectivity among the sub-regions. In South Asia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) and Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar-Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC) are worth noting. We believe that for connectivity to yield greater advantages and improvements in peoples’ living and livelihoods, we need to seriously explore greater resources, further capabilities, and newer partnerships. In Bangladesh, for instance, 4.5 million under-served citizens receive over 70 e-services from 5,300 Digital Centres across the country; we could also bring 43,000 government offices under a single National E-portal.

We look forward to ASEM bringing greater result orientation on connectivity, especially under ASEM Working Group on Connectivity.

Thank You.



ASEM Summit Retreat

Theme: Enhancing the Three Pillars of ASEM

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
16 July 2016

Excellencies,

On several counts, the world is passing through challenging times. Clearly, no community or state can face these on its own.

ASEM could play an important catalytic role in our efforts to synergise our strengths and coordinate actions. In order for us to strengthen the three pillars of ASEM, we need to consider three specific aspects:

Through my personal and political journeys, I learnt how women's participation in political, social and economic spheres contributes to building secure, inclusive and prosperous societies. It is much beyond mere gender parity – it is about securing equality, justice and freedom for women across social and economic menu. Today, Bangladesh is lauded globally for its accomplishments in women empowerment. At the same time, we show zero tolerance towards any forms of oppression, discrimination and violence against women and girls. Bangladesh is thus ready to share our bit of experience with friends in ASEM.

Yesterday, I spoke on 'connectivity', in a much wider sense. Yes, we should start with connecting 'nodes' and 'modes' in physical sense. But, our ultimate objective has to be to let our people move – so that they can share their cultures, ideas, technology. Connectivity has to be viewed as part of wider development discourse and integral to regional economic integration. We need to consider connectivity in ensuring peace, stability and prosperity of all. Our own vision is to develop Bangladesh as a regional connectivity hub.

In this regard, we also need to reflect on ways to facilitate greater people's mobility. Our economies and societies are getting far deeper connected. Within ASEM's vastly connected space, we now need to synchronize our policies and actions so that migration contributes to harmonious, tolerant and respectful environment across our societies, certainly also for the migrants. Europe and Asia together should work out a new mobility system to create win-win situation. At the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Summit in Dhaka this December, Bangladesh will work towards designing migration governance issues.

Last year the world agreed on pursuing sustainable development across nations. We agreed to make necessary adjustments to our living and economic systems. 2030 Development Agenda now provides the universal point of

reference. We have agreed to step up support to low-income and climate-vulnerable countries. ASEM must show, it is a region where no country or community is left behind! In that context ASEM should particularly consider ways to facilitate meaningful support for development and transfer of knowledge and technology across the low-income countries.

Excellencies,

Let us, therefore, reflect how we can give concrete shape to our ideas and initiatives in ASEM. We are ready to join any conversation within ASEM to advance all that I shared.

Thank you.



BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat

Goa, India
16 October 2016

**Hon'ble Chair Shri Narendra Modiji,
Leaders from the BIMSTEC Member States,**

Good Afternoon.

I thank you, Modiji, for inviting us to this retreat at this beautiful location of Goa. I stand here as one of the four founding leaders who had inspired the launching of the BIMSTEC way back in 1997. During the past twenty years, we have made progress in connecting our two regions. Understandably, our progress has been slow but the groundwork has been done. It is now time to hasten the process of integration.

Mr. Chair,

We believe in regional integration and cooperation. We draw inspiration for peace and development from the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who in his speech on 6 February 1972 in Kolkata said and I quote, 'Let there be an end, once for all, to the sterile policy of confrontation between neighbours. Let us not fritter away our national resources but use them to lift the standard of living of our people... We will be wanting to cooperate with all concerned for creating an area of peace in South Asia.'

Distinguished colleagues,

Time has come for us to seriously re-look at how we want BIMSTEC to be more effective and result-oriented as well as to draw synergies with other groupings. While we have 14 areas of cooperation under BIMSTEC, I believe we should try to focus more on some key areas like trade and investment, energy, connectivity and counter-terrorism for next five years. Regular ministerial meetings on the key areas of cooperation are important for building momentum.

To improve the lives and livelihoods of the people of our region, we should aim to develop regional projects. This will effectively connect BIMSTEC to the peoples as well as ensure the organization's sustainability and visibility.

We may think of funding mechanisms of our own, while collaboration with external funding sources can also be explored.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat

Mr. Chair,

It questions our commitment, when I observe that we are yet to finally conclude the BIMSTEC FTA—which was negotiated in 2004. We need to reiterate our political will in favour of the FTA implementation. It will help to enhance our intra-regional trade and will boost the BIMSTEC activities and programmes. We may target to finally adopt the four FTA-related agreements during the 20th anniversary of BIMSTEC next year.

Dear colleagues,

The transport connectivity working group has already met. I believe, the good work will continue on planning, implementing and monitoring of the prioritized projects, with the active support of ADB.

For enhancing connectivity, we may consider a coastal shipping agreement.

We would also like to see the MoU on Grid Interconnection signed and implemented at the earliest, for better sub-regional grid connectivity and energy trade.

Dear friends,

We must unite to defeat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In Bangladesh we have taken a 'zero-tolerance' approach to terrorism and violent

extremism. We have also undertaken massive awareness programmes for the youth, for families, for education institutions. We succeeded in disintegrating the homegrown terrorists. We must find out the mentors, masterminds, abettors, financiers, arms suppliers and trainers of the terrorists and extremists. We must be prepared to take strong action against terrorists and their supporters. I firmly believe that within BIMSTEC we should be able to strengthen our cooperation to address terrorism and rise of violent extremism.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.



BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit

Goa, India
16 October 2016

**Hon'ble Chair, Modiji,
Distinguished Leaders from the BRICS and BIMSTEC Member States,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I must thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, for his wonderful initiative to bring the leaders of BRICS and BIMSTEC to a single table. This is indeed an apt and timely step. Let us reflect on how we can identify mutual scope as well as synergies for cooperation between our two groupings.

Excellencies,

We created BIMSTEC in 1997 to improve the lives and livelihoods of the people in the Bay of Bengal region. The potentials in our region are enormous.

BIMSTEC region is strategically located at the crossroads of South and South-east Asia. Centuries back, we used to have deeper connects crossing our lands and sea space. In the recent times, our countries have made significant economic growth. We also made notable social advancements: in women empowerment, in education enrolment, in girls' education, in reducing maternal mortality, in increasing life expectancy, and so on. Our region also has a younger population; and we will continue to have large active population over the next decades.

We have a regional hydro-electricity potential of more than 300 gigawatt. We have vast marine resources of the Bay of Bengal, which are yet to be fully mapped and tapped.

In the global plane, we all pledged to sustainable development. Last year, we signed on to a transformative 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. By now, we have similar outcomes on financing for development, disaster reduction and climate change. These are important for both of our groups – in terms of addressing our challenges and also for tapping possible opportunities.

Excellencies,

I would like to share three specific ways for BRICS to engage with BIMSTEC:

First: Large part of BIMSTEC needs to develop quality and resilient infrastructure. Countries like Bangladesh need billions of dollars of investment. We are trying to attract investments—through FDI, equity investments or PPP. We are developing one hundred Economic Zones (EZs) across the country for potential investors. We have also taken initiatives like Hi-Tech City in Kaliakoir,

Software Technology Park in Jessore, and Sylhet Electronic City, which are opportunities for hi-tech investors. Our liberal investment policy includes protection of foreign investment by law; generous tax holiday; concessionary duty on import of machinery; remittances of royalty; 100% foreign equity; unrestricted exit policy; full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit. We can assure you that our regimes and incentives are indeed competitive; and regulatory and policy environments are supportive. Now that BRICS countries have put forward two new Multilateral Development Banks, I would call for the Banks' special attention to the opportunities in the low-income countries.

Second: BIMSTEC region recognizes the need to focus on development of science–technology–innovation capabilities. The world is now focused on 'learning'. Sizable part of our population needs access to technologies in farming, water, sanitation and basic health. We also need to develop and adopt technologies to address the challenges arising out of climate change.

We are focusing on innovative public service delivery, mass access to information, and enhanced transparency and accountability, to build an inclusive, empowered, digital and knowledge-based society. We have set up about 10,000 digital centres across the country to cater 200 different services to our people's doorsteps. Digital Laboratories and Multi-media classrooms are operating in growing number of educational institutions. We are extensively utilizing ICTs for decentralizing service delivery to elevate Bangladesh to a middle-income country by 2021.

We have created government information portals, virtually uniting 43,000 government offices. We are taking a whole-of-government approach to address problems. The a2i programme at my office is leading this initiative.

I believe South-South and Triangular cooperation on innovation is also important for attaining sustainable development. Bangladesh has already signed MoUs with Maldives and Bhutan to collaborate on promoting and scaling up public service innovations. We look forward to more of such collaborations in future.

In the BRICS countries, there are institutions which lead the world by bringing life-saving solutions and inventions. We would call upon our leaders from BRICS to launch a wider cooperative agenda for technology. Collaboration among higher education and research institutions for development and sharing of technologies could be mutually beneficial.

Third, as the global economy moves on, both BRICS and BIMSTEC can engage in a conversation to sustain our economic development. We need to look at 'sustainability' issues with purpose. It could be opportune for us to link our value chains and markets aligning with the norms and trends of global supply chains. In BIMSTEC, we are working on our own regional value chains. While our countries are at different levels of development, our two groupings can surely join hands on developing value chains for products and services.

Excellencies,

All our efforts for sustainable development depend on peace, security and stability. As a responsible member of the global community, Bangladesh maintains 'zero tolerance' to any act of terrorism or violent extremism. We must join hands to deal with terrorism and violent extremism as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let our today's meet be a beginning of a 'new conversation' for collaboration between BRICS and BIMSTEC aimed at greater peace and development.

I thank you.



Budapest Water Summit 2016

Budapest, Hungary
28 November 2016

His Excellency Mr. János Áder
Distinguished Colleagues from the High Level Panel on Water
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Water is the origin and sustainer of life. Water is fundamental to social development, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. I thank the government of Hungary to organize the Summit on a topic that is precious to all of us. As regards Bangladesh, water occupies a centre place to our culture, ethos, lives and livelihoods. It is also significant that we are talking about water in a country that continues to play important role in global water discourse. We acknowledge the contributions of the Budapest Water Summit 2013 that eventually gave the basis for water related SDGs.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

We, the members of High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) adopted a 'call to action' during the UN General Assembly this September. We urged all the Heads of State and Government and other leaders to prioritize water issues in their policies and actions. In this regard, let me share with you 07-point agenda:

First: The Agenda 2030 have sufficiently articulated the inter-linkages and interfaces between water and wider sustainable development architecture. Hence, water should be the integral part of any development endeavour at national, regional and global level.

Second: Millions of people around the world face difficulties to access safe drinking water and basic sanitation; given the fact that water supplies are neither adequate nor safe. Special focus needs to be paid to people or group who is usually left behind: the poor, the women and the marginalized section of the society.

Third: Water is one area where climate vulnerable countries are intensely challenged. There is an urgent need to build resilience to water related disasters. Climate change adaptation efforts should be accorded due priority.

Fourth: Water challenges today, are not the scarcity of water in absolute term, rather its equitable distribution. Effective management of trans-boundary river water would serve a lasting and viable solution to this effect.

Fifth: Water is also used for agricultural development and food security. We must continue to develop less water-intensive varieties of crops and water efficient technologies.

Sixth: We need to share with each other our ‘light-house initiatives’ to further develop our knowledge, capacity, skill and technique in terms of development and efficient use of water resources.

Seventh: Financing is critical to realize water related goals and targets. I re-iterate the need for creating a global fund on water to support research, innovation and technology transfer. However, innovations and solutions should be such that it reaches to the people at the bottom.

Excellencies,

In Bangladesh, we have already met the MDG target for safe water. Much progress has also been made in the sanitation sector with around 65% of the population having access to improved sanitation facilities. We are committed to ensure safe drinking water for all and improved sanitation for at least 90% of our population by the year 2021. Being one of the most climatically vulnerable countries, the government has been carrying out series of measures to address climate change adversities. Some of the initiatives like early warning system, cyclone shelters and coastal green belt have drawn global attention.

Bangladesh faces unique challenges—abundance of water during monsoon and scarcity of water during dry season. The country’s vulnerability is further increased by the fact that 92% of its surface waters originate from the outside of its border. Sharing of trans-boundary river water is a complex issue. Two decades back, Bangladesh succeeded to enter into a long-term water sharing arrangement with India on the Ganges waters. Sub-regional cooperation on waters between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal is also on the right track.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Water may intensify inequality within and among nations, in view of growing population, rapid urbanization and unplanned industrialization. As such issues like protection, conservation and utilization of water resources need to be addressed comprehensively. It would not merely eliminate inequality in access to water resources, but would also help to bring peace, stability and security to the society as water has been the roots of many tension and conflicts across the world.

Water security guarantees a life of dignity and well-being for the people of this planet. To achieve this, we must work together and act now. Bangladesh is committed to play its role.

I thank you.



Closing Ceremony of Bangladesh–Hungary Business Forum

Hotel Marriott, Budapest
29 November 2016

**Your Excellency Prime Minister Viktor Orbán,
Distinguished Leaders of Business and Industry of Hungary,
Members of the Bangladesh Business Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon [In Hungarian: Jó napot] to you all.**

I am pleased to be with you, at this concluding session of Bangladesh-Hungary Business Forum and share a brief perspective on the business opportunities available in Bangladesh.

I gratefully recall that Hungary was one of the first European countries to recognize Bangladesh as a sovereign state on 29 January 1972. The government and the people of Hungary also extended moral and political support during our liberation war in 1971.

Immediately after establishment of our diplomatic relations, the cooperation between our two countries flourished. Our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been instrumental to steer the relations to the right direction. The two friendly countries signed three important agreements for cooperation on trade, scientific & technical and economic matters before 1975. But the brutal assassination of our Father of the Nation in August 1975 put a halt to the positive growth trajectory of our relations.

I am delighted to be the first ever Prime Minister to undertake an official bilateral visit between our two countries. I am pleased to inform you that Prime Minister Orban and I had very fruitful bilateral talks this morning. We agreed to deepen and widen our relations, particularly by promoting more two-way trade and investment. I am happy that chambers of our two countries are going to sign a MoU, after this session. I believe it is a critical step in promoting mutually beneficial business opportunities.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, Bangladesh is fast making an economic transformation. From subsistence agriculture, it is becoming mechanized, process oriented, diversified and value added economy. We have the most liberal investment

policy in South Asia. Cost of establishing business is relatively lower. We enjoy 'duty free, quota free' access to the markets of EU, Australia, Canada, India, Japan and New Zealand.

We have eight 100% export oriented and fully operational 'Export Processing Zones' (EPZs). We are now working to establish 100 'Economic Zones' (EZs) in different parts of the country as part of our new plan to industrialize Bangladesh in an inclusive way. We have already allocated special economic zones exclusively for China, India and Japan, on G2G basis based on mutually agreed terms.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Bangladesh is a success story in the Ready-made Garment (RMG) sector. We are now the 2nd largest garment exporter in the world. Like the RMG sector, other sectors are making significant progress as well. Our pharmaceutical products are now being exported to 83 countries, including the USA. We are fast emerging as a major global hub for high quality, low-cost generic medicines, including Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API).

Our knowledge industry, ICT and related sectors are also expanding rapidly. Shipbuilding is another fast emerging industry in Bangladesh, by making world-class light to medium size ocean going vessels.

We welcome Hungarian companies to invest in these and other emerging sectors like leather and footwear, jute, ceramics, petrochemicals, food and agro-processing, plastic goods, power, energy (including renewable energy), telecommunications & ICT, water and marine and other infrastructure projects. Any business proposition may take note of increased purchasing power of Bangladesh's growing middle class and also our geo-economically strategic location in close proximity of the vast markets of China, India and the ASEAN.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to make a 'Sonar Bangladesh' [i.e. Golden Bangladesh], we are on the way to becoming a digitalized, knowledge-based middle income country by 2021. We have also set a target to be a developed country by 2041. We have already been graduated to the lower middle income country status, according to World Bank assessment.

As we strive to achieve our goals by 2021 and 2041, I strongly encourage you, the leaders of Hungarian business and industries to partner with us in investment, trade, and innovative businesses for a shared prosperity. Together we can bring a change in the lives of millions in both our countries.

On behalf of the business community of Bangladesh, and on my own behalf, it gives me great pleasure to invite Your Excellency and the distinguished business leaders of Hungary to our country.

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh-Hungary Friendship.



Honouring Indian Martyrs of 1971

Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi
Saturday, 08 April 2017

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi,
Distinguished Ministers,
Respected family members of the martyrs,
Respected war veterans of Bangladesh,
Liberation War,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Afternoon to you all.**

I'm greatly honoured to be present here at a very unique event to pay tribute to some very special friends, who sacrificed their lives for the independence of Bangladesh. On behalf of the people and government of Bangladesh, I acknowledge the debt of gratitude to the martyrs and their families.

In his historic speech of the 7th March 1971, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called upon Bangalees to fight for liberation of Bangladesh. Bangabandhu said, 'this time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for independence'. He declared the independence on the 26th March 1971 before he was arrested. Responding to the call of Bangabandhu, the whole nation fought against the Pakistani occupation forces and earned ultimate victory on the 16th December.

We are grateful to the government and people of India for their extraordinary support to our war of liberation. Many valiant soldiers of Indian armed forces had sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Bangladesh. We always remember with gratitude their contributions and sacrifices. This is a long cherished moment as we are today remembering those who laid down their lives.

Dear Friends,

The initiative to recall the contribution of foreign friends of the liberation war of 1971 and honour them was taken up by my government in 2009. We have started this in July 2011 when we conferred the Bangladesh Freedom Award, the highest civilian award for a foreign national, on the former Indian Prime Minister Srimati Indira Gandhi, We continued with giving honours to former Indian Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Shri Pranab Mukherjee.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the event of Honouring Indian Martyrs of 1971

Ladies and Gentlemen,

History of Bangladesh has been written by the blood of the Indian martyrs along with valiant freedom fighters of Bangladesh. They fought together for the independence of Bangladesh. The story of their sacrifice will be remembered from generation to generation in our two countries. Let the souls of the martyrs rest in peace. Let us celebrate the lives of our heroes.

Distinguished guests,

The martyrs of India and Bangladesh, who fought together in 1971, are blessing us from the heaven. Let us reiterate our resolve to work together for shared peace and prosperity. Let us pledge to work closely to materialize the dreams and aspirations of Bangabandhu for establishing Sonar Bangladesh.

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long live Bangladesh-India Friendship.



Reception by India Foundation

New Delhi, India
10 April 2017

**Shri L K Advani - Former Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the
Advisory Group of Bhartiya Janata Party,
Ministers from India and Bangladesh,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
A very Good Morning to you all.**

I would like to thank the organizers for this event.

Bangladesh-India relations are based on mutuality of interests and commonality of aspirations. We share universal values of freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights and rule of law. The foundation of our relations was laid by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the early years of Bangladesh. In 1972 Bangabandhu said, 'We have a very special relationship with India. The relationship is the friendliest. Friendship of Bangladesh and India is in our hearts. The bonds of friendship will remain firm and long-lasting'. Since then the relationship has matured taking dynamic, comprehensive and strategic shape.

There have been qualitative transformations in the way the relationship between our two countries has evolved over the past eight years. Bangladesh and India have witnessed tremendous progress in almost all sectors of cooperation namely, security, connectivity, power, trade and commerce, development cooperation, health, cultural exchange and people-to-people contact. Amicable settlement of both the maritime boundary and land boundary topped all and set example for the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our challenges and developmental aspirations are similar. Therefore, we need to march together to uplift the lives of our peoples. We have envisioned to become a digital middle income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. India is our partner in this path to progress.

Distinguished Guests,

We have comprehensively addressed India's security concerns. This has been a factor in trust building. We have put in place a multi-layered and effective bilateral security architecture with many dedicated joint institutional mechanisms for targeted and coordinated actions.

Our journey towards peace and prosperity is put to peril by the rise of terrorism and violent extremism. Security threats from state and non-state actors tend to undermine our efforts to integrate our economies and societies. We would need more concerted efforts to strengthen protection for our societies.

Power sector cooperation has been another high point of the relationship. We are importing electricity from India through grid-interconnection. We are also collaborating in other sectors of energy namely, renewables such as solar, wind and hydro, offshore exploration, LNG, LPG, diesel, to name a few. We are identifying hydro-power projects in Bhutan and Nepal for joint development and import of power to Bangladesh across Indian territory.

Trade engagements lie at the heart of our relationship. Bangladesh and India are natural trading and development partners. We are focusing on expansion of trade in a more open, beneficial and balanced manner by addressing the issues of trade barriers, harmonization of standards, development of trade infrastructures, mutual recognition of certificates. To address the trade deficit, we are also working on getting more investment from India particularly in the special economic zones in Bangladesh. Already we are seeing great interest from the biggest business houses in India.

We believe connectivity holds the key to our collective and inclusive development. In our endeavour to integrate the two economies and the region, we are enhancing our connectivity in many ways leading ultimately to multi-modal connectivity. And we are being innovative enough to develop new modes of connectivity.

Whatever earnest we try at the political and official levels, it is our peoples' solidarity, our deep emotional, cultural and historic bonds on which the relationship rests and thrives. With the restoration of trust and build up confidence, the people-to-people exchanges have grown exponentially.

All these are the hallmarks of a new paradigm of partnership.

Distinguished Guests,

We strongly believe our common water resources must act as a uniting force. A comprehensive, basin-wide solution with an in-built solution to water sharing of all the common rivers holds the key to our common future. On Teesta issue, Prime Minister Modi once again reiterated his government's strong resolve to conclude the water sharing treaty at the soonest. Once it happens, the face of Indo-Bangladesh relations would undergo another transformation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our people fought at the clarion call of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The people of India and its government supported us wholeheartedly during the war of liberation in 1971.

In 1971, 3 million people were killed and over 2 lakh women were violated. However, the history of atrocities by Pakistani occupation forces is being distorted. Condemning the denial of history by Pakistan, Bangladesh parliament recently adopted a unanimous resolution declaring March 25 as 'Genocide day' in remembrance of the atrocities carried out by the Pakistani army on the night of March 25, 1971 and thereafter during our liberation war. We want this genocide of 1971 to be recognized by the international community. Prime Minister Modi has made commitment to remain with us in our journey.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh-India Friendship.



At the Business Event with the Indian Chambers of Commerce

Delhi, India
10 April 2017

**Ministers of India and Bangladesh,
Minister of State for External Affairs, India,
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh,
President of Chamber of Commerce India,
President, FBCCI,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning.**

At the beginning, let me thank you all for your kind presence here. I believe that for successful ventures, policy makers and the business leaders need to share their ideas and to know each others' priorities and future plans. I hope this event will enable us to reflect on how we want to see our collective future.

Dear Entrepreneurs,

In the global context, in recent times we have witnessed major political and economic uncertainties which are expected to continue at least for near future. On the contrary, we have noted continuation of prosperity and economic rise of Asian countries. On a different note, we are reminded of challenges like terrorism and violent extremism, conflicts and climate change. These will certainly have impacts on the way we conduct our foreign relations as well as the way we do business.

Despite the global uncertainties, South Asia is continuing as the fastest growing region of the world. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in its 'The World in 2050' report has predicted that India will be world's 3rd largest economy by 2030, while Bangladesh will be world's 29th economy by 2030 in terms of GDP at Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). Not only that, in terms of average real GDP growth from 2016 to 2050, PWC has predicted that Bangladesh will be in 3rd place globally.

If I may share with you at this point that to materialize the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream of a 'Sonar Bangla' or Golden Bengal; Bangladesh is progressing well to emerge as a middle income 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 and a developed nation by 2041.

Let me now share with you few numbers to understand Bangladesh's recent achievements and future prospect. Bangladesh achieved over 7% GDP growth in the past year. IMF forecasts Bangladesh's GDP growth to further enhance in 2017. In the current 2016-17 fiscal year, the government is aiming for 7.4%

GDP growth. We expect that the GDP growth rate will progressively reach 8% by 2020.

Bangladesh receives over 2 billion US dollars of FDI which is the second highest in South Asia. Bangladesh plans to raise the FDI level to 9.6 billion US dollars by 2020.

Bangladesh earned over 34 billion US dollars from exports in the last fiscal year. With increasingly diversified export basket, we are planning to enhance annual export earnings to 54 billion US dollars by 2020. The target has also been set for \$5 billion ICT exports by 2021.

Our foreign exchange reserve currently stands at more than 30 billion dollars. Per capita income has gone up to 1,466 US dollars. In 2015, we achieved lower-middle income status for the first time since its independence. Bangladesh now plans to secure the higher middle-income status by 2021.

Bangladesh continued to be a top remittance earning country last year earning 14.93 billion US dollars. We have celebrated 15,000 megawatt power generation capacity in December 2016 and devised a Power and Energy Sector Master Plan to achieve 57,000 megawatt power generation by the year 2041.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the industry leaders present here, I am happy to share that Bangladesh has declared to build 100 special economic zones, to boost industrialization and to attract foreign investment with attractive incentive packages. So far, we have primarily selected 74 sites for SEZs, among which 22 will be developed by private entities. Among the 56 government SEZs we are now working on to develop the first 10 SEZs. We have decided that some of the economic zones will be exclusively dedicated for Indian investors (for Mongla in Bagerhat district and Bheramara in Kustia district, feasibility study is going on while Mirshorai in Chittagong district is already finalized). I would request the Indian business leaders to consider investing in those special economic zones and to avail the incentives.

In this regard, may I mention that bilateral agreement on promotion and protection of investment is already in place between Bangladesh and India. We are providing attractive packages to the foreign investors including 100% repatriation of profit and invested capital. You can also take advantage of the LDC benefits enjoyed by Bangladesh. Bangladesh is getting benefits of Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) from 38 countries of the world. Indian investors can avail the duty-free and quota-free benefits extended to Bangladesh. Apart from GSP facilities, Indian companies in Bangladesh can also take benefit of preferential tariff granted to Bangladesh by China, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Chile. Bangladesh is also a very huge market of around 160 million people with 30% of population having the affordability to buy

costly products. We can also support your companies through backward and forward linkages.

Our investment in infrastructural development has now rose to 6.32 billion US dollars and we need to invest 20 billion US dollars annually till 2030 to take full advantage of high demographic dividend and low labour cost. We have taken up massive infrastructure development projects like the Padma Multipurpose Bridge and Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, which will significantly change the future of the country. I would urge the Indian investors to consider possible investments in infrastructure projects, in manufacturing, energy and transport sectors.

Distinguished Guests,

Right now Bangladesh and India are enjoying best of relations. We have been able to establish profound mutual trust and exemplary friendship. We have ensured for you the right kind of enabling environment. We are also ensuring physical and virtual connectivity to boost your businesses.

This is the time when the Indian business community should focus more on Bangladesh to take advantage of our steady economic growth, high demographic dividend, cheaper cost and huge consumer base. We promise to facilitate your endeavours.

Let me conclude by thanking you for the hard work you are doing every day to create employment, to bring prosperity to our people and for the growth of our two economies.

I thank you.



Arab–Islamic–American Summit

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
21 May 2017

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
Your Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud,
Your Excellency President Donald Trump,
Your Excellencies Presidents and Prime Ministers of my fellow Arab and
Islamic Countries,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh and Good Afternoon
to you all.**

I am delighted to join you all in the first ever Arab-Islamic-American Summit. My most sincere gratitude goes to His Majesty King Salman for inviting me to this very significant event.

I thank His Majesty King Salman for his initiative to establish the Islamic Counter Terrorism Centre in Riyadh. We are happy to be a founding member of this centre.

Terrorism and violent extremism have become major threats to global peace and development, and in fact to human civilization. Its spread would not spare any country, religion or people.

Bangladesh maintains ‘zero tolerance’ policy to all forms of violent extremism. We have always stood firm not to allow any terrorist individual or entity to use our territory or resources.

For us, a terrorist is a terrorist. They do not have any religion, belief or race. They may come from any religious background. Islam is a religion of peace. It never supports violence or killing. We denounce the use of religion to justify any form of violent extremism. I would call upon this august meeting to declare that Islam should not be used to refer to the terrorists.

We have effectively dealt with homegrown violent extremist in Bangladesh. A number of local outfits have been banned. These elements used to get support from some vested quarters. We have adopted a multi-pronged strategy to address this menace. Our law enforcement agencies have been made effective with proper training to combat extremism. We are also working to build awareness among people against terrorism. I am personally holding meetings and exchanging views through video conferences with all sections of society,

especially with public representatives, teachers, students and imams of mosques, across the country to build a social movement against terrorism and militancy.

Global refugee crisis contributes to the rise of terrorism and violent extremism. Refugees could be a potential breeding ground of terrorists and extremists. The image of 3-year-old Aylan, lying lifeless on the seashore, or the image of blood-stained Omran in Aleppo, shake our consciences. I can hardly take in these images as a mother.

I feel the pain of refugee as I myself had been a refugee. I along with my family was internally displaced in Dhaka in 1971 during our liberation war. When my father, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated in 1975 along with 18 members of my family, I and my younger sister had to take refuge abroad for six years till 1981. Who else could better realize than myself the pain of a refugee!

Excellencies,

The long-time suffering and deprivation of the people of Palestine always cause a sense of injustice in the minds of the young generation. We must act together for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The war-ravaged countries like Iraq and Syria have become the main centres of recruitment and operation for terrorist organizations. Let us join in launching a reconstruction and development plan for these countries on the model of post-Second World War Marshall Plan.

I firmly believe that war can never give solution to any international disputes. It rather aggravates the situation. We need to encourage dialogues among feuding parties to arrive at a peaceful and sustainable settlement to the conflicts.

In conclusion, I would like to propose a few steps:

First: We must stop the source of supply of arms to the terrorists.

Second: We have to stop the flow of financing to the terrorists and their outfits.

Third: We have to remove the divisions within Islamic Ummah.

Fourth: We have to pursue the principle of peaceful settlement of international disputes through dialogues that can address the divides leading to a win-win situation for all.

I once again thank His Majesty King Salman.

Thank you.



IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme–60 Years and Beyond: Contributing to Development

IAEA, Vienna, Austria
30 May 2017

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Director General Mr. Yukiya Amano,
Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President of Mauritius,
His Excellency Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of Uruguay,
Chairman of the IAEA Board of Governors,
Distinguished Delegates,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.**

I extend my felicitations to all member states and the IAEA on the 60th anniversary of the IAEA. I congratulate Mr. Yukiya Amano for his leadership and the agency for its dedicated efforts in the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy under its motto ‘Atoms for Peace and Development’, in the last 60 years. I also thank IAEA for its support to Bangladesh in its development over the last 45 years.

IAEA holds a special place in Bangladesh’s development and energy security. It is one of the first few intergovernmental organizations that granted membership to Bangladesh in 1972, immediately after our war of liberation. I recall references to this organization from Late Dr. MA Wazed Miah, an eminent nuclear scientist who used to visit IAEA as leader of the Bangladesh delegation in the IAEA General Conference.

It is his bold and forward-looking initiatives that gave the earliest expression to the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to build peaceful nuclear energy in Bangladesh. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman decided to establish an atomic energy research establishment with the aim to transform the war-ravaged country into a prosperous ‘Golden Bengal’. In fact, a small research reactor has been running successfully in this centre for more than 30 years for research, radioisotope production, education and training purposes.

Bangladesh today is regarded as a model country for its socio-economic achievement, with an economic growth rate of 7.24% this year. Science, technology and innovation played a major role in our achievement. A group of Bangladeshi scientists deciphered the complete genetic code of jute with a great success. We have also devised ‘science diplomacy’ to ensure partnership for

sustainable economic development through knowledge generation and sharing.

We aim to make full use of science, technology and innovation to achieve a 'Digital Bangladesh'. Accordingly, in the National Science and Technology Policy and the 7th Five Year Plan (2016 to 2021), we have focused on finding solutions to the emerging problems in the sectors of agriculture, food, health, environment and climate change through application of science and technology. The digitization of some public services has helped us to bring the fruits of economic development to the door steps of the rural people.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh enjoys an excellent collaboration with IAEA. We have successfully completed 138 national projects under Technical Cooperation (TC) and participated in 111 regional projects under Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA). Recently Bangladesh successfully hosted the 39th Meeting of the National RCA representatives.

Under the framework of IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, we have received support in many areas, such as, promoting nuclear education and research, food safety, food security, human healthcare improvement, use of isotopes techniques in water and environment system management, industrial applications like Non Destructive Testing (NDT), crop and livestock improvement, control of pests etc. Amongst these many activities, let me share two concrete examples of Bangladesh's achievement in the peaceful use of nuclear technology:

First, Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) has developed high yielding, high nutritive, short duration, salt and submergence tolerant, climate resilient mutant varieties of different crops, by using nuclear technology, radiation and other advanced techniques. We have already developed 92 improved varieties of 13 crops. BINA was awarded with the 'Outstanding Achievement Award' in 2014 by FAO-IAEA for its contribution towards the achievement of food security. Bangladesh today is self-sufficient in staple food production and even able to export surplus food grains.

Second, the number of people who can affordably access diagnostic medical care in Bangladesh has increased 10 times over the last twenty years, as the country has expanded and strengthened its nuclear medicine services. 15 public and 6 private nuclear medicine institutes in the country carry out more than 400,000 nuclear medicine procedures each year in the areas of Oncology, Cardiology, Nephrology, Thyroid, Invitro studies and Cerebral studies. Uses of most recent nuclear technologies in the treatment of cancer are a real help to the people of Bangladesh. We have also built well-trained medical staff, advanced imaging tools and a cost-effective source of essential

radiopharmaceuticals. As a result, life expectancy has increased and public health indicators have improved remarkably.

Excellencies,

I am happy to announce that Bangladesh has recently stepped into nuclear power generation programme. We regard nuclear energy as a safe, environment friendly and economically viable source of electricity generation to meet the ever increasing demand of electricity of 160 million people of the country and thus unlock our development potentials through enhanced productivity and sustained growth. The Russian supported Rooppur Power Plant will produce 2400 mega watts (MW) electricity by two reactors. Our aim is to generate at least 4000 MW of electricity from nuclear source by 2030.

Excellencies,

Capacity building and transfer of technologies are much needed by the developing countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I would call upon developing countries to forge greater cooperation to draw maximum benefits from the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies through IAEA expertise. I would also call upon the developed countries to help maintain IAEA resources assured and sufficient for the Technical Cooperation (TC) programmes. I call upon IAEA to strengthen its efforts to help member states particularly the LDCs and developing countries to implement the SDGs.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, I would like to say that, Bangladesh is solidly anchored at its principled position on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Bangladesh remains committed to working with IAEA and other international partners in ensuring due diligence of the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

I thank you.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu



High Level Meeting on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

United Nations, New York
18 September 2017

**Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to be present here in this High Level Meeting on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse – S.E.A. I thank the Secretary General for taking lead in combating his scourge of S.E.A. within the UN system and beyond.

We had experienced worst form of sexual violence during our war of liberation. Over two hundred thousands women were violated by the Pakistan occupation forces and their collaborators. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took a bold initiative to acknowledge their contribution to our liberation and recognized them as 'Birangana' (meaning 'war heroes'). We have ensured justice by trying, the perpetrators and the abettors of such heinous crimes through international crimes tribunal.

Mr. Secretary General,

As a major troop and police contributing country in the UN peacekeeping, we attach high importance to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse. In this context, our approach is 'zero tolerance' to the allegations of sexual violence by the peacekeepers.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers have consistently maintained good image and credibility almost in all missions. This was due to our strong moral values, effective motivation and high standard of discipline.

Two allegations that we received in all these years have been dealt strongly. One accused proven guilty has been punished with dismissal from service and imprisonment.

Excellencies,

Allegations of sexual abuse against the peacekeepers are handled with extreme urgency. The members under such allegations are immediately repatriated at his own expenses. His/her UN allowances are suspended until the investigation is complete.

'Protection against S.E.A.' has been made an integral part of our pre-deployment training.

Our contingent commanders have been empowered with legal and administrative authority to address any allegation of S.E.A. They can investigate and prosecute the allegations within the mission area. The senior most peacekeeper in the mission area has the authority to take disciplinary actions against the Bangladeshi peacekeepers if they are charged with any criminal offence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh remains committed to the Secretary General's noble initiative to eradicate sexual violence and abuse. To that end, Bangladesh has already conveyed its endorsement to the 'voluntary compact'.

Mr. Secretary General,

We believe the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse deserve justice and also opportunities for rehabilitation. In this regard, I would like to pledge 100,000 US dollars of token contribution to the victim support fund.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh has become a trend setter in peace support operations for our utmost dedication and professionalism, and high respect for the religious, cultural and social values of the people we serve. Our commitment to peacekeeping is reaffirmed through the supreme sacrifice made by 132 of our valiant sons. We remain steadfast in our resolve to continue our meaningful participation in the maintenance of international peace and security through UN peacekeeping operations.

Excellencies,

I wish to conclude by expressing our resolve to strengthen the Secretary General's hands by providing timely support at all times.

I thank you all.



Meeting of OIC Contact Group on Rohingya Muslim Minority

United Nations, New York
19 September 2017

Myanmar is forcibly expelling out the Rohingya Muslims through planned and organized process. First, they have been excluded from the list of recognized ethnic groups of Myanmar. Then in 1982 they were denied of their right to citizenship. Later they were sent to IDP camps in their own country.

Excellencies,

We have continued our diplomatic efforts to return all the Rohingyas to their homeland. But Myanmar is not responding to our calls. You may have also seen in the media that Myanmar is laying landmines along their stretch of border to stop return of Rohingyas to their homeland.

We want to see the end of the 'ethnic cleansing'. The plights of our-Muslim brothers need to stop as well. The crisis has its root in Myanmar and its solution has to be found in Myanmar. In this regard, I would like to make following, proposals–

First: All forms of atrocities against the Rohingya Muslims must be stopped immediately.

Second: 'Safe zones' may be created inside Myanmar to protect the innocent civilians, especially women, children and elderly.

Third: All forcibly displaced Rohingyas must be able to return to their homeland in Myanmar in safety, security and dignity.

Fourth: The recommendations of Kofi Annan Commission must be implemented immediately and unconditionally in its entirety.

Fifth: The State-sponsored propaganda to identify Rohingyas as 'Bengalis' must stop.

Sixth: The Muslim brotherly countries should help Bangladesh with urgent humanitarian assistance till they return to Myanmar.

I call upon OIC countries to show unity to solve the Rohingya crisis before it is too late. Bangladesh remains ready to join any initiative that OIC plans to take.

I thank you all.



Roundtable of UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel (HLP) on Women's Economic Empowerment led by Group of Champions for Women's Economic Empowerment

United Nations, New York
19 September 2017

**Distinguished Co-chairs and the members of the High-Level Panel and
the Group of Champions,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good afternoon to you all.**

Women are the most important drivers of transformation. Through empowerment of women in all sectors the world can most effectively succeed in the realization of sustainable development for all. We believe, women should be supported with education, proper training, right tools and access to equal opportunities.

In the political spectrum, Bangladesh has ensured representation of women in all levels, from the top to the lowest tier of Government. To attain SDG on women empowerment, in our 7th Five Year Plan, we have given priority to women's economic engagement. We are committed to ensure 'enabling, environment' to unleash the potentials of women in the labour and entrepreneurial sector. 27% of our budget is allocated for women's social and economic empowerment activities.

We are bringing our women in the forefront of all economic activities. 10% of posts for women are reserved in judicial, administrative, civil service, armed forces and law enforcing agencies. 60% posts of primary school teachers are reserved for women. We have introduced six months' paid maternity leave for working women.

Our central bank is providing collateral-free loan up to Tk. 2.5 million to the women entrepreneurs. 15% funds of the refinancing scheme, 10% industrial plots and 10% small entrepreneur funds are allocated for women. Every bank and non-bank financial institutions have dedicated desk for women entrepreneurs.

Government's micro-finance schemes and small & medium enterprises (SMEs) have been contributing in poverty reduction and women empowerment. At least 10% of all credit is allocated to women-led SMEs. Our

'Joyeeta Foundation' provides support to 18 thousand grass root level women entrepreneurs.

We are providing skill development training, like sewing, beautification, mobile phone servicing, nursery, kitchen gardening, basic computer and IT training etc. to facilitate self-employment of women.

As a result, women's participation in our economy is increasing. Over four million women are employed in the readymade garments industry. 35% of our women hold a bank account. Women's contribution to the GDP growth is 34%. We aim to ensure 40% participation of women in every sector by 2021 and 50% by 2030.

However, to overcome existing challenges, we need to recognize the unaccounted work of women, build more support facilities for women workers and eliminate social stereotypes.

I thank you all.



Business Council for International Understanding

New York
20 September 2017

**Mr. Chairman,
Business leaders of the United States,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon to you all.**

It is a pleasure to meet you all again this year. I recall my earlier meetings with you held regularly for the last couple of years. Every year, when I come to New York to attend UNGA, I invariably meet you despite my busy schedule. Reasons are many, and I shall mention here just a few. First, Bangladesh and USA are time-tested friends based on common values and shared interests. Second, USA is our major economic, trade and development partner. Third, Bangladesh has been witnessing huge socio-economic transformations, and I want to share this with you.

The relations between the two countries have been flourishing since I took over in 2009, and today, Bangladesh and the USA enjoy the best of relations. The establishment of annual Partnership Dialogue, signing of TICFA (Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement) and regular dialogues of these forums and dialogues on security, military and counter-terrorism eloquently indicate the height of relationship between the two countries. US is now our closest partner in combating terrorism and extremism.

Our trade relationship is reflected by our increasing bilateral trade that totaled about US \$ 8 billion last year. But, the full potential for the expansion of this relationship remains to be explored. Quite a few stumbling blocks are preventing this potential from expanding to its desired level. These include, among other things, very high tariffs on Bangladeshi apparels. While majority of LDCs enjoy duty free market access to USA under different preferential schemes, Bangladesh along with Asian LDCs are facing increasingly stiff competition from those LDCs because of high tariffs. Even some developing countries enjoy the benefit of duty free access under AGOA. This is a basic inequality and injustice that needs to be addressed to ensure level playing field for all the competitors. It is to note that all the developed countries except USA, and even many developing countries have already granted duty free access to LDCs as per commitments under Doha Round.

Bangladesh is celebrating its historic achievements in poverty alleviation, nutrition, maternal and child health, primary education, women empowerment etc. Since our government assumed office in 2009, Bangladesh's

economy has demonstrated an incredible resilience to sustain an average GDP growth of 6.2% despite internal and external challenges, including global recession, and it crossed 7% mark during the last three years; per capita income increased by 100% reaching US \$1752; inflation reined to 5.7%; export earnings doubled to US \$ 37 billion; foreign currency reserve increased to a staggering US \$ 33 billion (equivalent to 8 months' import); food and energy security achieved; Human Development Index increased at annually 1.6%, to name a few economic indicators. Bangladesh tops the south Asian countries in gender parity and ranks 7th globally in political empowerment of women, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2016. Bangladesh achieves Ba3 (Moody's) and BB-(Standard and Poor's) with stable outlook for the 6th consecutive years. Stable real GDP growth and strong external balances have helped Bangladesh to achieve BB- rating with stable outlook from Fitch Ratings for the fourth time. These have been duly recognized by many others, including Goldman Sachs, Citi Group, JP Morgan etc.

Bangladesh has evolved from one of aid dependence to that of trade dependence. Bangladesh is now the 32nd largest economy of the world (based on PPP). Foreign Aid is less than 1.5% of Bangladesh's annual GDP. Bangladesh is today a role model of economic development. Bangladesh is also a progressive, secular democracy with a homogenous population of which 50% is below the age of 25 and available at competitive wages. It has fast growing middle class consumers with increasing purchasing power.

Bangladesh has the most liberal investment policy in South Asia. It includes protection of foreign investment by law; generous tax holiday; concessionary duty on import of machinery; remittances of royalty; 100% foreign equity, unrestricted exit policy; full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit, to name a few. Foreign investment is protected by relevant acts of parliament and bilateral investment treaties. It is to note that Bangladesh already signed Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) and Convention on Avoidance of Double Taxation Treaty with USA. We have planned to establish 100 Exclusive Economic Zones throughout the country. Investors will find all the services available at one place. More than half a dozen exclusive economic zones (EEZs) are ready with all facilities for foreign private enterprises to set up industries. Rapid urbanization fed by increasing consumption of electricity and burgeoning growth of middle class indicate the market potential in Bangladesh for the investors. Additionally, Bangladesh enjoys duty and quota free access to almost all the developed countries, and developing countries like China, Japan, India and South Korea amongst others. Investors producing exportable items could benefit from marketing them to those countries. To be noted, the USA is the largest investor in Bangladesh. Persistent growth of global FDI into Bangladesh since my government took over in 2009 crossing \$2b mark for the last three years reflects the increasing confidence of the foreign investors in

Bangladesh. Even, US investment in Bangladesh crossed US \$1b during last seven years. We are investing heavily to improve the infrastructure and power in order to facilitate investment.

All sectors except arms and ammunitions, nuclear power, forestation and security printing are open to investment by private entrepreneurs. However, we invite investment in potential areas such as power and energy, especially in renewable energy, shipbuilding and recycling, automobile and light engineering, chemical fertilizers, agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, ceramic and plastic goods, ICT, marine resources extraction, tourism, medical equipment, telecommunications and knowledge based hi-tech industries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh is on the way to becoming an industrialized, digitalized, middle-income country by realizing its 'Vision 2021' and a developed country by 2041. Bangladesh has already graduated to a Low Middle-Income Country. As Bangladesh strives to achieve those goals, I urge upon you, the leaders of the US business, commerce and industry to partner with us in investment, trade, share of profits and prosperity. Our mutual beneficial business would strengthen our two countries' friendship, raising it to an enviable level.

I thank you all.



Security Council Open Debate on ‘Reform on UN Peacekeeping: Implementation and Follow-up’

United Nations, New York
20 September 2017

Mr. President,

I thank you for inviting me to this Open Debate.

International peace and security is facing many new challenges. UN peacekeeping operations now need to be made ‘fit for purpose’. In this regard, the Secretary General’s reform agenda is crucial. This should be guided by the recommendations made in the 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.

Peacekeeping must be supported by a political process. The Council needs to review mandates to tailor them to ground realities. There needs to be smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

Mr. President,

In last three weeks, we have once again seen massive influx of Rohingyas from Myanmar. These distressed Rohingyas are facing ‘ethnic cleansing’ in their own country. We are providing shelter, food and other assistances to these forcibly displaced people.

We thank the council for taking proactive role in addressing the crisis and making a call for arresting violence and providing humanitarian assistance to the displaced Rohingyas.

I urge the council to remain engaged and take further effective measures to address the root causes of the problem. All displaced Rohingyas must be able to return to their homes in safety, security and dignity.

Mr. President,

UN Peacekeeping is a core element of Bangladesh’s foreign policy. Bangladesh has never failed to respond to UN’s call for peace and stability worldwide.

As peacekeeping has now become more complex, demanding, and dangerous, we are investing in building our forces capabilities. I can assure the council that Bangladesh would maintain its rapid deployment and self-sustaining capabilities. We are committed to increasing female participation in the peacekeeping.

I recall the pledges made in the 2015 UN Peacekeeping Summit. We further pledge to contribute self-sustained infantry, formed police units and all-female police units at shortest notice. We also commit to offer air power, helicopters, aircrafts, engineers, signals, medical teams, riverine and sea-based units on shortest notice.

We stand ready to provide senior leadership both at UN Headquarters and in field missions.

Mr. President,

We attach high importance to protection of civilians. Our 'zero tolerance to sexual abuse by peacekeepers' will be firmly upheld.

We shall continue to train our peacekeepers in human rights issues and enhance their language skills. We can also provide customized training, joint exercises and technical support to other TCCs and PCCs, including those from Africa.

I invite you to join the meeting on 'Smart Pledges' to be held in Bangladesh in October, ahead of the Vancouver Defence Ministerial.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh has become a brand name in peacekeeping. Our commitment to peacekeeping is reaffirmed through the supreme sacrifice of 132 of our valiant soldiers. I conclude by offering my salute to peacekeepers all over the world.

I thank you all.



Creating a Policy Vision for SDG Finance Facilitating Private Sector Investment in the SDGs

United Nations, New York
20 September 2017

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Good Morning.**

We are here to discuss how we can finance the future we want to build together.

According to UNCTAD, the world will need 3.3 to 4.5 trillion dollars every year to achieve the SDGs. It would be a major challenge for governments to mobilize such resources. The private sector needs to be on board to address the financing gaps.

Private sector in developing countries already accounts for 60% of GDP, 80% of capital flows and 90% of jobs. Partnership with the private sector is, therefore, critical for financing SDGs

In Bangladesh, our private sector is coming forward as a strong and willing partner. In response to that, we have set up a number of entities under my office to mobilize increased private sector investment.

The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority is working on promoting large investments, with focus on FDI. The Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority is setting up 100 Special Economic Zones in the next few years. The office of Public-Private Partnership is speeding up PPP projects and building capacity of public institutions for the purpose. The Principal SDG Coordinator based in my office oversees the work of all these entities. This we have done consciously in an effort to link private sector investment with SDGs.

Thanks to many such initiatives, FDI in Bangladesh rose from under 1 billion dollars in 2010 to 2.5 billion in 2016.

Excellencies,

It is encouraging to see that the private sector is taking SDGs seriously. Companies around the world are including SDGs into their corporate mission statements and sustainable business plans.

This is giving rise to new forms of investment opportunities such as impact investment, which seeks both financial and social returns. I thank UNDP for recognising the potential for such investments and creating the UNDP Social

Impact Finance (UNSIF). This can be a useful tool for private finances to complement government and donor funding for SDGs.

The first investment of UNSIF will be in Bangladesh under the banner of the 'Build Bangladesh-UNDP Impact Fund'. It adds to the list of many innovative firsts that Bangladesh has offered to the world. The Fund will start with affordable housing, with the support of Chinese impact investors.

I hope that the 'Build Bangladesh Fund' will do justice to its name and will be an example not only in Bangladesh but also globally. I thank Canada and UNDP for partnering with us to mark the Fund's launch today.

We look forward to working together to enhance private sector contribution to a sustainable future for all.

I thank you.



SDG Implementation, Financing and Monitoring: Sharing Innovations through South-South and Triangular Cooperation

United Nations, New York
20 September 2017

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

It is a pleasure for me to join you all. We are here to share as to how countries in the global South are fostering mutual cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda. We will look at how advanced countries in the North are extending their support in this regard.

We are promoting a culture of innovation and service within our government. Our Vision 2021 of 'Digital Bangladesh' is a reflection of our new culture. Engaging the larger society for achieving the SDGs is our motto.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh is long known as a development laboratory. The country has now firmly added public service delivery to its focused areas for innovation. We set up over 13,000 One-stop Digital Centres in all local government institutions and post offices. Millions of citizens now get easy access to over a hundred public and private services. These include critical services like birth registration, land records, passports, banking and e-commerce. In 2016 alone, citizens saved over 1.5 billion dollars and 1 billion person days by avoiding traveling to the district headquarters.

However, we realize that development challenges cannot be addressed by government alone. The private sector can and should make enhanced contributions to our national development efforts.

Excellencies,

The countries in the south are often well-positioned to understand each other's development realities and challenges. We, therefore, need to promote a deeper understanding and broader exchange within the south.

We are unveiling today the publication 'South-South in Action: Citizen-Friendly Public Service Innovation in Bangladesh'. I thank the UN Office for South-South Cooperation for its interest and support.

One of our most recent innovations is a simple but powerful tool called SDG Tracker. It can be used for comprehensive target setting and tracking progress



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with world leaders during 72nd UNGA

of each SDG, along with the indicators. It is an innovative platform that takes advantage of the massive data revolution. With the launch of the SDG Tracker, we are making it available for countries in the south.

Excellencies,

Last year, we proposed a ‘South-South Network on Public Service Innovations’. There is an African saying, and I quote, ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’ I think if we want to go far and fast, we need to be innovative together.

I thank you all.



High Level Panel Water in the Sideline of 72nd UNGA

United Nations, New York
21 September 2017

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Excellencies,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all.**

We value water as rights. Water ensures human dignity. We envision a water secure world for all.

As the members of the HLPW, our mandates were to motivate effective action and advocate on financing and implementation. Our Action Plan, declared in 2016, aims for a fundamental shift in the way we behave towards water. The water we need for our survival is a finite resource for the global commons. In addition to creating new narratives and renewed values on water, we need to invest heavily in resilient and innovative water infrastructures.

We share some of our 'light-house initiatives' and learn from the best practices of other partners. Bangladesh has earned global recognition as a champion for ensuring, safe drinking, water and sanitation for all. In a country of more than 160 million people, nearly everyone can access safe drinking water. Now, our target is to ensure direct access to safe drinking water for all by 2020. To increase the sustainable use of surface water, we are re-excavating big ponds, ditches, and water reservoirs and ensuring their water filtration systems and protection from pollution and surface discharge.

We are also prioritizing wash in schools. We believe that our investment for the younger generations will promote education and empowerment for girls and boys and support our shared principles on the basic need of the posterity who will secure our future.

We also require a fresh focus on the impacts of climate change and the intensity of water-related disasters such as floods, draughts, and cyclones. We need long-term strategies to tackle these challenges. We may also need to create a global fund on water SDG to support research, innovation and technology transfer. I am happy that the panel's final outcome package will highlight some concrete actions.

Excellencies,

The panel will soon complete its term and I fully agree that the key legacy of our panel will continue as country-led initiatives at diverse levels. The outcome package will also be our guide for the next hard task: how to get other governments and leaders involved for meaningful water-actions. Also, we must not forget the critical and connecting roles of water with other SDGs, particularly for health, agriculture, industry, infrastructure, and cities. Let us explore all possible platforms, in our respective regions and at the global level, to ensure water governance and continue our best attention to water.

I thank you all.



The 72nd Session of the UNGA

The United Nations, New York
21 September 2017

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Mr. President,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon.

Let me extend my heartiest felicitations on your election as President of the 72nd session of the General Assembly. My delegation assures you of our full support in discharging your priorities on people, peace and planet.

Mr. President,

This is the 14th time I am addressing the UN General Assembly. And this time I have come here with a heavy heart. I have come here just after seeing the hungry, distressed and hopeless Rohingyas from Myanmar who took shelter in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. This forcibly displaced people of Myanmar are fleeing an 'ethnic cleansing' in their own country where they have been living for centuries.

I can feel their pain as I, along with my younger sister, had been a refugee for 6 years after my father, the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and almost all members of my family were assassinated in 1975.

In 1974, in the first ever address of Bangladesh in this Assembly, my father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said, 'I know that the souls of our martyrs join us in pledging that the Bengalee nation fully commits itself to the building of a world order in which the aspirations of all men for peace and justice will be realized'.

Mr. President,

We are currently sheltering over 800,000 forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar. The ongoing atrocities and human rights violations in the Rakhine State of Myanmar once again aggravated the situation at the Bangladesh-Myanmar Border. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas from the Rakhine State are entering Bangladesh to flee violence. As estimated by IOM, in last three weeks over four hundred thirty thousand Rohingyas entered Bangladesh. We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying landmines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingyas from returning to Myanmar. This people must be able to return to their homeland in safety, security and dignity.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the 72nd Session of UNGA

At the same time, I condemn all kinds of terrorism and violent extremism too. Our government maintains a 'zero tolerance' policy in this regard.

I thank the members of the Security Council and also the Secretary General for their proactive attempts to stop atrocities and bring in peace, and stability in the Rakhine State of Myanmar.

I further call upon the United Nations and the international community to take immediate and effective measures for a permanent solution to this protracted Rohingya crisis. In this regard, I propose the following actions:

First: Myanmar must unconditionally stop the violence and the practice of ethnic cleansing in the Rakhine State immediately and forever.

Second: Secretary General of the United Nations should immediately send a Fact-Finding Mission to Myanmar.

Third: All civilians irrespective of religion and ethnicity must be protected in Myanmar. For that 'safe zones' could be created inside Myanmar under UN supervision.

Fourth: Ensure sustainable return of all forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh to their homes in Myanmar.

Fifth: The recommendations of Kofi Annan Commission Report must be immediately implemented unconditionally and in its entirety.



Mr. President,

In the 1971 war of liberation, we endured an extreme form of genocide. In the 9-month-long war of liberation against Pakistan 3 million innocent people were killed and more than 200,000 women were violated. The Pakistan military launched the heinous 'Operation Searchlight' on 25th March which was the beginning of the 1971 genocide.

The 1971 genocide included targeted elimination of individuals on the ground of religion, race and political belief. The intellectuals were killed brutally. To pay homage to the victims of the genocide, our national parliament has recently declared 25th March as 'Genocide Day.'

In Bangladesh, we have already undertaken the daunting task of bringing the key perpetrators to justice through the International Crimes Tribunal. I urge the international community to take collective actions to prevent recurrence of such heinous crimes anywhere anytime. I believe, recognition of past tragedies like the 1971 genocide would guide us to achieve 'never again'.

Mr. President,

Since our birth as a nation, we have pursued peace-centric domestic and foreign policies. With that spirit, Bangladesh has been taking the lead in tabling the resolution on 'Culture of Peace' every year in the General Assembly since 2000.

We reaffirm the call for resuming the Middle East Peace Process, and for ending all forms of hostilities and discriminations against the brotherly Palestinian people.

In recognition of the potential role of the UN peacebuilding architecture, we look forward to bold and innovative proposals from the Secretary General on financing for 'sustaining peace'. I am pleased to announce a token contribution of USD 100,000 from Bangladesh for the UN Peace Building Fund (PBF).

Mr. President,

As a major troop and police contributing country Bangladesh underscores the importance of upholding effectiveness and credibility of UN peacekeeping operations. We shall maintain our own capability readiness, remain open to further smart pledges, enhance the scope of our peacekeeping training, and deploy more female peacekeepers.

We maintain a 'zero tolerance' approach to any allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. As an endorser of the 'Voluntary Compact' on sexual exploitation and abuse, I have committed myself to the Secretary General's 'Circle of Leadership' to combat this scourge. I am also pleased to announce a token contribution of USD 100,000 to the Victim Support Fund established for this purpose.

Mr. President,

Terrorism and violent extremism have become a major threat to peace, stability and development. Terrorists have no religion, belief or race. Having been a target of a number of terrorist attacks myself, I personally empathize with the victims of terrorism and appreciate their need for protection.

We denounce the use of religion to justify violent extremism. I have involved families, women, the youth, the media and religious leaders at the community level to offset the spread of violent extremism.

In this regard, I reiterate my calls:

First: Stop supplying arms to the terrorists;

Second: Stop terrorist financing; and

Third: Settle all international disputes peacefully.

I also urge the UN to address the growing threats emanated from the cyber space to prevent money laundering, terrorist financing and other transnational organized crimes.

Mr. President,

We believe in promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. Last year we proposed developing a sound migration governance framework through the 'Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration'. I am pleased that currently the UN is delivering on the formation of the compacts for migration and refugees.

Mr. President,

The Paris Climate Agreement remains our bastion of hope for climate justice. By recognizing the climate vulnerability, we are building resilience against the grave impacts of climate change. We believe in the potentials of 'Blue Economy' in advancing the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and seas.

Bangladesh has achieved exemplary success in building resilience against flood and other disasters. Crop intensification and invention of water resistant crops have helped us achieve self sufficiency in food. We have efficiently responded to the massive flood that has stricken the entire South Asian region this year.

As a member of the High-level Panel on Water, I attach high priority to implementing its comprehensive Action Plan. Bangladesh has ensured access to safe water for 87 percent of its population by 2015, and we aim full coverage of our population by 2030.

Mr. President,

We believe that there are close interfaces between peace & stability and development. We share the conviction that addressing poverty, hunger, illiteracy, unemployment and inequalities is crucial for building peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

We are committed to implement the SDGs. For that, our government has adopted a ‘whole-of-the-society’ approach. The SDGs complement our vision to transform Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

Even before the adoption of the SDGs we have initiated unique social programmes that reflect the themes of the SDGs, such as Ekti Bari Ekti Khamar (One Household One Farm); Community Clinic; Ashrayan (Shelter project); Digital Bangladesh; Education Support; Women Empowerment; Education for All; Social Safety Net; Environment Protection and Investment and Development.

Our ‘Voluntary National Review’ presented to the UN this year showcased our progress and commitment for achieving the SDGs.

Mr. President,

In 2016-17, Bangladesh’s economy posted a GDP growth rate of over 7.24% and our foreign currency reserve reached USD 32.1 billion. We have brought down the poverty level from 56.7% in 1991 to 23.2% today.

Our per capita income is expected to grow to USD 1,602 by the end of the current fiscal year, which was only USD 543 in the FY 2005-06. Our life expectancy increased to almost 72 years. These figures, indeed, are indications of our inclusive development, in which no citizen is left behind.

To ensure inclusive growth, promote investment and employment opportunities for all, we have taken an initiative to develop 100 special economic zones around the country.

Our extensive social safety net measures give coverage to many vulnerable segments of our population, including elderly people, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and vulnerable mothers under economic hardship.

Special emphasis has been given to unlock the potentials of physically challenged children and people. 103 service and care centres along with 32 mobile therapy vans attend to the needs of persons with disabilities, including those affected by Autism. 18,500 community health clinics are being complemented by medical services through mobile phones and web cameras in districts and Upazilas (sub-districts).

There is now a public primary school in every village of the country. 38,331 educational institutions have been equipped with digital laboratories and

multi-media classrooms. Special emphasis is being given on promoting technical and vocational education and training for young people.

Mr. President,

Our youth are the main movers in realizing my vision for a knowledge-based 'Digital Bangladesh'. We are working towards creating an environment to allow them to pursue transformative education, find decent jobs, and turn into truly global citizens.

I am happy to announce that Bangabandhu Statellite-1, which is our first ever satellite, is scheduled to be launched this year on our victory day 16th December.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to say, we do not want war. We want peace. We want people's wellbeing—not destruction of humanity. We want sustainable development. Let this be our collective goal.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh.



63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) Inaugural Ceremony

South Plaza, Parliament Building
Sunday, 5 November 2017

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Hon'ble Chair of the inaugural ceremony,
Hon'ble Speakers of CPA Member Parliaments,
Hon'ble Members of Parliament,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning to you all.**

I am deeply honoured to be here to inaugurate the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in this historic city of Dhaka. I would like to welcome the distinguished guests on behalf of the people of Bangladesh, the government and myself. Conference of this kind would I am confident, give us a clearer insight into democratic values and practices.

We parliamentarians being the people's representatives have the first and foremost obligations to preserve and maintain the faith of the people in democracy and parliamentary institutions.

Due to the pragmatic and far-reaching thinking of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, decision to join the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's (CPA) membership was taken in 1973. Our Hon'ble Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP made Bangladesh proud when she became the first women to be elected as the chairperson of CPA in 2014. This is a testimony by the Hon'ble Members of the Parliament across the Commonwealth towards our commitment to democratic practices and values.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The cherished desire of the people of this land to establish a sovereign and an independent democratic country has been materialized through huge sacrifices. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had led the struggle from the forefront. As a consequence, he had to endure confinement in jail for half of the Pakistan's 24 years' regime.

The Pakistani military junta conceded to arrange general elections in 1970 after a long and unbridled struggle waged headed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Bangladesh Awami League earned an absolute majority in the

elections. But the then rulers had tried to impose an undemocratic rule through exercising power instead of handing over power to the elected representatives.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his historic speech of the 7th March aroused the Bangalee nation to get freedom and he called for a noncooperation movement. As the Pakistani military force started genocide through 'Operation Search Light' on the night of the 25th March in 1971, Bangabandhu declared the independence in the first hour of the 26th March. We earned an independent Bangladesh sacrificing 3 million lives and innocence of 2 hundred thousand women in the 9-month bloody war with Pakistani forces.

When Bangabandhu was engaged in reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-ravaged country, the reactionary defeated forces assassinated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members on the 15th August 1975. I and my younger sister survived as we were abroad on that fateful night. We had been barred to return home. With the killing of Bangabandhu, the democracy was assailed and the era of military dictatorship started.

While in exile, I engaged myself in the struggle for restoration of democracy. Ending six years in exile, I returned home in 1981. I had to endure huge sufferings while struggling for establishing people's rule. Repeated attempts were made on my life along with house-arrest and internment.

We didn't restrain ourselves from the struggle for the restoration of democracy despite thousands of workers and leaders became victims of massive repression. We think that only a democratic polity can ensure uplift of people's living standard through fulfilling their basic needs.

After long 21 years, my party Awami League returned to state power in 1996 and we engaged ourselves to fulfill the basic needs of people not as a ruler but as a public servant. After an interval of 8 years, my party again came to the state power in 2009.

Our main aim is to build a hunger and poverty free Bangladesh through strengthening the foundation of democratic rule in the country. Aiming to fulfill the goal, we framed Vision 2021 and now are implementing the same devising specific plans.

Excellencies,

Friendship to all, malice to none- is our policy in maintaining relations with foreign countries. Especially, we are eager to maintain good relations with our neighbors. We have resolved long-standing problems of Ganges water sharing and land boundary with India through signing treaties. Similarly, maritime boundary problem with India and Myanmar was also resolved amicably.

But the inhuman persecution meted out on the Rohingya population in the Rakhaine state of Myanmar and their forceful expulsion from their homeland have created instability in the region and beyond. Over 6.22 hundred thousand Myanmar nationals fled to Bangladesh to escape persecution. After 1978, another 5 hundred thousand Rohingyas came to Bangladesh at different times.

We have given temporary shelter to this huge number of people on humanitarian ground. I would like to request you all to discuss the Rohingya issue with utmost importance and exert pressure on the Myanmar government to stop persecution on its citizens and take them back at the earliest.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A new campaign of facing militancy and terrorism has been added to our efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty. Thoughtless acts of a section of people are claiming innocent lives. Militancy is not a problem of a particular country, rather it became a global phenomenon. A few days back, 8 precious lives were claimed on a New York road. We have to be united to get rid of this menace.

We are the worst victim of the climate change. This year we experienced excessive precipitation and recurrence of flooding that washed away our vast localities and damaged standing crops. We expect immediate implementation of the promises made at different times to offset the adverse impacts of climate change.

In Bangladesh, we have been striving hard to build a poverty and hunger-free democratic society. We have strengthened various democratic institutions, including national parliament and local government bodies. Elected representatives have been heading the local bodies from Union Council to Upazilas (Sub-districts), Municipalities, City Corporations, District Councils. Bangladesh now stands at the top among its south Asian neighbours in terms of women empowerment and achieving gender parity.

Independent and strong mass media are the vigilant watchdog of democracy. In the past few years we witnessed huge expansion of mass media. The freedom of mass media and people's right to information have been ensured.

We have been implementing the SDGs in continuation of the successes of the MDGs. The subjects of SDGs have been incorporated in our 7th 5-year plan.

Bangladesh has been in a journey through the roads of peace, democracy, development and prosperity. We have already been elevated to a lower middle income country. We expect that Bangladesh will emerge as a country of middle income on the golden jubilee of our independence in 2021 and as a developed one by 2041.

Let us make this planet a peaceful, happy and prosperous abode for the entire humanity. I wish, your stay in Bangladesh will be joyful and memorable one. I also wish all success of the conference.

With these few words I declare the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference open.

Thank you all again.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Meeting with the Business Leaders of MEDEF International

Hotel Intercontinental Paris-Le Grand, Paris, France
Wednesday, 13 December 2017

**Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Bonjour. A very Good Morning to you all.**

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to meet you all.

I am here at the invitation of President Macron to participate at the One Planet Summit. My participation in this Summit is reiteration of Bangladesh's support to the Paris Agreement (COP-21). Bangladesh appreciates France's leadership in taking forward the climate change consensus.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and France. I believe this is an opportune time to reflect on potential new areas of cooperation. We have installed around 4.5 million Solar Home Systems (SHSs) across the country serving almost 18 million people.

Yesterday, I had a very fruitful meeting with President Macron and we both share the vision to expand bilateral relations and cooperation between our two countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh is a land of opportunities and potentials. We have one of the friendliest foreign investment and trade regimes in the region. Despite challenges, we have achieved 7.28% GDP growth last year. This powerful momentum has created huge opportunities.

Bangladesh has come a long way since its independence in 1971. We have made significant progress in areas like alleviating poverty, attaining food security, improving health and sanitation, expanding social safety nets. The strength of Bangladesh's economy is globally recognized. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), in its report earlier this year identified Bangladesh '**as one of the three fastest growing economies globally over the next three decades**'.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am encouraged to see the growth in bilateral trade and investment between Bangladesh and France in recent years. Two-way trade between Bangladesh and France stands at over USD 2 billion. France is now Bangladesh's 5th largest export destination.

In continuation of our ever-expanding bilateral economic relations, Thales Alenia Space was awarded the contract in 2015 to build and launch the Bangabandhu Satellite—first of its kind for Bangladesh. We are happy that all preparations are now underway to launch it in March 2018. I am further happy to note that French company Technip is currently working towards establishing the 2nd phase of Eastern Refinery.

French FDI to Bangladesh was USD 14.64 million in 2016-17. There is certainly room for more French investment in Bangladesh. We strongly encourage French companies to come up with investments, including with concessional financing options.

Bangladesh is a huge market of 160 million people. Located between south and south-east Asia, makes Bangladesh the natural gateway between the ASEAN and SAARC region. We are also investing heavily to improve regional connectivity. Thus, investing in Bangladesh, will give you access to the market of the entire region, which is a market of nearly 2 billion people.

We are setting up 100 ‘Special Economic Zones’ (SEZs) across the country to industrialize Bangladesh in an inclusive manner. We invite you to set up a French SEZ in Bangladesh. Beside the traditional areas of trade between the two countries, I feel that there is scope for further French investment in the urban infrastructure, energy and the blue economy sectors. We are also in discussion with French authorities to support our efforts in these sectors.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My message to you is simple – France needs to invest to sustain its growth while Bangladesh needs investment to expedite its growth. You need competitive sourcing option while we look for diversifying our export destination. This offers a perfect combination for a win-win partnership for both our countries.

I understand that a visit by MEDEF to Bangladesh is expected to take place soon. We welcome that. Such a visit would surely contribute to further expanding bilateral trade and investment between Bangladesh and France.

Thank you all
Khoda Hafez



41st Session of the IFAD's Governing Council

Rome, Italy
13 February 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Chairperson–President of IFAD Mr. Gilbert Foussoun Hougbo,
Governors,
Representatives of different international organizations,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning to you all.**

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here at the 41st session of IFAD Governing Council. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for inviting me as keynote speaker.

Bangladesh from its early history has been known as a fertile land where all agricultural products grow easily. But that reputation was marred time and again for a long period till the late 1990s. At the time of its emergence as an independent country in 1971, Bangladesh faced serious food shortage as the production of food grains for a population of 75 million was only 11 million tons.

Soon after the independence, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had laid utmost importance on increasing agricultural production and he called for 'Green Revolution' in the country. To boost production, he took some pragmatic measures, including land reform, land tax waiver, establishment of research bodies, installation of irrigation pumps and distribution of agri-inputs at free of cost.

But after his assassination in 1975, the agricultural sector has been a subject of negligence by the subsequent governments resulting in acute food shortage.

Every year for a decade and a half it had to assemble development partners for at least four times a year to meet its food needs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its inception IFAD has invested in 31 projects in Bangladesh and other five projects are in the pipeline. The total loan and grant for all 31 projects amounts to US dollar about 680 million. Currently IFAD is focusing on the adaptation of rural livelihoods to climate change and the scaling up of successful approaches.

According to World Economic Forum report, the world's population is projected to surpass 9 billion by 2050 and half of it will belong to the middle



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivers speech at the 41st session of the IFAD's governing council

class. There will be a huge strain on declining global arable land, forests and water.

Rise in sea level will heavily reduce arable land in many countries and we will be its victim again without contributing to sea level rise at all. Global food demand in 2050 would increase by at least 60 percent over 2006 levels and food prices are likely to increase by at least 84 percent.

How do we respond to such a combination of adverse developments?

I shall tell you the story of agricultural growth of my country pointing out the lessons which can be adopted or more appropriately adapted in other countries for human development on a global scale. We do not want to face another 1981 when we discovered that neglect of agricultural growth was most unfortunate for mankind.

First of all, let me tell you that the natural resilience of Bangladeshi people to any crisis did not allow the build-up of a food crisis in a year of climatic vagaries and reduced food production in the country.

The resolve of Bangladeshis to tighten the belt, encounter difficulties with confidence and seek alternative ways of meeting the crisis enabled us to overcome and succeed.

Bangladesh had about a decade of self-sufficiency in food and then this year there was an unexpected shortfall due to untimely and recurrent flooding. Some adjustment in import policy immediately made food readily available to the consumers.

In my country, you may please note that we have increased our food production from 11 million tons in 1971 to 39 million tons in 2017 although one third of arable land has been lost in the meantime.

From 2008 it has been an increase of 9 million tons. This was possible as we reached agri-inputs to the farmers with heavily subsidized prices, and soft and collateral-free loans were made available to the landless farmers.

We used all options that ICT could offer us to overcome the crisis. At present ICT is helping us to accelerate the efficiency and precision of research, particularly on issues related to climate change. New mapping techniques using remotely-sensed data and GIS have helped us to assess vulnerability to climate change, devise more efficient water capturing methods, locate areas with water-harvesting potential and develop suitability maps for newly developed crop varieties. As a result we are now self-sufficient in food and agriculture with some additional capacity for export as well.

Mr. Chair,

After the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, we aligned our march for development with our Seventh Five Year Plan based on the spirit of 'leaving no one behind'. Our targets for the future remain the same and they will be incorporated in the subsequent Five Year Plans.

The first target is to eliminate poverty. The second one is to eliminate hunger. And the third one is to make nutritious food available to all.

The challenge of leaving no one behind is most significant in rural areas. About 72 percent of our population live in rural areas and 43 percent are engaged as labour in agriculture sector that contributes 15 percent to the country's GDP.

The rural non-farm sector accounts for 40 percent of rural employment but earns more than 50 percent of rural income. Hence, inclusive and sustainable rural transformation is key to reaching the goals of poverty elimination, hunger elimination and leaving no one behind.

Sustainability cannot be achieved without creating long-term resilience. A comprehensive sustainable rural economy requires investment in the development of the rural social fabric and climate resilience.

Bangladesh, a country of over 160 million people, is the most densely populated country in the world. It is poised to achieve the SDG goals well ahead of 2030. It estimates that poverty will be eradicated altogether by 2024 and that of hunger by 2041.

But it also faces other formidable challenges. It is likely to lose 40 percent of its productive land by 2080 if sea levels rise 65 centimetres only. In addition, changes in crop production due to the impact of climate change will increase

the number of people living in poverty. Therefore, significant resources must be tapped in order to ensure better adapted and resilient agricultural practices.

The government's Seventh Five Year Plan, therefore, places emphasis on the sustainable use of resources and investment in agricultural research to develop high yield crop varieties resistant to salinity, flooding and cold.

The Seventh Five Year Plan also focuses on issues related to development of rural areas of Bangladesh and identification of priority areas, such as increasing local production, solving energy problems, reducing poverty through undertaking programmes on agriculture, employment generation and rural infrastructure.

The rural institutions will be strengthened to support the ongoing rural transformation including support for non-farm job creation, rural mobility, and rural finance.

Due to policies friendly to fisheries, the total fish production reached up to 41.34 lakh MT in Fiscal Year 2016-17. This has contributed to self-sufficiency in fish production. Our national fish, Hilsa has received geographical identification certificate. We are fourth largest producer of sweet water fish in the world.

We also have a food feeding programme for the poor and vulnerable population. In 2017, five million families received 30 kg rice for 5 months at a highly reduced price. Under the food based social security safety-net programme, about US Dollar 750 million has been allocated. We have also allocated US Dollar 76.5 million for rice sale in open market for low-income families.

Our government launched One House One Farm project in 2010-11 financial year to alleviate poverty through agro-livelihood and family farming.

Under the project 17,300 Village Development Organisations have been formed incorporating over one million beneficiaries. They have set up nearly 7 hundred thousand small farms with an investment of US dollar 115.3 million.

We have also successfully tried to tackle the problem of nutrition. The undernourished portion of Bangladesh's population declined from 33.2 percent in 1992 to 16.4 percent in 2016. Poverty has been reduced to about 22 percent now from about 41.5 percent during 2005-06. Various government initiatives have played a role in this improvement.

Mr. Chair,

We believe that in order to ensure resilience, investment in rural economy is a key factor. This, we believe, cannot be achieved without global partnership and cooperation.

The development partners have to be a little more generous in order to eliminate poverty and hunger. The world appears to me to be ready now for it. I would like to urge you for investing in sustainable rural economies.

By way of telling the story of my country, I have tried to plead for 'From fragility to long term resilience by investing in sustainable rural economies'.

My country Bangladesh has been very lucky with stable governance for almost a decade. We formulated our strategy of socio-economic growth very carefully over a period of about four years. And then we tried to implement it in the last nine years. We made adjustments as needed and as demanded by circumstances very carefully.

Fortunately, the development partners came forward with eager and generous hands and jointly we made proud progress. We hope and pray that in continuing such a partnership, IFAD will play an important role. IFAD's model of mutual help and partnership is very different from that of other UN agencies and organizations.

And we sincerely believe that this ideal model will work in the promising future that is before mankind now.

Thank you all again.

Khoda Hafez



Luncheon Hosted by the Prime Minister of Singapore

The Istana, Singapore
Monday, 12 March 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Your Excellency, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon to you all.**

I thank you, Excellency Prime Minister, for hosting this lunch and for your kind remarks just now. May I also thank you and your government for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation ever since our arrival in Singapore.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh and Singapore have been enjoying friendly ties since the establishment of diplomatic relations in February 1972. Our friendship is rooted in common values and shared history and economic cooperation. We had very good meetings with Her Excellency the President and you, Excellency earlier this morning. We discussed issues of mutual interests and areas of new cooperation. I recognize the engaging interest in advancing our bilateral relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh and Singapore belong to different levels of development. But we can complement each other in our economic pursuit. In Singapore, you have capital, advanced technology and know-how while in Bangladesh, we have a large workforce. Moreover, a large section of our population is young and educated. These comparative advantages may be harnessed to our mutual benefit.

We have signed a few documents today. Our chamber bodies will sign a few more with their counterparts tomorrow. Implementation of these provisions is expected to usher in a new era of economic cooperation between our two countries. I am happy to see a growing interest and engagement of Singaporean companies in Bangladesh.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech at a luncheon hosted by the Prime Minister of Singapore

Singapore continues to be a favourite destination for Bangladeshi workers. I hope that Singapore will continue to provide them with a decent work atmosphere.

Distinguished Guests,

Bangladesh and Singapore share a similar outlook on many issues of global concern. We take mutually supportive positions in international fora, including in the UN. Our positions are based on a deeper understanding of, and respect for, each other's values, principles and approaches.

I congratulate Singapore on the assumption of ASEAN Chair this year. My country would wish to forge deeper cooperation with ASEAN during the Singaporean leadership.

On that note, I would like to stop here. I wish your Excellency good health, long life and happiness. I also wish the friendly people of the Republic of Singapore peace, progress and prosperity.

Thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever
Long Live the Bangladesh–Singapore Friendship



Bangladesh-Singapore Business Forum organized by the Singapore Business Federation

Shangri-La Hotel
Tuesday, 13 March 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**President of Singapore Business Federation,
Business leaders and entrepreneurs from Singapore,
Members of my Business delegation,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning to you all.**

I am pleased to be here with you at the opening of this Business Forum.

We have been striving hard to materialise our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream to build Golden Bangladesh, a country free from hunger, poverty and deprivation.

We are now transforming the nation into a knowledge-based society, driven by our 'Digital Bangladesh' Vision 2021 since 2009. We have set a clear goal to become a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

Last year Bangladesh's economy posted a GDP growth rate of 7.28%. The foreign currency reserve rose to over US \$ 33 billion in 2017 from a mere US \$ 3.5 billion in 2005. Our export volume increased to US \$ 34.67 billion in 2016-17 fiscal from US \$ 10.52 billion in 2005-06. Poverty rate has been slashed to 22% now from 41.5% in 2005. Life expectancy has increased to 72.4 years from 65 years in 2006.

At present, our per capita income rose to US \$ 1,610 from US \$ 543 in 2005. Bangladesh is now ranked the 33rd largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity-PPP. We are expecting UN to announce graduation of Bangladesh from LDC very soon, as recognition of our recent economic performances.

Distinguished Guests,

From a humble subsistence agriculture-based economy, Bangladesh is shifting towards a modern, resilient and diversified economy. The manufacturing sectors now occupy four-fifth of our GDP. In 2017, Price Waterhouse Cooper predicted Bangladesh as one of the three fastest growing economies globally over the next three decades. Other two countries are India and Vietnam. The leading UK daily Financial Times in its 8 August 2017 issue states 'Bangladesh has achieved an economic miracle in the past 20 years'.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the Bangladesh–Singapore Business Forum

We expect that half of our population to become urbanized consumers by 2030 creating a large market.

Distinguished Guests,

We have one of the most liberal foreign investment regimes in South Asia. It includes protection of foreign investment by law, generous tax holiday, concessionary duty on import of machinery, remittances of royalty. We also offer 100% foreign equity, unrestricted exit policy, full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit.

We have a huge young, energetic and easily trainable workforce with competitive wages. Bangladesh offers opportunities for duty and quota-free access to the markets of EU, Australia, Canada, India, Japan and New Zealand.

Success of our ready-made garments sector is known to the world. The volume of our textile export is second to only China reaching almost US \$ 30 billion in 2017. We want to increase this export to US \$ 50 billion by 2021.

Similarly, our pharmaceuticals are now being exported to 120 countries, including USA and EU, after meeting 97% of our domestic demands. Bangladesh is emerging fast as a major global hub for high quality, low-cost generic medicines.

Our knowledge industry, ICT and related industry is also expanding rapidly. Ship-building is yet another promising industry in Bangladesh. Our builders have drawn global attention by making world-class light to medium-sized ocean-going vessels.

We are now establishing 100 ‘**Special Economic Zones**’ (SEZs) in different parts of the country as part of our planned rapid industrialization. We are also developing several Hi-tech Parks in Bangladesh for IT industries with foreign investment. We have a target of exporting US \$ 5 billion worth of IT goods and services by 2021.

**Distinguished business leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I invite you, the business communities in Singapore, for a partnership role in our journey towards economic development. I encourage you to visit Bangladesh and explore what we have to offer for your businesses and investment.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Bangladesh's Development Story: Policies, Progresses and Prospects

Queen Elizabeth Centre, London, UK
Tuesday, 17 April 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Mr. Thier, thank you for this opportunity to address this eminent gathering at the ODI.

Excellencies, Hon'ble Members of Parliament, Distinguished Audience, Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning/Afternoon to you all.

I am greatly encouraged by your interest on Bangladesh.

Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 after nine months of bloody war fought under the leadership of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Three million people were martyred and two million women lost their innocence by Pakistani occupation forces.

Soon after independence, Bangabandhu started rebuilding the war-ravaged country. But unfortunately, he, along with 18 family members, was brutally assassinated on 15 August 1975.

My sister and I survived as we were out of the country then. For the next 21 years the country was ruled by military, quasi-military and undemocratic rulers. People's aspirations and well-being were trampled.

Bangabandhu dreamt of a hunger, poverty, illiteracy and exploitation-free Golden Bangladesh. This dream has been my government's inspiration all along.

Returning home from exile in 1981, as I led the movement to restore democracy and people's right to vote and food, I was targeted time and again. At least 19 attempts were made on my life, and I was interned or arrested several times.

Distinguished audience,

That was just to give you a very brief account of our struggle to make Bangladesh self-reliant.

Following a term in office from 1996 to 2001, my party Bangladesh Awami League again assumed office in 2009. At that time the country was struggling with several internal and external shocks: political anarchy, rise of extremism, natural disasters, commodity price hike and a prolonged global recession.

We charted our roadmap for future Bangladesh—'Vision 2021' in our 2008 election manifesto. It foresees, among other things, that by 2021, the golden



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the Queen Elizabeth Centre, London, UK

jubilee year of our independence, Bangladesh will become a middle-income country.

Long, medium and short-term policies have been crafted to revitalize the economy. We formulated and implemented the 6th five-year plan that laid emphasis on boosting rural economy. Our government also channelized adequate fund for SMEs to create job opportunities in rural areas.

Agricultural sector was given special attention to make the country self-reliant in food production.

Our pragmatic and decisive policies paid dividends. We attained autarky in food grain, fish, poultry and vegetables productions.

On the fiscal front, focus was given on mobilisation of domestic resources. Over 95% allocation of our national budget is met from domestic resources.

Private sector has been opened up to boost investments and thereby create job opportunities. We have undertaken several fast track projects with foreign investments. One hundred Special Economic Zones are being set up across the country to attract foreign direct investment.

Ten initiatives, mostly dealing with socio-economic emancipation of rural people, are being implemented under direct supervision of my office.

We have introduced the concept of micro-savings along with micro-credit under One House One Farm project. The poor and marginal rural people are being made self-reliant using the credit in income-generating activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are one of the fastest growing economies in the world with optimistic outlook. Last year the growth rate was 7.28% and this year the projected growth is 7.65%.

The GDP grew by 2.5 times to 250 billion US dollars in 2017 from 100 billion US dollar in 2009.

Foreign currency reserve grew more than 9 times to over US \$ 33 billion, thanks to our Diaspora. Per capita income leaped from US \$ 543 in 2006 to US \$ 1,752 this year. In its review last month, the Committee on Development Policy (CDP) of UN ECOSOC found Bangladesh fulfilling its three eligibility criteria for graduation out of the LDC category.

Distinguished Guests,

Bangladesh currently is the second largest RMG exporter in the world. Initiatives have been taken to make our garments factories compliant to safety and security standards.

We have now 67 RMG factories with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. Top seven environment-friendly garments and textiles factories of the world are in Bangladesh.

Our pharmaceutical industries meet 95% of local demand and export to more than one hundred countries. Our ship building industry exports ocean-going vessels to Scandinavian countries and Germany.

Alongside, frozen food, leather products, smart devices IT Services, jute and jute goods, toys and many others have the potential of claiming greater share in global trade and investment.

Since 2009, export earnings increased 3 times to 34.67 billion US dollar. During December 2008 election, we rolled out our Digital Bangladesh concept.

We now have 136 million mobile phone users and 73 million of them use mobile data.

Thirteen high-tech parks are being set up to boost billion-dollar ICT industry. Bangladesh is also set to launch soon its first satellite 'Bangabandhu-I'.

We have set up about 6,000 digital and 8,500 e-post centres across the country to cater 200 different government services to people.

More than 18,000 thousand Community Clinics and Union Health Centres are providing medicare services to mainly rural women and children.

Energy is crucial to achieve high growth. In 2009, we inherited power production capacity of around 3,200 megawatts. The capacity is now increased by more than five times to 16,600 megawatts. 90% of households have been brought under electricity coverage.

Work on a 2,400-megawatt nuclear power plant along with several other big power plants is going on.

The strategic location makes Bangladesh an emerging hub for regional connectivity, foreign investments and global outsourcing.

Work on the 6.15 km Padma Multi-Purpose Bridge is progressing with our own resources which will develop connectivity with second port, Mongla and southern part of the country.

We are planning to build a deep seaport, while our third seaport in Payra has commenced operations.

Work on the metro rail in capital Dhaka is also progressing. Bangladesh could be a gateway to a market of 3.9 billion people through regional integration.

Multi-modal transport networks are being built to promote trade and people-to-people contacts among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN).

We have taken an initiative to connect our two neighbours-India and China-through Bangladesh and Myanmar to revive the old Silk Route. Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) connects South Asia with ASEAN.

Distinguished Guests,

We understand that investing in our vast human resources, particularly women and youth would pay rich dividends. Nearly 20.3 million students, half of whom are girls, are brought under stipend and scholarship programmes. Education of girls in public schools is free up to level twelve. Free text books are being distributed among students upto secondary level since 2010. Some 362 million textbooks have been distributed this year alone. School meal programme is introduced for more than 2.84 million children. Cent percent children are enrolled in schools. The female-male ratio in secondary school is now 53-47% which was 35-65% in 2009. Literacy rate has been increased to 73% from 45% in last 9 years. We are expanding vocational training facilities to equip our youth with future livelihood skills. Special emphasis has been given to unlock the potentials of physically challenged children and people.

We are spending 2.3% of our GDP in 145 social safety-nets programmes. These programmes coupled with some pro-people policies have brought down poverty from 41.5% in 2005 to 22% today.

Women are our agents of change. We are providing special facilities to women entrepreneurs. They get collateral-free bank loan with only 5% service charge. They are entitled to 10% of the SME fund and 10% industrial plots.

The 350-member Bangladesh Parliament has now 72 women MPs. Thirty percent seats are reserved for women at local government bodies. Over 16 thousand elected women are placing their voices at the local government bodies.

Our foreign policy priority is to strengthen friendly relations, particularly with neighbours, aimed at flourishing trade, investment and development cooperation.

Distinguished Audience,

Our successes are not to suggest that there are no challenges. We face the challenge of climate change although we are the least polluter. Rise in sea level will induce displacement of millions.

It is a shared responsibility of the global community to protect our planet, our biodiversity and our climate. We are in the process of developing Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 to mitigate and manage the climate change impacts. Bangladesh is following zero tolerance policy against terrorism and militancy which of late became a global threat.

Distinguished Audience,

Bangladesh is currently enduring the entire brunt of the recent exodus of persecuted Rohingya people from Rakhine State of Myanmar.

Their total number is now 1.1 million, larger than the total population of many countries. We have given them shelter on humanitarian grounds.

I have personally visited them in the camps to see their plights. So did many world leaders. Bangladesh seeks a peaceful, sustainable and early solution to the crisis.

Distinguished Audience,

We need to build knowledge and innovation partnership for transformative technology. We have to ensure a better quality of life which cannot always be measured by the yardstick of per capita income.

Therefore, we have drawn up our 'Vision 2041' when Bangladesh will be a peaceful, prosperous, happy and developed nation.

I am confident that we shall fulfil that cherished dream of Bangabandhu's Golden Bangladesh in good time.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live UK–Bangladesh Friendship.



Global Women's Leadership Awards Gala Dinner 2018

Global Summit of Women

Sydney, Australia
Friday, 27 April 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Hon'ble Ministers,
Ms. Irene Natividad, President, Global Summit of Women,
Esteemed business leaders,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Evening to you all.**

I am honoured and pleased to receive the Global Women Leadership Award 2018. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Global Summit of Women for nominating me for the prestigious accolade and organizing this gala event.

I extend my sincere thanks to Prime Minister of Australia His Excellency Malcolm Turnbull for inviting me.

I dedicate the award to the women across the world, who have shown their strength in changing their destiny.

It is a great pleasure for me to see the women change-makers, who have gathered here from different parts of the world, and are delivering on the theme 'Women: Creating Economies of Shared Value'.

Distinguished Participants,

Under the leadership of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bangalee nation earned independence in 1971 through a 9-month bloody war against Pakistani occupation forces.

Women played a significant role in every nationalist movement beginning from the Language Movement in 1948 to the War of Liberation in 1971. Two hundred thousand women lost their honour in the war.

Soon after independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman established the Women Rehabilitation Centre to rehabilitate the women war victims. We have honoured them as 'Birangana' (The war heroes).

The Constitution of Bangladesh, introduced by the Father of the Nation in 1972, provides: 'Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public life', which is the bedrock of women empowerment in Bangladesh.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receiving 'Global Women's Leadership Award' 2018 from The Global Summit of Women for successful women leadership in the world, Australia, 27 April 2018

Bangabandhu made girls education free up to class VIII and preserved 10% quota for females in the government jobs.

Dear Friends,

Let me share with you my struggle and experience in realizing people's rights, particularly women's empowerment in Bangladesh.

In 1975, my father along with 18 family members was assassinated. My sister and I survived the massacre as we were in Germany.

Following the atrocities, we were prevented from returning home and spent 6 years in exile. After returning home in 1981, I focused on working for economic and political emancipation of the people.

My party Bangladesh Awami League was voted to power in 1996. We were re-elected in 2008 and again in 2014, getting opportunities to establish a fair, rights-based, gender sensitive and pragmatic Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has now emerged as a role model of 'women empowerment' and in providing 'agency' to all women.

World Economic Forum's report 2017 says, Bangladesh is at the 47th position among 144 countries and first in South Asia in the global gender gap index. It ranks 7th among 155 countries in the political empowerment of women.

However, women around the world still continue to face numerous challenges in realizing their rights and dreams.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me share some specific thoughts with you focusing how we can promote women's rights and empowerment. Let us:

First: Work to overcome traditional gender stereotypes regarding women's ability.

Second: Reach marginal and vulnerable women who are still less fed, not schooled, under-paid and violated. No woman and girl should be left behind.

Third: Enhance women's productivity by addressing health hazards specific to women.

Fourth: Create equal opportunities for women in all sectors of life and livelihoods.

We have to forge a new alliance to support the women and uphold their rights. Together, we must act on our shared culture, tradition and values to benefit millions of women in need. Let us mobilize our strength. I particularly count on all of you.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Visit to Western Sydney University

Parramatta South Campus, WSU, Sydney
Saturday, 28 April 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Barney Glover,
Faculty members and Students of Western Sydney University,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning to you all.**

It is my great pleasure to visit Western Sydney University. I am deeply touched at the establishment of a bust of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on the campus of this University.

The bust is rightly located in front of the Institute of Ocean Governance (IOG) to recognise Bangabandhu's vision and pioneering role on maritime boundary demarcation through an Act of Parliament in 1974.

Bangladesh has been enjoying warm relations with Australia since Australia's recognition to independent Bangladesh on 31 January 1972.

Very fundamental of bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Australia originates from the fact that Australia was the first country from the developed world to recognise our independence.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence of Bangladesh on the 26th March 1971 and called upon the people of Bangladesh to fight for our independence.

We offer homage to the world leaders who stood by our side during our liberation war and the early years of our nationhood.

Amongst the world leaders who championed our cause for liberation, Edward Gough Whitlam was one of them. Whitlam played a leading role in building a bi-partisan consensus about Bangladesh as the leader of the opposition in the Australian Federal Parliament in 1971.

He had also raised the plight of our humanitarian sufferings at the hands of the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators at that time.

He played an important role in lobbying with the international community for Bangladesh to be recognised by the Commonwealth and other countries.

Edward Whitlam visited Bangladesh on the 19th January in 1975. It was the first and last visit by a prime minister of Australia to Bangladesh.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the Western Sydney University

We also recall with gratitude the contribution of Australian national William A. S. Ouderland during our war of liberation for which he was conferred on gallantry award 'Bir Protik' and awarded with 'Friends of Bangladesh of Liberation War 1971'.

Australia has been a favourite destination for higher studies for our students. About 200 students are studying in Western Sydney University.

Western Sydney University's present collaboration with Bangladesh are strengthening capacity of our judiciary management and providing training programme for Department of Oceanography, University of Dhaka and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University to enhance their knowledge and skills in ocean governance.

Bangladesh is planning to develop inclusive and people centric blue economy enhancing capacity building with innovative financing, ensuring transfer of critical technology, and strengthening cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration from Australia.

We seek technical assistance for development of marine aquaculture and exchange of teachers on Oceanography.

As Bangladesh is going to the next stage of development through graduation from LDC; we need greater human capacity, where Australia can contribute by providing training of trainers type programme and vocational education.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in front of the bust figure of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, erected at the Western Sydney University

I would like to urge Bangladeshi students studying in this university to take advantage of best knowledge that this university can offer.

I thank the Vice Chancellor and faculty members for organizing this programme.

Khoda Hafez

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh–Australia Friendship.



4th BIMSTEC Summit

Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Kathmandu, Nepal

30 August 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

His Excellency Rt. Hon'ble K. P. Sharma Oli, Chairman of the 4th BIMSTEC Summit

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Afternoon to you all.

It is my privilege to be present at the 4th BIMSTEC Summit in Nepal. I would like to convey my warm felicitations to the Rt. Hon'ble K.P. Sharma Oli, Chairman of the 4th BIMSTEC Summit. My heartfelt thanks go to the Government of Nepal for their support in carrying forward the BIMSTEC during the last four and a half years.

I also extend thanks to the Chairman of the 4th BIMSTEC Summit for choosing an appropriate theme of the Summit, 'Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region'.

Mr. Chairman,

This is the month of August. It was during this month in 1975 my father, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose leadership Bangladesh was born as a nation state, was assassinated. My entire family was killed. Only I and my sister were survived as we had been abroad.

In Bangladesh, it was the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who back in 1972, first dreamt of regional economic and social progress in South-Asia. Since then, regional cooperation has been an integral component of our foreign policy. We attach high importance to regional cooperation through BIMSTEC. Hosting of the BIMSTEC secretariat in Dhaka is a manifestation of the full commitment of our government to the BIMSTEC Forum.

Excellencies,

BIMSTEC is potentially a dynamic region in the world. With 1.5 billion people comprising almost 22% of global population, its combined GDP is USD 2.8 trillion and average growth rate of above 6%. The region has a huge scope of expansion of intra-trade. We have to utilize the potentials that much of which remain still untapped.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the 4th BIMSTEC Summit

Mr. Chairman

The UN Secretary General termed Bangladesh as an economic miracle during his recent visit to Bangladesh. We made significant economic and social progress during the last 10 years.

Our per capita GDP reached to USD 1,752 during the current fiscal year from USD 543 in 2006. Our GDP growth reached 7.8%.

Poverty rate has dropped to 21% in 2018 from 41.5% in 2006. The World Bank ranks Bangladesh as the 43rd largest economy in the world in terms of GDP and the 32nd in terms of Purchasing Power Parity.

PricewaterhouseCoopers projected Bangladesh as the 23rd largest economy by 2050. We are committed to pursuing all means of domestic, bilateral, regional and international cooperation in transforming Bangladesh to a middle income country by the year 2021 and a developed one by the year 2041.

Excellencies,

Development is dependent on peace and stability. We have been pursuing a policy of inclusive development with the conviction to address hunger and poverty, illiteracy and inequality to build a stable, just and a sustainable society. Earlier this year, we have been qualified to graduate from the LDCs.

Some of our unique domestic socio-economic measures have received popular response and produced visible dividends. These include: 'Ekti Bari Ekti

Khamar' (One Household One Farm); Community Clinic; Ashrayan Project (Shelter project); Education for All, stipend, free books and day-meal for students; Social Safety Net programmes; Electricity for All, Digital Bangladesh, Women Empowerment and Environment Protection.

Another unique economic initiative our government undertook for the disadvantaged people is the 'Micro Savings Initiative'. Under this programme, the beneficiary of micro-savings make a monthly personal savings of 100 taka in a specialised bank named Rural Savings Bank's accounts and the government deposits a matching amount of 100 taka. They then invest in small scale economic activities to create sustainable livelihood.

Excellencies,

Poverty, climate change and terrorism, among others, remain some of our common enemies. As the lead country in climate change, we have initiated adaptation and mitigation programmes. For example, we have created a Climate Change Trust Fund of USD 400 million in line with our Comprehensive Climate Change Strategy.

We have successfully implemented our 'Zero Tolerance' policy in addressing terrorism in all its manifestations. We had hosted early this year the 2nd BIMSTEC Security Chief's meeting in Dhaka. As the lead country for trade and investment, we have been pursuing promotion of meaningful engagements and cooperation.

Excellencies,

However, despite our very passionate collective commitment, BIMSTEC Forum achieved a few modest successes during the past 21 years of its existence.

Therefore, a huge task remains ahead of us. We need to consolidate fundamental legal frameworks to carry forward the substantive engagements in our cooperation to produce visible results.

In this context, the Special BIMSTEC Retreat in Goa, in 2016, hosted by Indian Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Narendra Modi was an important step forward.

Some of the decisions of the 16-point Agenda of Action adopted in Goa have been executed while many are yet to be realized.

Mr. Chairman,

The global scenario has been changing very fast resulting in new dynamics in every sphere. We have to match the new dynamics and the current reality through three-pronged cooperation—bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally.

Our cooperation in BIMSTEC forum can be expanded through creation of Free Trade Area, investment and energy cooperation, enhancing people-to-people contact and funding mechanism. I am happy to mention that some BIMSTEC countries have bi-lateral arrangement of electricity grid connection. The new BIMSTEC Electricity Grid offers a new avenue for energy cooperation as complimentary to our bilateral, trilateral and regional initiatives.

To achieve an early dividend from the BIMSTEC, we would like to propose to categorize the 14 sectors into several clusters to make them more synergized, focused and implementable. The proposals are:

- a) Trade, investment, connectivity, science and technology, energy, poverty alleviation and agriculture sectors that directly add economic and social benefits for the people may be categorized under one cluster called 'Sustainable Development'.
- b) Likewise, security, counter-terrorism, climate change and disaster management that protect and promote our prosperity may be placed under another cluster called 'Security and Stability'
- c) Last but not the least, culture and public health that facilitate and influence our progress and prosperity may be placed under the 3rd cluster called 'People to People Contact'.

In the same light, we may also consider reviewing the scope and structure of BIMSTEC in view of the evolving political and economic scenario.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever
Long Live the Spirit of BIMSTEC



High-Level Event on the International Finance Facility for Education

UNHQ, New York
Monday, 24 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Excellency Mr. Gordon Brown

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning/Afternoon.

I thank the Education Commission for inviting me to this high level meeting. In 2015, when we adopted Sustainable Development Goals, we committed ourselves to ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all. Regrettably, about 263 million children in the world are still out of school. About 800 million children lack basic skills to lead a decent life and livelihood.

Excellencies,

In order to attain success in Goal 4 of the Agenda 2030 we need to invest in education and skill development sector. In Bangladesh, we have allocated 26.9% of our annual development plan in education sector.

Our National Education Policy 2010 promotes universal and quality education. We have also taken programme for out-of-school children, school feeding programme in poverty-pockets, stipend for under-privileged students and girls up to graduation level, construction and maintenance of school infrastructure, training and skill development of teachers, use of ICT, etc. to promote quality education.

We are distributing free textbooks to all the school children. This year alone, we have provided 354.92 million free textbooks to 43.76 million children. Total 13 million students have been brought under stipend programme. We have brought 211 thousand and 2 hundred teachers in government pay roll.

Excellencies,

Our efforts have resulted in increase of net primary enrolment rate up to 98% and decline of drop out to 18.8%. Over 3 hundred thousand out-of-school children have been brought under education facility through a project called 'Ananda Schools', meaning 'happy schools'. We are also investing in improving the infrastructure and school environment. Recently 1495 primary schools have been built in areas with no schools and 1,000 more are

under construction. We are building 7,000 primary schools with separate wash blocks for boys and girls, ensuring access to sanitation for girls. We are setting up 46,340 multimedia classrooms and 2,120 smart classrooms in 26,000 educational institutions at secondary, higher secondary level including in religious schools called madrasas. We have a plan to set up 64 livelihoods and lifelong learning centres in 64 districts. Currently, the government is implementing 71 education-related projects worth US Dollar 106.7 million.

Excellencies,

Despite substantial increase in investment in education from domestic sources, there remains a wide financing gap. We are working out innovative financing mechanisms to bring adequate resources to education.

I thank you.



Leaders' Dialogue: Together for Girls' Education in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Contexts

UNHQ, New York
Monday, 24 September 2018

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon.

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for continuing to lead the world in the area of gender equality.

Ladies and gentlemen

We continue to confront violence, populism and extremism, often uprooting a large number of people from their homeland. Currently more than 65 million people remain displaced and the number is increasing every day.

A majority of them are women and children. They are traumatized, carrying horrific experiences of violence and atrocities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are facing a formidable challenge hosting over 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh. They fled atrocities in their country in Myanmar.

The Rohingyas have been subject to discrimination and excluded from education and healthcare. They were stripped of their citizenship and denied freedom of movement.

Around 55 percent of the Rohingyas hosted in Bangladesh are children. We have set up eleven hundred and six learning centres in partnership with the UNICEF for imparting informal education to them. These centres are providing informal education to one hundred and thirty-six thousand Rohingya children. We are continuing our efforts to equip them with life skills. The aim is to build their capacity to lead decent life once they go back to Myanmar.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The children fleeing conflict face particular trauma. We have to bear in mind three particular issues:

First: These children deserve psycho-social care and special education.

Second: They cannot be expected to adjust to normal school setting. They need to be provided with a special learning environment.

Third: Their education should be aligned with their own culture, ethnicity and language to the extent possible.

Excellencies,

We are thankful to the international community for supporting our efforts to give education to the Rohingya children in Bangladesh. International community should continue to invest in the camps in Bangladesh as well as in Myanmar villages to help their return and reintegration.

The Canadian investment in girls' education in conflict situations is indeed encouraging. We appreciate Canada's strong political and humanitarian support for the Rohingya. Deprived of a past, Rohingya women and girls should be able to dream of a future.

Thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Business Roundtable Hosted by US Chamber of Commerce

New York
24 September 2018

Assalaamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon.

I am pleased to be with you today at this business meeting. I thank the US Chamber of Commerce for organizing this event. Your presence indicates your keen interest to do business in Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh–US relations is based on common values and shared interests. It has been progressing to higher planes since I became Prime Minister in 2009. We established the annual Partnership Dialogue, the TICFA; and we are holding annual dialogues on security, military, and counter-terrorism. We have now the best of relations. We look forward to working together for a free, open, peaceful, secure and inclusive Indo-Pacific region with shared prosperity for all.

Our two countries' goal of shared prosperity is reflected in our expanding business relations. Our bilateral trade have been growing consistently, and totalled US \$ 8 billion last year. It could be more if unfair high tariffs, compared to other developing countries were removed, and GSP restored. Sadly, the US in 2015 restored its GSP privileges to all South Asian countries, except Bangladesh. This affected our apparel industry that employ 90% women, empowering them and enabling Bangladesh to become a modern society.

Distinguished Business Leaders,

I feel proud to inform you that in March 2018, the United Nations declared Bangladesh eligible for graduation from LDC to a developing country. It is the result of our efforts in realizing 'Vision 2021'. Our goal is to become a developed country by realizing our 'Vision 2041'. We can do so considering the huge socio-economic transformations currently taking place in Bangladesh. During the nine and half years of our government, Bangladesh achieved remarkable achievements in poverty alleviation, nutrition, maternal and child health, primary education, women empowerment, ICT etc.

In the same period, our GDP growth averaged 6.6 % reaching 7.86% in the last fiscal year and expecting to be 8.25% in the current fiscal year. We have undertaken a number of mega projects to improve infrastructure, and the growth rate is expected to reach double digit once these projects are completed in 2-3 years' time. Inflation has been reduced to 5.4%; per capita income

increased by 100%; foreign currency reserve raised to US \$ 33 billion: export earnings doubled to US \$37 billion; remittances to US \$15 billion; Human Development Index yearly at 1.6%; attainment of food and energy security, to mention few economic indicators.

Bangladesh is today no more an aid dependent country. Foreign aid is merely 1.5% of Bangladesh's annual GDP. Bangladesh is now the 32nd largest economy in the world based on PPP. Bangladesh is now globally recognized as a role model of economic development. Bangladesh is also a progressive, secular democracy with a homogenous population of which 50% is below the age of 25 and available at competitive wages. It has a fast growing middle class consumers with increasing purchasing power.

Bangladesh has the most liberal investment policy in South Asia. It includes protection of foreign investment by law; generous tax holiday; concessionary duty on import of machinery; remittances of royalty; unrestricted exit policy; full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit, to name a few. Foreign investment is protected by relevant acts of parliament and bilateral investment treaties. Bangladesh and the USA have signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty and the Convention on Avoidance of Double Taxation.

Bangladesh is establishing 100 Exclusive Economic Zones. Seven of them are ready with four allotted to three countries. Two dozen high-tech parks are also ready for technologies and Innovation enterprises. To feed the current and the future growth of industries and overall development, electricity production capacity has reached 20,000 Megawatts this month far exceeding the total demand. The target is 40,000 Megawatts by 2030 and 60,000 Megawatts by 2041. Ten percent of electricity will come from renewable energy.

Also, the strategic location of Bangladesh provides tremendous potential for being the economic hub of the region. With India on the west, China on the north and South East Asia on the east, and with a population of 160 million of its own, Bangladesh is in the middle of a combined market of 4 billion people. Since regional connectivity is vital for trade, initiatives have been undertaken to connect with the neighbours, and the region.

Moreover, technology and innovation are helping fast economic transformation and self-sufficiency. Thus, Bangladesh has become the 3rd largest producer of vegetables; 4th largest producer of rice; 3rd largest producer of inland fisheries; and the 2nd largest RMG exporter in the world. Other booming sectors are pharmaceuticals, ceramics, ship building and ICT. A unique project is the Delta Plan 2100 with the Netherlands to reclaim land from the sea, secure water safety, and economic growth by preventing floods and erosion.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the business meeting with the US Chamber of Commerce

Finally: I am happy to see that USA is our single largest trading and the second largest investment partner. For further improvement, your investment is imperative in all the other sectors shown in the video clips earlier. Interestingly, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is also looming in the horizon of Bangladesh. It is all the more reason why you all should be with us in our journey for shared profit and prosperity. Such benefiting business cooperation would also strengthen our two countries' friendship to a lasting one.

I thank you all.



High-Level Event on the Global Compact on Refugees: A Model for Greater Solidarity and Cooperation

UNHQ, New York
Monday, 24 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**UN Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for inviting me to this meeting on the Global Compact on Refugees.

I am happy to see that the commitments of 2016 New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees are becoming realities with finalization of both the compacts. These two compacts—one on refugee and other on migrants are complementary to each other and we hope necessary synergies will be drawn by the agencies while implementing.

Excellencies,

Refugees are among the most vulnerable people in the world. I myself was refugee twice; first during our liberation war in 1971; when my father, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested and taken to Pakistan. I along with my mother, sister and brother was confined in a house. At that time I expecting my first child who was born in captivity.

Second time, in 1975 when my father along with 18 members, including my mother, three brothers, the youngest one of 10 year-old, two sisters-in-law, and uncle, was brutally assassinated on 15 August in 1975. I and my younger sister had to take refuge abroad for six years till 1981.

Excellencies,

Now in Bangladesh, we are faced with the largest forced movement in shortest time of over 1.1 million traumatized Rohingyas. They have been forcibly displaced from their homes in Rakhine State of Myanmar where they had been living for centuries.

While we are providing them with basic necessities, the magnitude of the problem has posed serious challenges for us. We have allocated over 6000 acres of land. Diversion of human and other resources for Rohingyas has taken toll on our society, environment and economy.

The international partners, especially the UN agencies, have been helping the Rohingyas. Regrettably the current UN joint response plan of 2018 which requires USD 950 million has remained severely underfunded with only 33% funding secured.

Excellencies,

The Compact on Refugees has been adopted at a time when the world is faced with swelling refugee crisis. Innocent people from the various conflict-torn countries are leaving their homes for safety and security while many countries like Bangladesh are giving them shelter, protection and hope.

Most of these refugee hosting countries are developing countries with their own set of challenges. Yet they respond to the call of humanity. The world must recognize their contribution and help those countries shoulder the burden. The world leaders must come forward with political will and commitment.

Excellencies,

We must not forget that every refugee desires a safe return to his/her homeland. The displaced people from Myanmar have to return to their homes in safety, security and dignity. Having lived life of a refugee, I know how I spent each day waiting for my return to my own country.

Safe and sustainable return to the country of origin is particularly important to resolve protracted refugee crisis. Greater attention needs to be paid to remove the root causes that drive people refugee, and those root causes lie in the countries of origin.

The realization of the compact should exhibit stronger commitment in addressing those root causes; rather than focusing on response to an emerging situation only.

Excellencies,

I would like to share some of my thoughts as to what should be done to settle Rohingya crisis peacefully and sustainably:

First: Myanmar must abolish discriminatory laws, policies and practices against Rohingyas and address the root causes of forced displacement in a genuine and timely manner.

Second: Myanmar must create a conducive environment guaranteeing protection, rights and pathway to citizenship for all Rohingyas for their sustainable return and if needed, create 'safe zones' inside Myanmar to protect all civilians irrespective of religion and ethnicity.

Third: Recommendations of Kofi Annan Commission Report must be immediately implemented unconditionally and in its entirety.

Fourth: Prevent atrocity crimes against Rohingyas in Myanmar by bringing accountability and justice, particularly in light of the recommendations of the Fact-Finding Mission of the Human Right Council.

Fifth: Humanitarian and development support of the international community for the Rohingyas and other affected communities must be predictable and in the spirit of international responsibility sharing.

Excellencies,

Let me reiterate that Rohingya crisis has been originated in Myanmar and the solution has to be found in Myanmar. As a responsible government, we have opened our border and provided shelter to the forcibly displaced Rohingyas. By doing so, we have not only saved lives, we have stabilized the entire region by containing the crisis within our border.

However, we would like to see the Rohingyas returning to the homes in safety, security and dignity. Pending their return, we are trying to address their basic needs. Given scarcity of land and other socio-cultural and environmental impacts, we are going to relocate them to a newly developed island called Bhashan Char where they will have better living conditions and livelihood opportunities. In the absence of any policy of local integration in Bangladesh, Rohingyas need to secure their future in their own country Myanmar.

I urge international community to help us achieve that.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Nelson Mandela Peace Summit

UNHQ, New York
Monday, 24 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Excellencies,
United Nations Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I thank the organizers for convening this peace summit on the occasion of the 100th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela began his political life as a leader of his people to fight apartheid in South Africa. Later, with his sacrifice, dedication, compassion for people, he became the undisputed leader of the humanity. Peace, freedom, unity have been his life-long mantra.

Excellencies,

Peace is no more absence of war. Our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had defined a comprehensive peace in this assembly in 1974, (and I quote): ‘Our total commitment to peace is born of the realization that only an environment of peace would enable us to ... mobilize and concentrate all our energies and resources in combating the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment’. (Unquote)

The vision of Bangabandhu to establish peace has guided us all along. Our investment in poverty alleviation, public health, education have allowed us to ensure well-being of our people and reduce inequality. We have created opportunities for individuals through innovative means and thus established peace through socio-economic development.

We are committed to global peace since our independence in 1971. The peacekeepers of Bangladesh are saving lives in many parts of the world.

We cooperate with the international community in sustaining peace through conflict prevention, development and promotion of human rights. Bangladesh has introduced the culture of peace resolution in the UN General Assembly since two decades.

Excellencies,

After successful implementation of Millennium Development Goals, the international community has adopted the Agenda 2030 in 2015. The Agenda for sustainable development encompasses on aspects of human life—from hunger to inequality.

Yet, peace is eluding us. Conflicts are far from being resolved. Human rights and fundamental freedoms, which leaders like Mandela fought for, are yet to be secured. People in many parts of the world are suffering from hunger and malnourishment.

Racism, populism and intolerance are on the rise. People in many societies are facing discrimination, forced displacement, torture and even genocide due to their ethnic and religious identity. In my own country, over one million Rohingya have taken shelter to evade ethnic cleansing in Myanmar.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Like Nelson Mandela, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman too has liberated us from the oppressors and gave us freedom. They both spent major parts of their life in prison, fighting for their people. Bangabandhu was sent to jail time and again from 1948 to 1971. While in prison he wrote diaries and a number of books. The biography 'Unfinished Memoires' and 'Preson Diary' written by Bangbandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman have recorded his struggle for peace and a just life for his people, like the 'Long Walk to Freedom' by Nelson Mandela.

As a tribute to the great leader Nelson Mandela, we endorse the political declaration adopted by this Summit for establishing global peace.

Excellencies,

To achieve our target for peaceful future, we must commit to:

- Settle all international disputes through peaceful means and prevent conflict in all circumstances;
- Strengthen cooperation to achieve sustainable development goals;
- Promote tolerance, preserve diversity, protect the religious and ethnic minorities from discrimination and exploitation;
- Fight emerging global challenges like terrorism, through stopping the flow of financing to the terrorists, and the source of supply of arms to the terrorists and their outfits;
- Fight climate change and built upon resilience;
- Promote and protect human rights in any circumstances and nurture culture of peace and non-violence.

As mentioned by Mandela, and I quote, 'as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, no one can rest in peace.'

Let us work together to achieve his dream and let him rest in peace.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Luncheon Roundtable Meeting with US Chamber of Commerce

Hotel Grand Hyatt, New York
Monday, 24 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Business Leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon.**

I am delighted to be with you again to speak about business opportunities in Bangladesh. I thank the US Chamber of Commerce-USCC for arranging this event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It makes me proud to inform you that, in March 2018, the UN declared Bangladesh eligible for graduation from LDC group to a developing country. We have been implementing Vision 2021 since 2009 to materialize the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Using graduation as stepping stone we are now working on the Vision 2041 of becoming a developed nation.

Bangladesh has come out of aid dependence as we have aligned our economy with international trade and labour market. During our nine and a half years in government, the economy grew at an average rate of 6.6 percent. Reaching seven point eight-six (7.86) percent last fiscal, the growth is expected to be eight point two-five (8.25) percent in the next fiscal. Inflation declined to 5.4 from 12.3 percent. Foreign currency reserve has grown more than 9 times to over USD 33 billion in 2018 from a mere USD 7.5 billion in 2009. Poverty rate has fallen to 21.8 percent from 41.5 percent in 2006.

I am happy that the USA is our single largest trading partner with bilateral trade of USD 7.5 billion in 2016-17 and second largest investment partner with investment of over USD 3 billion.

Distinguished Business Community,

Technology and innovation are bringing fast economic transformation in Bangladesh. Having gained self-sufficiency, Bangladesh is now the 3rd largest producer of vegetables, 4th largest producer of rice, and 3rd largest producer of inland fisheries in the world. Currently the second largest RMG exporter with

exporting USD 30.61 (Thirty point six-one) billion in last fiscal, Bangladesh is poised to become the first soon.

Bold entrepreneurship and drive for export diversification with FDI are facilitating new sectors to emerge. The Pharmaceutical industry is one of those which is currently meeting 98% of local demand and exporting to about 125 countries. Ship building is another one. We are exporting medium-size ocean-going vessels to even European countries. Knowledge-based ICT sector is thriving on 136 million mobile phone users, 73 million of them using mobile data.

Energy, crucial for high growth, is opening up opportunities for FDI. Electricity production capacity has reached 20 thousand Megawatts this month from a mere 3 thousand 200 Megawatts in 2009.

Ongoing work on a 2 thousand 400-Megawatts nuclear power plant along with several coal fired plants is advancing our plan to generate 40 thousand Megawatts electricity by 2030 and 60 thousand Megawatts by 2041. Ten percent of the electricity will come from renewable energy.

Distinguished Business Leaders,

Bangladesh's strategic location is making us an emerging hub for regional connectivity, foreign investments and global outsourcing. We have taken connectivity initiatives to connect our Indian, Chinese and South East Asian neighbours.

Bangladesh could be a gateway to a market of 4 billion people- itself offering a strong and growing market of 160 million. Delta Plan 2100, taken up in cooperation with the Dutch Government, is to secure water safety, food security and economic growth by preventing floods and erosion.

We have undertaken ten growth and employment generating mega projects. We are ready to take up more in diversified areas of infrastructure, connectivity and high-tech for a sustainable double digit growth. To the thrust sectors, I add growing services sectors of banking and finance, tourism, health and education.

We also want to open new avenues of blue economy. We are establishing 100 Exclusive Economic Zones for new industries and investment at both public and private sectors. Two dozen high-tech parks are ready.

Bangladesh has the most liberal investment policy in South Asia with most attractive incentives and highest profit rate. It includes protection of FDI by law, incentives like generous tax holiday, concessionary duty on import of machinery, duty free import of raw materials, remittances on royalty, 100% foreign equity, unrestricted exit policy, and full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit.

Other advantages include the young, committed and easily trainable workforce with highly competitive wages, cheaper costs of setting business, access to a large duty free quota free market, low cost electricity and water, Bangladesh's good credit rating, minimum risk factors, and fast technology adaptability.

We also have challenge ahead of Fourth Industrial Revolution looming in the horizon. I invite you to come to Bangladesh with your businesses, technology, and innovations for mutual benefit. Please join us in our journey of shared profit and prosperity. I assure you of my Government's full support and cooperation.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.
Long Live Bangladesh-US Friendship.



High-Level Side-Event on Cyber Security and International Cooperation

UNHQ, New York
Tuesday, 25 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Excellencies, Distinguished participants,

It is a pleasure to be with you all. In 2008, we had made a commitment in our election manifesto to build a 'Digital Bangladesh'. In the last ten years, we have made Bangladesh digital, taking its benefits to our people's doorsteps.

ICT has indeed transformed Bangladesh. An extensive IT infrastructure covers the whole country. Internet density rate is growing by the day. ICT is considered a key engine in our sustainable development efforts. Services in education, health, agriculture and social protection are now being delivered online.

On 11 May 2018, Bangladesh has entered the space era with the successful launching of its first satellite Bangabandhu I. With this technological feat, we have become the 57th country to have its own satellite in outer space.

Our hard earned gains in the ICT sector need to be made secure. The cyber space remains open to many threats and risks. Critical infrastructures around the world have become regular target of cyber attacks. Some states are even working on using ICT for military purposes. Terrorists and violent extremists are using it to spread their toxic narratives. The risks from misuse of ICT can be serious for international peace and security.

Distinguished participants,

The cyber space has no physical borders. States' capacity for securing it is far from even. In an inter-connected world, the weaker links can cause disruption for others. Cyber security should thus become a concern for all, and not just a select few.

Identifying the actual source of wrongful activity remains a challenge. Developing countries should have access to technologies and information to detect such sources.

The UN can play a critical role in making the digital world safer. The work on norm-setting in information security should continue. The mechanisms used so far should be made more inclusive. Developing countries should be given a chance to voice their concerns. The Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament recognises that.

Confidence building measures should help States overcome any breach of trust. States should promote the use of non-offensive means to prevent and counter harmful cyber activity. The question of rights and freedoms in cyberspace needs to be duly addressed. The role of the private sector and civil society must be factored in.

The norms and principles for responsible State behaviour in cyber space should receive unconditional support. The principles of the UN Charter and relevant international law should apply to the cyber space. States must remain true to their commitment not to conduct or support any harmful cyber activity.

States should also prevent their territory from being used for wrongful acts against other nations' interest. Bangladesh takes these commitments seriously. We expect others to do the same.

Distinguished participants,

International cooperation in capacity building for cyber security must be given priority. Development partners should consider this to be part of their internationally agreed commitments. In Bangladesh, we are working on building a complete cyber security eco-system.

Our Parliament has recently enacted the Digital Security Act. A Cyber security Incident Response Team is in place, which cooperates with other countries. A Digital Forensic Laboratory has been set up for training purposes. A National Cyber Security Agency is in the process of being set up. We hope to keep learning from the experience of other friendly countries.

Excellencies,

Twenty years ago, during my first term as Prime Minister, Bangladesh launched the idea of a culture of peace at the general assembly. As I draw close to the end of my third term in Office, I pledge Bangladesh's support for promoting a culture of cyber security at the UN and beyond. A UN High-level Conference on Cyber-security can be an important building block for that.

We must demonstrate our strong political resolve to create a secure, stable, peaceful, inclusive and accessible cyber space for our future generations.

I thank the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and this event's co-sponsors for sharing that sense of responsibility with us.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh.



High-Level Event for Action for Peacekeeping

UNHQ, New York
Tuesday, 25 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Mr. Antonio Guterres,
United Nations Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning/Afternoon to you all.**

I thank you for inviting me to this high level meeting on ‘Action for Peacekeeping’, also known as A4P. As a leading contributor of troops and police in the UN peacekeeping, we attach high importance to the A4P initiative. Therefore, I appreciate Secretary General’s sincere efforts in this regard.

Maintaining global peace has become far more challenging today. New and unconventional threats are arising from various state and non-state actors. Threats to peace have become multidimensional with rapid advancements in technology. These are making UN peacekeeping operations more difficult while increasing the fatalities of peacekeepers.

We must increase our effort to improve effectiveness of the peacekeeping operations. Most importantly the peacekeepers should be adequately equipped to fulfil their mandate.

Excellencies,

A4P has laid down ways to address some of the critical aspects of peacekeeping. We are hopeful that this will help peacekeeping operations become ‘fit for purpose’.

Bangladesh is an active subscriber of the A4P. We have lent our support to the recently developed ‘Declaration of Shared Peacekeeping Commitments’.

We acknowledge the importance of ongoing consultations on the five thematic areas under the A4P, which are, peace-building, performance, people, partnership and politics. I am pleased to share that Bangladesh along with Uruguay has taken up the responsibility of organizing consultations on ‘People’.

Excellencies,

Peacekeeping is one of our core foreign policy objectives. This year we celebrated 30th anniversary of our joining the UN peacekeeping operations here

in the secretariat. I thank the secretary general, president of 72nd UNGA and other dignitaries for gracing the occasion.

Many of our peacekeepers lost lives in the line of their duties. We, therefore, attach high importance in safety and security of the peacekeepers. To that end, we have provided mine-protected vehicles in Mali with our own resources. We are going to provide more such equipment for our peacekeepers in Democratic Republic of Congo.

We are continuously striving to further enhance the efficiency, performance, accountability, deployment capability and readiness of our peacekeepers.

We are also committed to increasing the number of female peacekeepers. Bangladesh is proud to have deployed first female helicopter pilots in UN peacekeeping mission in Congo. This is a milestone achievement.

We stand ready to provide senior leadership both at UN headquarters and in field missions.

Excellencies,

On the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, we maintain zero tolerance policy. We have earlier lent our support to the circle of leadership initiative of the Secretary General.

We endorse the collective statement issued by the circle on its anniversary.

We are also working to consolidate the normative notion of sustaining peace. Bangladesh was one of the co-facilitators of the Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Resolution adopted recently at the General Assembly. As one of founding members of Peacebuilding Commission, we remain actively engaged in the work of the PBC.

Mr. President,

UN peacekeeping operations have passed 70 successful years with lot of success. This was achieved by sacrifices made by thousands of peacekeepers. We are proud to be part of this glorious legacy.

I reiterate our commitment to continue our services to the UN peacekeeping operations. We shall also remain ready to provide all supports in fulfilling the Secretary General's action for peacekeeping.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



High-Level Leaders' Dialogue on Climate Change Implementation of the Paris Agreement Towards COP24 and Beyond

UNHQ, New York
26 September 2018

**Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to thank the Secretary General for convening this High-Level Leaders' Dialogue on climate change ahead of COP 24 in Poland in December this year.

Excellencies,

I was born in a riverine delta in Bangladesh. I grew up watching the ups and downs of life in the riverside. I saw our people's resilience, adaptation and innovation in battling climate change. I saw the way people made Bangladesh self-reliant in food production, in spite of the natural disasters. In my childhood, my father, our Father of Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, used to ask us to take care of our soil and water. He dreamt of realizing Golden Bangladesh as well as a shared future for all by protecting and nurturing our environment along with the economy.

Distinguished participants,

Bangladesh is one of the most climate vulnerable countries. Climate change threatens our life and livelihood of our 160 million people.

In Bangladesh, we have mainstreamed climate actions and disaster risks reduction in our national plan. We have investment of over 1 percent of our GDP to address the climate change impacts. Moreover, US \$ 450 million has been allocated from our own resources for adaptation and mitigation purposes. We have also transformed our agriculture making it more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Excellencies,

Five years back, in New York, I announced that, as a responsible member of the international community, Bangladesh will never exceed the average per capita emission of the developing world. Our commitment to low-carbon, climate-resilient development is firm. We plan to move to 'Carbon budgeting',

resilient industrialization. We wish to ‘de-carbonize’ our ‘manufacturing pathways’.

Bangladesh has installed around six million Solar Home Systems, provided two million Improved Cook Stoves among the poorest. We are developing stress-tolerant crop varieties to cope. In spite of our limitations, we allocated 385 million US dollars to our own funds for adaptation and mitigation.

Distinguished participants,

We need support for climate change adaptation and wider ‘capacity building’ and, also for ‘technology’ development and transfer in areas like agriculture, public health, disaster management. I hope that member states will utilize the opportunity in COP 24 to have a more focused discussion on climate finance to put the world on track to meet pre-2020 ambition and long term goals of Paris Agreement.

I thank you.



Global Hope Coalition 2018 Special Recognition for Outstanding Leadership Award

United Nations, New York
Thursday, 27 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Excellencies,
Ms. Irina Bokova, Honorary President of Global Hope Coalition,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a Good Evening to you all.**

I am happy to receive this prestigious honour of 2018 Special Recognition for Outstanding Leadership Award.

I dedicate this Award to the people of Bangladesh, who supported and opened their houses and shared their food with the Rohingyas during the critical time.

I particularly thank the people of Cox's Bazar of my country, where the Rohingyas are sheltered, for the immense sacrifice they continue to make.

I express my sincere gratitude to the Global Hope Coalition and its Honorary President Ms. Irina Bokova for recognizing the efforts of my government and the people of Bangladesh with this honour.

Nonetheless, I wish I never had to stand here for the reason I am standing here today. I wish the world never had to witness the worst form of violence and atrocities that has been committed against the Rohingyas in Myanmar. It stunned me, as it did to the billions of other conscience minds throughout the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year, when the destitute and traumatised Rohingyas from the Rakhine State of Myanmar started flocking in the border of Bangladesh, we decided to open the border and stand beside them out of our conscience. The first and most critical humanitarian response was from our common people with whatever means they had.

The mass exodus of those persecuted people soon turned out to be the fastest movement of displaced people in the recent history. The recent report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission as mandated by the Human Rights Council has documented incidents of 'ethnic cleansing' and 'genocide'.

Bangladesh is now hosting over 1.1 million displaced Rohingyas. The Rohingyas outnumbered the local population in Cox's Bazar by over 2 is to 1 ratio. The prolonged presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh poses serious challenges to our economy, environment and security. The crucial focus of our emerging nation is being largely diverted for its resolve. We stabilised the desperate Rohingyas by providing emergency food, shelter, water, sanitation and medicines with the help of the government agencies, our people, partner countries, UN system and other national and international NGOs.

Despite all the odds, Bangladesh did not push the Rohingyas out. Our restraints prevented wider regional and global security risk. In the recent past, we have seen havoc created in such mass movement of displaced people in other parts of the world.

Excellencies,

During the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, over 10 million people took refuge in India, fleeing genocide by the Pakistan occupation forces. I along with my mother, sister and brother was in captivity at that time. I and my younger sister together were also forced to stay out of the country for 6 long years after the assassination of my father, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with 18 family members including, my mother, three brothers, the youngest one of 10 years only, two sisters-in-law, uncle, on 15 August in 1975.

We, the people of Bangladesh, can feel the ordeal faced by the Rohingyas. And this is not the first time we are hosting the Rohingyas. We sheltered them in 1978 and 1991 in two other major exoduses.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a responsible neighbour, my government has been engaging with Myanmar in finding peaceful solution, from the very beginning. We have signed two instruments for repatriation of the Rohingyas. However, the repatriation process is yet to begin.

The Rohingya crisis is a political one deeply rooted in Myanmar. Thus, its solution has to be found in Myanmar.

I call upon the international community to continue their efforts in creating pressure and resolving the problem at the earliest.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



High-Level Discussion on Economic Growth Through Women's Empowerment

United Nations, New York
Thursday, 27 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Her Excellency, Dalia Grybauskaite,
His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum and a very Good Morning/Afternoon.**

I thank the Honourable President and Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders, Her Excellency, Dalia Grybauskaite for inviting me to this event.

Let me begin by quoting from our National poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's poem 'Woman'—'All that are great inventions and virtuous in the world—half of those are created by men and half by the women.'

Madam President,

Women constitutes around half of the world population. A large number of them are unemployed. Globally, about 50% of women aged 15 and above are in paid employment, compared to about 75% men. Moreover, women earn 10-30% less than men for the same work.

As a result, world economy suffers due to this unequal opportunity for women in the job-market. A study of McKinsey Global Institute on 'The Power of Parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$ 12 trillion to Global Growth' projects that closing gender gaps in labour market would add 12-25% to global GDP by 2025.

Madam President,

Realization of the overarching vision of the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 for 'leaving no one behind' is contingent upon Gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Realization of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, among other components, are intricately connected to implementation of all the 17 goals and 169 targets.

We have committed to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls while adopting the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030. Yet gender gaps around the world remain large, pervasive and persistent.

Honourable President,

Your efforts and leadership on women's empowerment resonates our government's focus on women's empowerment and development. We have emphasized on various programmes and policies specially targeted for women that have not only impacted on women's economic empowerment, but also reinforced women's social empowerment vigorously.

In Bangladesh, women's empowerment has been identified as the most significant determinant of the outstanding economic progress of the country. Our aim is to focus on decreasing the gap between women and men in targeted sectors like education, policy making and labour market, rather than focusing on whether women are winning the so-called 'battle of the sexes.' We have given special focus on women's economic and political empowerment through promotion of female education, training and creating opportunities for self-employment and ensuring easy access to 'micro savings' as tools. Employment opportunities have been created by providing training to poor women in five less developed districts. The number of working women increased to 18.6 million in 2016-17 from 16.2 million in 2010. In addition to the gender-equality specific social and economic policies, we have also strengthened our legal regime to combat violence against women.

Women's economic empowerment is not a smart option, but the just thing to do. We have learned from our own experience that economic and business gains from empowerment of women are significant. Greater gender equality reflects a better and inclusive education and health system, higher per capita income, faster and more inclusive economic growth, and greater international competitiveness.

In order to advance and replicate our experience in engraving women's empowerment as tool for development, I would highlight three actions:

First: As a first step, business community needs to recognize and address adverse stereotypes and implicit biases in their organizations.

Second: Collective actions to promote gender equality in recruitment policies, promotion and pay in the private sector; put in place women friendly work environment and family-friendly policies including paid maternity and paternity leave benefits both in public and private sector.

Third: For governments to make policies creating space for women's access to workforce, politics and justice.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



Meeting of OIC Contact Group on Rohingya Muslim Minority

United Nations, New York
Thursday, 27 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Your Excellency Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General, Dr. Yousef Al Othaimen,
Excellencies,
Brothers and Sisters,
Asalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu.**

As I stand here today, more than a year has passed since the Rohingya Muslims from the Rakhine State of Myanmar started crossing the border into Bangladesh as victims of ‘Genocide’ in their centuries-old homeland. We cannot just ignore the plight of the forcibly evicted Rohingyas in one of the largest displacements in the human history. Currently we are hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

This tragic fate of our Rohingya Muslim brothers and sisters is nothing new. The current exodus of Rohingyas from Myanmar to Bangladesh is the third major exodus and the biggest one. Thus, repatriation of the Rohingyas to their homeland alone does not seem to be the sustainable solution to the problem. Rather, the aggravation of situation brings two questions before the prevention of similar incidents in future:

- The question of collective responsibility and accountability; and
- The question of ensuring rights and privileges of the Rohingyas by Myanmar.

Excellencies,

It is the people of Bangladesh, bearing the brunt of the Rohingya crisis, time and again. My government stood by the Rohingyas by opening the border and providing emergency support, having been guided by our morale and human principles.

However, our resolution to humanity should not be penalized. The prolonged presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh poses serious challenges to our economy, environment and security.

As a responsible neighbour, my government has been engaging with Myanmar in finding peaceful solution, from the very beginning. We have signed two instruments for repatriation of the Rohingyas from Bangladesh to

Myanmar. However, persistent international pressure can only complement the bilateral front to change the well-planned political position of Myanmar for annihilating an entire race. Thus, I urge the Muslim Ummah to lead the campaign of mounting pressure on Myanmar for creating conducive environment for sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas from Bangladesh and ensuring accountability of the atrocities committed against them.

We underscore the importance of the OIC member states continuing to remain engaged in the United Nations system, including in the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as well as with other relevant international organizations to address the massive human rights violations against the Rohingya Muslims. Above all, we need to solve the issue at the earliest.

For homeless and hopeless Rohingya, I proposed 5 points action in last September for resolving the Rohingya crisis peacefully. It is a matter of great regret that the repatriation process is yet to start.

I thank the OIC member states for taking some concrete steps over the year. Our sincere appreciation goes for the formation of the OIC Ad-hoc Ministerial Committee for Addressing the Accountability Issue. Yet, there has not been enough tangible progress in implementing the resolution.

I would like to reiterate that the Rohingya crisis is a political one deeply rooted in Myanmar. Thus, its solution has to be found in Myanmar.

Excellencies,

The OIC member states have to find out why the Muslims across the world are being subjected to repression, torture and eviction. Why Muslims are fighting against each other? If there is any problem or discontent that should be resolved through dialogue bilaterally or regionally. I would like to urge the OIC to play more proactive role in mitigating the plights of the Muslims.

I thank the organizers for convening this meeting.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.



The 73rd Session of the UNGA

UNHQ, New York
Thursday, 27 September 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

**Madam President,
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Evening.**

Let me congratulate you on your election as the fourth female president of the General Assembly during its 73 years of history. I assure you of my delegation's full support in upholding your commitment to the UN.

I also felicitate Mr. António Guterres, UN Secretary General for his firm and courageous leadership in promoting global peace, security and sustainable development.

Madam President,

The theme you have chosen for this year's session brings back some personal memories for me. Forty-five years ago, my father, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stood on this podium and said, I quote,

'Peace is an imperative for the survival of humanity. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world ... The United Nations remains as the centre of hope for the future in this world of sadness, misery and conflict.' Unquote

Madam President,

My father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman devoted his life for the socio-economic development of the people of Bangladesh. He had done so at a time when 90% of the population lived below the poverty line. Following 24 years of struggle culminating in the victory of our Liberation War, Bangladesh gained independence under his leadership in 1971. During this long period of struggle, he spent his time in the prison for almost 14 years. There were plots to assassinate him again and again.

Following the independence, Bangabandhu directed his strength to rebuild a war-ravaged country with a ruined economy. The people got back a sense of relief. Bangladesh set on its journey ahead as an LDC. Yet, what a misfortune for



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing at the 73rd session of UNGA

our people! Bangabandhu could lead the country only for three years and a half. He was brutally gunned down by assassins on 15 August 1975. Along with him, 18 members of my family— among them my mother Begum Fazilatunnesa, three brothers, the youngest only ten years of age, and two newly-wed sisters-in-law were also killed. My sister Sheikh Rehana and I happened to be abroad at the time and survived the mayhem. But, we were barred from getting back to the country. The military dictator who grabbed power at the time promulgated an Indemnity Ordinance and blocked the possibility for bringing the killers to justice. We were denied the right to seek justice for the gruesome murders.

Madam President,

I can feel the pain and suffering of countless people around the world, persecuted and expelled from their homes like the Rohingya. It is impossible to build peaceful, just and sustainable societies by ignoring such situations. The Myanmar situation repeatedly reminds us of the genocide committed by the Pakistan occupation forces against our people in 1971. During the nine months of our Liberation War, the Pakistanis had killed three million innocent Bengalis. Two hundred thousand women had to suffer heinous torture and abuse. Ten million people had to flee their homes and take refuge in India. My father was arrested and taken to Pakistan. I was also taken prisoner along with my mother, two younger brothers and a sister. I was expecting my first child at the time. He

was born in captivity. We had to spend our days in a damp unhealthy environment.

We are appalled by what we have seen in UN Reports about atrocities against Rohingya who have now taken shelter in Bangladesh, which are tantamount to genocide and crimes against humanity. We expect the international community, particularly the UN, to give due importance to the atrocities and injustice suffered by Rohingya population in Myanmar.

Madam President,

As a fellow human, we can neither ignore nor remain silent about the plight of the Rohingya. When my father and family members had been killed, I was not allowed to return home for six years. My sister and I were compelled to live abroad as refugees. I can feel the misery of losing one's loved ones and of living in a different land as a refugee.

I, therefore, presented a five-point proposal at the UN General Assembly last year with a view to finding a durable and peaceful solution to the sufferings of the forcibly displaced and hapless Rohingya. We are disappointed that despite our earnest efforts we have not been able to begin Rohingya repatriation in a permanent and sustainable manner.

Myanmar is one of our neighbours. From the outset, we have been trying to find a peaceful solution to the Rohingya crisis through bilateral consultations. So far, three bilateral arrangements have been concluded between Bangladesh and Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation. Despite their verbal commitment to take back The Rohingya, in reality the Myanmar authorities are yet to accept them back.

The 1.1 million Rohingyas hosted in Bangladesh are living in an uncertain situation. To the best of our ability, we have made arrangements for their food, clothing, healthcare, child-care and security. Many countries and organisations including the UN, the Commonwealth, and the OIC have shown solidarity with the Rohingya and extended support and assistance for them. I extend my appreciation and thanks to the international community.

So long the Rohingya are not able to return home, they should, as a temporary arrangement, be able to live in a good and healthy condition. With this in mind, we have started working on new housing facilities for them with all arrangements for their education, health care and other needs. I call upon international organisations to join hands with us in this initiative. I also seek their assistance to help relocate the Rohingya to the facility.

The Rohingya crisis has had its origin in Myanmar. As such, its solution has to be found in Myanmar. We also wish to see immediate and effective

implementation of the agreement concluded between Myanmar and the UN. We want an early, peaceful solution to the Rohingya crisis.

Madam President,

In last 30 years, Bangladesh has made its contribution to the international peace by deploying over 158,000 peacekeepers in 54 missions. 145 peacekeepers from Bangladesh made their supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. Currently, more than 7,000 peacekeepers including 144 women are deployed in ten different missions. Our peacekeepers have been acclaimed for their professionalism, courage and success. We pledged 23 contingents under the 'Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System.'

As the original proponent, Bangladesh expected to see more robust and human rights centric global compact on safe, regular and orderly migration. In the contemporary global contest, the migration compact should be considered a positive step and should serve as a living document for protecting the rights of migrants.

Bangladesh stands firm against terrorism and all organised crimes. We shall not allow our territory to be used for any terrorist acts against or any activity detrimental to the interest of our neighbours. Our 'Zero Tolerance' policy in countering terrorism will continue undiminished. Our 'whole of society' approach has served us well in preventing violent extremism, human trafficking and flow of illicit drugs. Bangladesh has aligned itself with the global call to action on the World Drug Problem mooted by the United States.

Madam President,

Since 2009, we have been implementing inclusive and people-centric development policies. On our way to realising Shonar Bangla as envisioned by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, we remain committed to fulfilling our people's aspirations.

The World Bank recognised Bangladesh as a middle-income country in 2015. Bangladesh is the 43rd largest economy in the world in terms of national GDP. Our per capita income has increased from US \$ 543 in 2006 to US \$1752 in 2018. We have achieved the average GDP growth rate of 7.86%. Inflation has decreased by 5.4%. Poverty has dropped from 41.5% in 2006 to 21.4% in 2018. During the same period, extreme poverty has decreased from 24% to 11.3%.

Power generation capacity has gone up to 20,000 megawatts from 3,000 megawatts in 2009. We are building coal-based super-critical power generation plants to ensure sustainable power supply. In remote areas without transmission lines, power supply is being ensured with the help of 5.5 million

solar panels. 90% of our population has come under electricity coverage. With the launch of the work on the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, we have moved a step ahead in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Bangladesh is now recognised as a global development model. We have commenced our journey from being an LDC to the status of a developing country. The pathway for graduation is inextricably linked with our SDG implementation strategy, which is integrated in our Seventh Five Year Plan. We remain fully committed to implementing the SDGs.

In the backdrop of our current economic growth, there are now immense and large-scale business opportunities in Bangladesh. Foreign investors are being offered various financial incentives like tax holiday, avoidance of double taxation and exemption of duties. We are setting up 100 Special Economic Zones that would help create 10 million job opportunities in Bangladesh.

Madam President,

To follow up on my role as a member, we remain committed to implementing the outcome of the High-level Panel on Water, formed under the joint initiative of the UN Secretary General and the World Bank President. I urge world leaders to take urgent actions on proper appraisal, management and investment in water. We shall be held responsible to our future generations if we fail to do so.

My government remains committed to ensuring safe drinking water and sanitation for all through achieving SDG 6. As of now, 99% of our people have access to sanitation and 88% to safe drinking water.

Madam President,

Under our social safety-net programmes, 6.5 million elderly men and women, widows, destitute women and persons with disabilities are getting regular allowances.

Since 2010, students are receiving free textbooks from pre-primary to secondary levels in school. 354.92 million books have been distributed among 43.76 million students this year. Vision impaired students are receiving Braille books. Children from ethnic minorities are being given books in their mother languages.

Around 20.03 million students from primary to graduate level are getting stipends. Stipend money for 14 million students is sent directly to their mothers through mobile phones. We have ensured 100% enrolment at the primary level. Literacy rate has increased from 45% to 72.9% in the last nine and half years.

Our home-grown, innovative socio-economic development models have gained widely popular acceptance. Micro-savings have been introduced for rural, marginalised communities through the 'One House, One Farm' project. The amount saved by beneficiaries on their individual accounts is equalled in deposit by the government. The 'Shelter Project (Ashrayon)' is being implemented with the aim of having no homeless person in Bangladesh. We are working towards reaching urban facilities to every one of our villages.

Madam President,

Women's empowerment and participation have been a major factor in Bangladesh's outstanding development. We have promoted women's empowerment through enhancing their education opportunities and facilitating their political and economic emancipation.

We have created opportunities for girls to pursue their education free of cost till twelfth grade in public educational institutions. At secondary level, the ratio of girls and boys is 53:47. In early 2009, it was 35:65.

Bangladesh is perhaps the world's only country, where in its National Parliament, the Speaker, the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the House, and the Leader of the Opposition are all women. In the present Parliament, there are 72 elected female members. 33% seats are earmarked for women in local government bodies in order to promote women's political empowerment at the grassroots.

Around 20 million women are employed in agriculture, service and industrial sectors. Women constitute 80% of 4.5 million workers engaged in the largest export earning garments sector. Women entrepreneurs are offered collateral free bank loans with 5% service charge. 10% of Small Entrepreneurs' Fund and 10% of industrial plots are, earmarked for women entrepreneurs.

Madam President,

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. More than 160 million people now live in a land area of only 147,570 square km. Despite our resource constraints, we have made significant strides across a range of social indices.

The maternal mortality rate has decreased to 170 per thousand and child mortality rate under the age of five has gone down to 28 per thousand. Life expectancy has increased to 72 years from 64 in 2009.

In the last fiscal year, we spent 5.9% of our national budget in the public health sector. This year, investment in health has been increased by 17%. With around 18,000 community health clinics and Union Health Centres operating,



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at New York on 27 September, 2018

health care service has reached to people's doorsteps. 30 different types of medicines are being distributed free of cost. Tuberculosis prevention and control efforts have been intensified to reach the 2030 SDG target. As a result, TB related deaths have reduced by 19% in the last two years.

Madam President,

Bangladesh has been playing a pioneering role in raising awareness about the needs of children affected by autism and other neuro-developmental disorders. In order to further consolidate our efforts in this regard, a specialized cell is being created in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. A National Steering Committee and a National Advisory Committee have already been set up. Saima Hossain Wazed, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee and a member of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) expert advisory panel on mental health, has been named a Goodwill Ambassador on this issue for South Asia.

Madam President,

We welcome the formation of the Secretary General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. The underlying premise of our vision for a 'Digital Bangladesh' is to promote people's well-being. Widespread introduction of Internet-based public service delivery has led to growth in job creation at the grass root level. The idea of a Digital Bangladesh has become real.

We have made our foray into the world of space technology by launching our own satellite, Bangabandhu I, being the 57th country in the world to have done so. It was in fact a dream of our Father of the Nation that we would one day reach the outer space. The launching of this satellite helped us realise the aspiration he had instilled in us by setting up the first satellite ground-station of the country on 14 June 1975.

Madam President,

Bangladesh is among the 10 most climate vulnerable countries in the world. Its topography coupled with high density of population has made the country particularly exposed to climate change risks.

Bangladesh remains committed to implement the Paris Agreement. We are spending over 1% of our GDP in addressing climate change impacts; we are also promoting climate-resilient agriculture. Initiatives have been taken to increase tree coverage from 22% to 24% in the next five years. A project worth 50 million US dollar is being implemented for the conservation of the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a UNESCO world heritage site.

We have integrated our development programmes and our efforts to build capacity for combating climate change into a mega project titled Delta Plan 2100. It is a water-centric, multi-sectoral, techno-economic plan with a long-term time frame. It has been developed in consideration of the local geo-morphology and of global climate change impact. Bangladesh is the only country in the world that has adopted such a long-term development plan spanning 82 years.

Madam President,

We are shocked by the continued violation of the rights of the brotherly people of Palestine. This must come to an end. As the Chair of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, we shall continue to work with the international community for resolution of the Palestine question.

Madam President,

There are three elements that play the most critical part in advancing human civilization: Peace, humanity and development. For the well-being of human

societies, we must continue to strive for humanity. Our main objective must be to serve the people and ensure their well-being. It is humanity and goodwill that would take us forward on the pathway to sustainable development.

In a world faced with myriad of challenges, our common interest, shared responsibility and sustainable partnership would be our best bet for preserving the human civilisation.

Madam President,

All my life, I have been working selflessly to make a difference in the lives of my people. In the last nine years and a half, Bangladesh has achieved remarkable success in different socio-economic sectors. That Bangladesh the world knew as the land plagued by disasters, floods, droughts and hunger has done wonders in maintaining international peace, managing disasters, empowering women and consolidating development gains. Bangladesh has now surpassed its neighbours in South Asia on a number of indicators.

But, our journey has not reached its end. Our journey will continue till the day we can build a Bangladesh free of hunger, poverty, illiteracy and exploitation—the Sonar Bangladesh of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

