



Bangladesh Development Journey with SDGs

Prepared for Bangladesh Delegation to
72nd UNGA Session 2017



General Economics Division (GED)

Planning Commission

Ministry of Planning

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

September 2017



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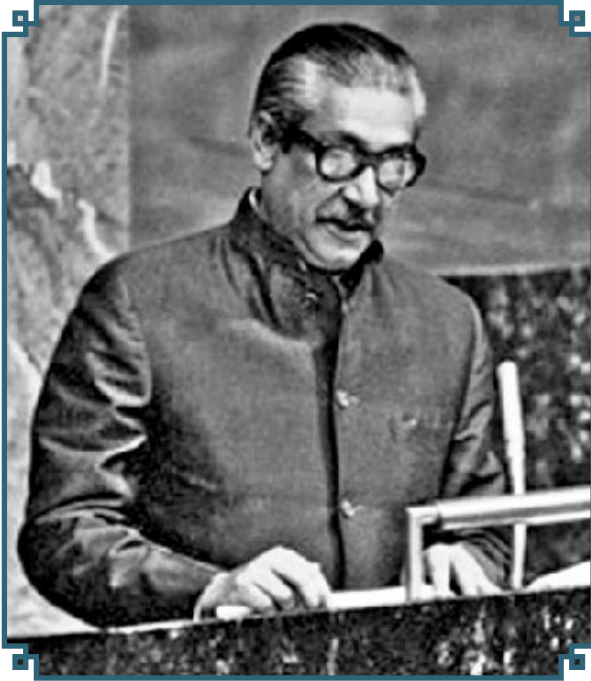
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Bangabandhu: The Architect of Sonar Bangla



“ Let us together create a world that can eradicate poverty, hunger, war and human sufferings and achieve global peace and security for the well-being of humanity. ”

Father of the Nation
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the UNGA in 1974

“ I am confident that Bangladesh could show its capacity in achieving SDGs the way it achieved the MDGs. ”

Hon'ble Prime Minister
Sheikh Hasina



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Prologue

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are United Nations (UN) sponsored forward-looking development agenda. SDGs are considered successor to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were adopted at the 70th UNGA Session in 2015. MDGs were prepared based on the Millennium Declaration 2000 pronounced by the UNGA where Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended as head of the government. In 70th UNGA in 2015 where the SDGs were adopted, Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was again present along with other 135 head of states/governments. Bangladesh actively participated in setting 2030 agenda by proposing a set of goals, targets and indicators; Bangladesh proposal contained 11 goals and 48 targets of which 10 goals were directly reflected in the 17 goals of SDGs and the remaining one was included in the SDG targets. That implies Bangladesh was very much in tune with world community under the UN in development thinking. Bangladesh owns SDGs in terms of political commitment from the apex level of the government for development transformation within the framework of SDGs implementing through our national planning tools (Five Year Plans). Bangladesh was early starter in initiating SDGs implementation adopting a “Whole of Society” approach for its implementation involving government machinery, NGOs, INGOs, Civil Society, Development Partners, Private Sector and engaging broader stakeholders. Almost two years have been elapsed after initiation of SDGs implementation. A brief account of **output-based activities** was highlighted in this booklet flagging footprints in our journey to development so far through the SDGs framework. This was prepared with the aim to provide insights where we stand in terms of SDGs implementation to the delegates/participants from Bangladesh in the 72nd UNGA Session for reference in the discourses of SDGs. This brief stocktaking may help others also to grasp where we are in terms of implementation of SDGs in Bangladesh.



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Bangladesh Development Journey with SDGs

A: Chronicles of SDGs Implementation : Creating ownership of SDGs

Political Commitment

The Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina envisions transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a prosperous country by 2041. The Government has already translated this vision into an actionable agenda by formulating Perspective Plan (2010-2021) and two Five Year Plans (6th and 7th FYPs).

While the Government of Bangladesh has been formulating the 7th FYP at the national level, the 2030 Agenda was in the process of being adopted at the UN in 2015 and the final draft of SDGs was available in July 2015. This offered Bangladesh an opportunity to integrate the priorities of 2030 Agenda into the 7th FYP (2016-2020).



Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives UN-women 'Planet 50-50 Champion' and Global Partnership Forum 'Agent of Change Award' for her outstanding contributions to women empowerment.

The political commitment of the Government of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was unequivocal for the SDGs implementation. She was prompt to form, as soon as the SDGs were adopted by the UNGA in 2015, a very high powered inter-ministerial SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee comprised of Secretaries from 20 key Ministries/Divisions.

A high level position, Principal Coordinator (SDGs Affairs) has been created at the Prime Minister's Office to head this committee. The General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission serves as the secretariat of the committee and also the focal point of the government for SDGs implementation and Poverty eradication.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh is one of the members of UN sponsored High Level Panel on Water. United Nations Secretary-General and President of the World Bank Group convened a High Level Panel on Water (HLPW), consisting of 11 sitting Heads of State and Government and one Special Adviser, to provide the leadership required to champion a comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative way of developing and managing water resources, and improving water and sanitation related services.

The core focus of the Panel is the commitment to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, as well as to contribute to the achievement of the other SDGs that rely on the development and management of water resources.

“Whole of Society” Approach in engaging all Stakeholders

Unlike the MDGs, SDGs are much broader development agenda and it covers almost all aspect of development issues. Therefore, it would be difficult for the public sector alone to achieve its objectives. The UN has strongly encouraged all its member countries to adopt “Whole of Society” approach for its implementation.

The government of Bangladesh has also adopted a “Whole of Society” approach for implementation and attainment of the SDGs. As part of this, several consultations were held on stakeholders’ engagement on the SDGs implementation involving representatives from the NGOs, CSOs, Businesses, Development Partners, Ethnic Minorities, Professional Groups, Labour Associations, Women Network and Media.



Consultation of stakeholders' engagement in the SDGs implementation in Bangladesh.

Dialogues were held with private sector and the development partners including UN agencies on the role of the private sector in facilitating the implementation of SDGs. In the process, Bangladesh International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) organized seminars, workshops and symposia in collaboration with government and expressed deep commitment to remain engaged in SDGs implementation.

The Government has also been in constant dialogues with media through seminars and workshops to share ideas regarding potential role of media in SDGs implementation in Bangladesh. The media professionals have shown keen interests in creating SDGs awareness among common people and branding SDGs through regular campaigns in electronic and print media.



Stakeholder's consultation on draft VNR Report.

Members of the Parliament (MPs) have been playing an instrumental role in transmitting the core messages of SDGs among the local communities, administrative bodies and integrating those in local development initiatives. This is essential for SDGs implementation.

The Hon'ble Speaker of the Parliament, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, proposed to form several committees comprising of MPs to work on specific goals and targets and provide regular suggestions and guidance to the government.

In Bangladesh's socio-economic transformation over the past few decades, women played a pivotal role. In particular, women empowerment has been a key driving force in elevating Bangladesh's rural economy and society. Financial inclusion of women, particularly promoting women



A discussion meeting on SDGs with Media.

entrepreneurship worked as a catalyst in Bangladesh's success in MDGs. Against this backdrop, the government considered it most important to bring the women to the forefront of the decision-making process. Keeping this in view, the Government has engaged different women groups, including Bangladesh Civil Service Women Network, to create adequate opportunities for them to contribute to the SDGs implementation.

Ethnic minorities, youths and tribal communities constitute an important part of our society and culture. The government already have policies in place to integrate them into mainstream economic and social development, which goes very well with the spirit of 2030 pledge: **leave no one behind**.

The government also held wide consultations with ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups to bring their ideas and needs to the forefront of SDGs action plan and implementation. Bangladesh is passing through the phase of demographic dividend. We have a large pool of youth. Engaging them in socio-economic activities can accelerate Bangladesh's development progression. Realizing this potential Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been highly emphasised in the education policy.

Alongside, the Government has already engaged with professionals of diverse background including law enforcement agencies, local level public officials, health professionals, engineers, planners, school teachers, legal practitioners, religious leaders, peasants, RMG workers and members of different labour groups.

SDGs in Mother Tongue (in Bengali)

Aimed at removing the language barrier to popularise the SDGs concept and ideas among masses and to create awareness among the general people of the country, the GED, Planning Commission has prepared and published a “Bengali version of SDGs, targets and indicators” and widely distributed to the public and public offices all over the country.

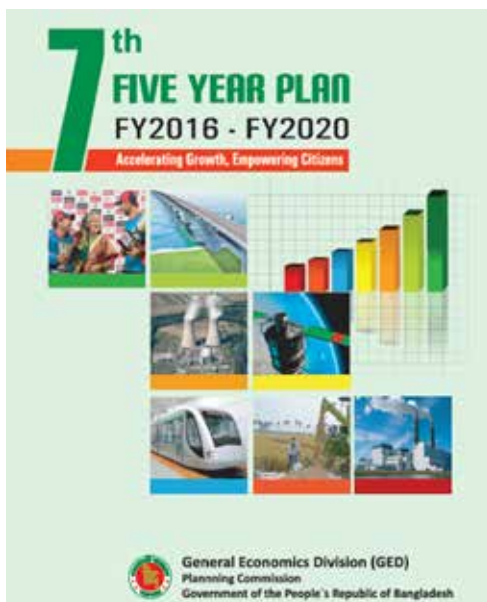


Integration of Sustainable Development Goals into 7th Five Year Plan (FY 2016-FY 2020)

Bangladesh's journey towards the implementation of SDGs started by successfully integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the 7th Five Year Plan (FY 2016-FY 2020).

An inter-ministerial workshop was held to examine how well the SDGs are embedded in the Plan document. The workshop attended by the representatives from 57 ministries/divisions found that out of 169 targets, 56 are aligned with 7th FYP while 37 are partially aligned and 65 could not be aligned.

In terms of indicators, 41 indicators of SDGs are found fully aligned with 7th FYP, 27 are partially aligned and 138 are not directly aligned.



Besides aligning the SDGs with the 7th FYP, the inter ministerial workshop recommended for identifying challenges of SDGs implementation in Bangladesh and suggested ways to overcoming those challenges.

Given the comprehensiveness and cross cutting nature of SDGs, policy coherence is very critical for the success of SDGs implementation in Bangladesh. Effective coordination among all stakeholders including civil society participation holds key for SDGs implementation.

Mapping of Ministries by Targets in the Implementation of SDGs Aligning with 7th FYP (2016-2020)

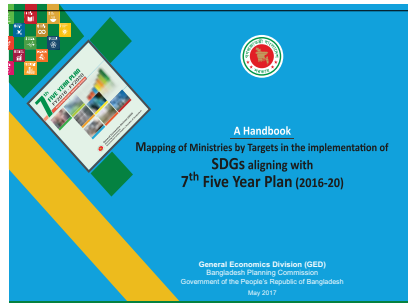
Bangladesh has successfully completed the “Mapping of Ministries/Divisions by Targets in the Implementation of SDGs Aligning with 7th FYP (2016-2020)”, a first formal document towards implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh.

Through the Mapping, the Government has identified 43 Lead Ministries/Divisions including Prime Minister’s Office and Cabinet Division and 34 Co-lead Ministries/Divisions responsible for (who will do what) implementing the SDGs and its targets including actions to achieve the SDGs targets beyond 7th FYP (2021-2030). It also listed

available existing policy instruments (acts, policies/strategies, etc.). The mapping exercise has created an opportunity to look at the data scenario of Bangladesh through the lenses of the SDGs indicators.

The Mapping showed that almost 50 per cent of identified ministries have linked with multiple SDGs. This suggests setting up a strong national coordination mechanism and cooperation among government ministries/agencies in order to transform SDGs agenda into the national context. This is key for successful implementation of SDGs. In identifying the lead ministries/divisions for each of the targets of SDGs the “Allocation of Business of the Government” was the guiding principle.

The mapping will ensure synergies among the ministries in implementing the SDGs. The report has been formally launched by the Planning Commission (GED) and officially shared with all ministries/agencies informing their engagement on goals and targets of SDGs implementations.



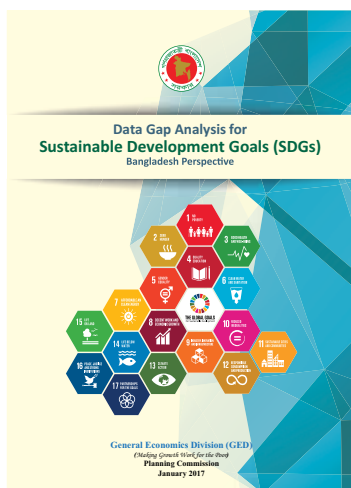
Launching ceremony of Mapping of Ministries by Targets in the Implementation of SDGs Aligning with 7th FYP (2016-2020).

Data Gap Analysis for SDGs: Bangladesh Perspective

Data availability, quality and level of disaggregation by age, sex, youth, child as well as marginalized groups have been identified as huge challenge for SDGs monitoring by the UN. This prompted the government to undertake a comprehensive study of data gap analysis for SDGs monitoring in Bangladesh.

The study report titled “Data Gap Analysis for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective”, found that Bangladesh was facing a “considerable” data gap for monitoring the SDGs as data of less than one-third of the indicators are readily available while two-thirds are either partially available or not available at all.

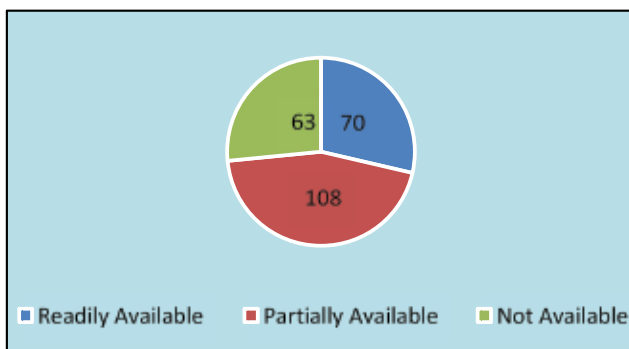
Out of total 241 indicators (for some with repeated use) to monitor against the 169 targets, data of only 70 indicators are readily available while data on 108 indicators are partially available and 63 indicators related data are not available at all.



The General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission conducted the study. The data looked for the gap analysis were provided by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)-National Statistical Organization of Bangladesh and other administrative ministries, divisions, and agencies.

The Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) will play a key role by providing/generating data for 93 indicators followed by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which will provide data for 52 indicators.

Availability of data to monitor SDGs indicators (number)



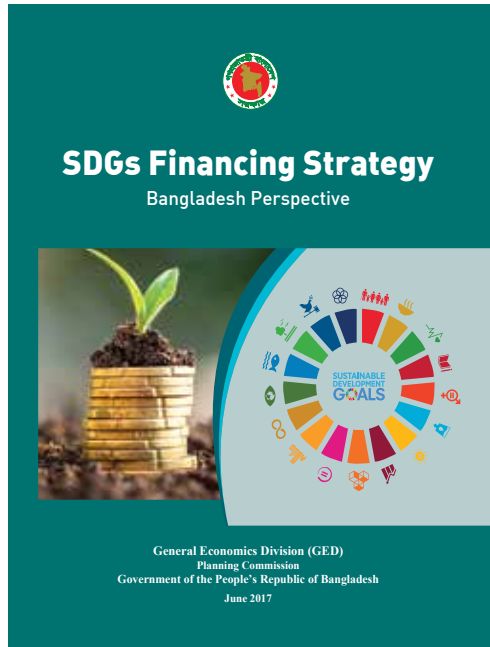
SDGs Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective

The General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission has also conducted an important study on “SDGs Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective” to assess the resources need to implement SDGs and map out financial strategy that would require for successful implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh.

The study provides a well-defined framework that outlines the goal and target-wise additional estimated cost at 2015-16 constant price. The 7th FYP extended growth scenario (7% plus) projects that the GDP growth rate would be at 9 per cent by FY 2030.

The report estimates that an additional amount, over the current provision of investment related to SDGs by public sectors and external sources, would be USD 928.48 billion at 2015-16 constant prices. This amount would be required for SDGs implementation over the period of FY 2017-FY 2030, which is 19.75 per cent of the accumulated GDP under 7th FYP extended growth scenario. The annual average cost of SDGs would be USD 66.32 billion (at constant prices) for this period.

The study suggests five potential sources for meeting the financing gap: they are 1) Public Financing; 2) Private Sector Financing; 3) Public-Private Partnership (PPP); 4) External Sources including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Foreign Aid and Grants; and lastly 5) Non-government Organizations (NGOs). During the period of FY 2017 - 2030, on an average, public sector would account for 34 per cent of the financing requirement.



The private sector would have to share of 42 per cent of investment through reenergizing their business activities. The average share of financing through PPP is determined to be 6 per cent.

The external source would have average share of around 15 per cent in the face of dwindling ODA prospect. Finally, the contribution through NGOs is estimated to be around 4 per cent of total additional cost.

Financing Strategy for Implementation of SDGs (US \$ in billion)

	FY17- FY20	FY21- FY25	FY26- FY30	FY17- FY30
Total additional amount from domestic sources (85.11% of total)	107.72	257.49	430.87	796.09
Total additional amount from external sources (14.89% of total)	22.07	43.15	67.17	132.39
Total additional amount from both domestic and external sources (100%)	129.79	300.65	498.04	928.48
Annual average additional amount from domestic sources	26.93	51.50	86.17	56.86
Annual average additional amount from external sources	5.52	8.63	13.43	9.46
of which FDI	2.73	6.45	10.70	6.91
Grants and aid	2.79	2.17	2.74	2.55

Source: SDGs Financing Strategy, GED, Planning Commission 2017

National Action Plan to Achieve SDGs in Bangladesh

The government prepared a “National Action Plan for SDGs Implementation” in accordance with 7th FYP objectives and shared with all relevant ministries for preparation of their respective implementation plan for achieving the SDGs targets as per instruction by inter-ministerial committee.



Inter-ministerial workshop on “National Action Plan Framework to achieve SDGs in Bangladesh” with relevant ministries to prepare their respective implementation plan for achieving SDGs targets.

The GED has also arranged training workshops for the officials working in “Development and Planning Wings” of the ministries/divisions/agencies so that their capacity for identification and formulation of appropriate projects/programmes for SDGs get enhanced. Furthermore, the action plan for implementing 7th FYP/SDGs and its associated targets have been reflected in ministries’ annual work plan as well as in newly introduced Annual Performance Appraisal (APA) of the line ministries.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for SDGs in Bangladesh

The government is in process of finalizing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for SDGs implementation. This framework will have a web-based data repository system to facilitate data collection, analysis, progress tracking and reporting.

Web-based SDG Tracker

It is well understood that an effective, widely used, comprehensive SDGs monitoring framework will provide essential support to measuring the successes of the SDGs. Bangladesh has designed SDG Tracker, an innovative tool that will help measuring achievements in attaining SDGs. Thus, SDG tracker will provide status of Bangladesh's progress on SDGs over the period of time.

The Access to Information (a2i) Programme of the Prime Minister's Office, with technical support from UNDP and USAID– in collaboration with General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and other government and private stakeholders, designed and developed SDG Tracker to:

- Create a data repository for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs and other national development goals
- Facilitate the tracking of progress against each goal and target through multiple visualization schemes
- Improve situation analysis and performance monitoring
- Create an environment of healthy competition among various organizations in terms of achieving the SDGs
- Enable predictive analysis for achieving the goals within the set time-frame

Two major components of SDG Tracker are SDG Portal and Dashboard:

- 1) **SDG Portal** enables policy makers, government agencies, private sector, Civil Society Organizations, International organizations, academia, researchers and the citizens to track year on year progress against each target and to create required visualizations.
- 2) **SDG Dashboards** facilitate individual Ministries/Divisions and Agencies to consolidate available data for each SDG and compare it visually against performance thresholds. The resulting dashboards highlight areas where a Ministry needs to make the greatest progress towards achieving the Goals by 2030.

Most success in attaining the SDGs will rest, in part, on how well efforts can be guided and where resources are directed. For the Government to plan and monitor the impact of its policies, it must be able to benchmark data and see year on year progress. Bangladesh's commendable achievement in implementing MDGs has poised Bangladesh to do better in achieving the SDGs also. National plans and actions are also directed towards this commitment. It is highly expected that the SDG Tracker (www.sdg.gov.bd) will support to drive these actions in the right direction.

This innovating tool, a product of Bangladesh, will be showcased in the side-lines of 72nd UNGA meeting.

SDGs Targets in Annual Performance Agreement

Initiated by the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) under the Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh has introduced Annual Performance Agreement (APA), a result-based performance management system across the whole spectrum of public sector with a view to improving efficiency as well as ensuring transparency and accountability. Under the APA system, each ministry enters into a memorandum of understanding with the Cabinet Division at the beginning of each financial year.

The APA outlines the goals and targets of each ministry with corresponding performance indicators. The government has integrated the SDG targets into APA system so that the long-term objectives can be translated into annual work plan of the ministries.

A Training Handbook on 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) Synergising SDGs

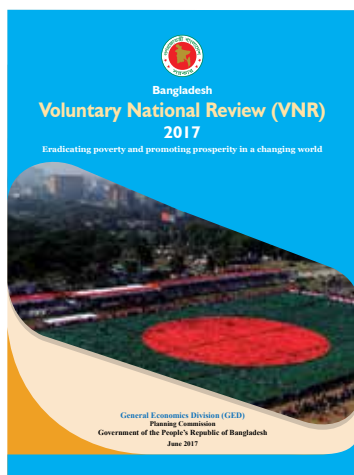
A training programme has been continuing on the ways of implementing the 7th Five Year Plan by each Ministry (so far around 400 officers relating to planning and implementation have been trained) organized by GED, Planning Commission where SDGs targets and 7th Five Year Plan goals/targets were juxtaposed showing interlinkages and highlighted how SDGs can be attained through our own national planning tool. A Training Handbook has been developed for attaining this objective.



Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDGs

Bangladesh has participated in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of SDGs in 2017, at the auspices of the HLPF, UN. The focus of the report is where we are in implementing Agenda 2030. 7 Goals: Goal 1 (Poverty); Goal 2 (Hunger); Goal 3 (Health); Goal 5 (Gender); Goal 9 (Infrastructure); Goal 14 (Life under water); Goal 17 (Means of implementation)-have been reviewed in this Voluntary Review Report.

In 2017 Bangladesh has submitted VNR of SDGs along with 42 other countries. Seventy Four (74) targets and 115 indicators related to 7 goals have been used for reviewing the SDGs. The draft VNR prepared jointly by GED and the GIU of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was shared with different stakeholders including government, NGOs, CSOs, Academia and Development Partners. After consultations, the VNR was finalized and sent to the HLPF (High Level Political Forum) of Sustainable Development.



On 17th July 2017, Hon'ble Planning Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal led-delegation of Bangladesh presented the VNR to HLPF at the UNHQs, NY.



A review meeting on draft VNR with Civil Society, NGOs, Research Organizations and eminent persons of the country.

Challenges to Tackle

● Resource Mobilization:

SDGs are all encompassing requiring huge resources for implementation. Traditional sources of funding are insufficient to implement the SDGs. We need to find innovative ways of financing from both the public and the private sectors, development partners and ensure effective and efficient ways of utilization. Given the dwindling ODA environment, Tax – GDP ratio need to be improved and business climate improved to encourage increased private and foreign (PPP, FDI etc.) investments.

● Stakeholders' Engagement:

SDGs implementation requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving private sector, NGOs, CSOs, Media and Major Group of Other Stakeholders including local governments. Bangladesh has been working towards enhancing participation of all the stakeholders in its efforts to implement the SDGs.

● Sharing experiences and Best Practices:

We need to build collaboration at bilateral, regional and global levels for capacity building and sharing of experiences of innovations, progresses and best practices in course of SDGs implementation.

● Localization of SDGs:

Localization of SDGs in line with domestic prioritisations holds key for SDGs implementation and emerged as a big challenge. We are encouraging inclusive and enhanced stakeholders' participation for local level ownership of the SDGs and devising local action plans on SDGs implementation.

Up-shots

SDGs demand concerted efforts with strong political commitment. The 2030 Agenda comes at a time when Bangladesh has already started its journey towards achieving her cherished goal of becoming a developed country by 2041. The Government has adopted a visionary and inclusive approach to development so that the poorest and the most vulnerable of the country are integrated into its national development pursuit. Bangladesh is confident to set an example as a leading SDGs achiever in the course of transformational development path to the cherished dream of attaining Sonar Bangla.

B: Briefs Prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Context of 72nd UNGA on the following Topics by GED (abridged versions are reproduced here):

1) Poverty Alleviation and 2) Human Resource Development

1. Poverty Alleviation and Development

The Government of Bangladesh is strongly committed to reducing poverty, improving human development and reducing inequality. “Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2010-2021): Making Vision 2021 Reality” which envisioned, “Bangladesh will be a middle income country through simultaneous fulfillment of economic and social rights of the people alongside civil and political rights” is the reflection of that commitment. The thrust of 7th Five Year Plan (2016-20) is on poverty alleviation, particularly eradicating extreme poverty by 2020 through expediting growth and creating employment while raising human resource development for increasing productivity.

The Government of Bangladesh has been continuously investing a considerable amount of public resources for uplifting socio-economic status of the people of this country in the way to developing human resources that fits the need of an emerging high middle income country. Each year, around half of total budget is allocated directly or indirectly targeting for poverty alleviation. Besides, the government has taken the SDGs seriously as the agenda that recognizes alleviation of poverty as the greatest challenge of all. Over the past two decades, the country has made immense progress in the areas of poverty reduction, health, education, and sanitation. Nevertheless, the government is mindful that these progresses are not enough and it has to make enormous effort and resources to tackle the existing and forthcoming challenges; to achieve SDGs.

Status of Poverty Alleviation in Bangladesh

1.1: Declining Poverty Scenario in Bangladesh

The poverty rate was 56.7% in 1991, which came down to 23.5% in 2016. And the incidence of extreme poverty rate was 41.1% in 1991, which declined to 12.1% in 2016. The poverty reduction measures taken by the Government has helped Bangladesh to achieve the corresponding MDG target couple of years ahead of the deadline.

Long term Poverty Reduction Trend in Bangladesh

Head Count Poverty	Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) Method						
	1991	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2016
National (Upper Poverty Line)	56.7	51	48.9	40	31.5	24.8	23.5
National (Lower Poverty Line)	41.1	34.4	34.3	25.1	17.6	12.9	12.1

Source: GED estimation for 7th FYP

Government of Bangladesh recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and the need to address the problem by adopting appropriate policies and strategies. Development policies and strategies mainly centre on the overarching goal of achieving pro-poor growth. The economy enjoyed annual growth rate persistently around 6.5% during the past nine years. Sustained growth over the last one decade has been instrumental in reducing poverty.

The government has formulated a comprehensive National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) to consolidate all safety net programmes to support its citizens who need it most. Distressed people particularly women, children, aged and disabled persons have been given due priority under NSSS. The coverage of social safety net recipients is 27.80 percent (HIES, 2016). The allocation has been increased from 1.9% of GDP in FY09 to 2.3% in FY17. The allocation for Annual Development Programme (ADP), which is the main public investment window to reduce poverty, was 2.8% of GDP in FY09 and has increased to 5.7% of GDP in FY17.

1.2: Strategy for Alleviating Poverty

- The government recognizes that faster growth is a necessary pre-condition for alleviating poverty. The 7th FYP seeks to raise the GDP growth rate progressively from 7.1% in FY16 to 8% by FY 20, averaging yearly growth rate of 7.4% for the Plan period.
- Additional focus on eradicating extreme poverty by taking special measures for the most vulnerable population.
- Taking necessary measures to bring all the poor under coverage of social protection system by 2020. Anti-poverty strategy of the government through the expanded Social Safety Net Programmes (SSNP) to address risk and vulnerability helped reduce poverty and inequality.
- According to 7th FYP, about 12.9 million additional jobs will be created by 2020, while new entrants in the job market will be

9.9 million during the same period. New Job creation includes around 2 million jobs abroad for migrant workers. This is going to significantly improve the unemployment situation in the country.

- To ensure safe, orderly and regular migration for all workers including women, the Government has taken adequate measures for legislative and regulatory reforms. Notable among these are the enactment of the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, and Overseas Employment Policy 2016.
- The government is encouraging women to get into wage employment in the rural economy in larger proportion. Due to government's consistent efforts, the relative male-female wage ratio has increased from 73% in FY 2010 to 78% in FY 2014.
- Remittance has been playing an important role in reducing poverty through increased consumption, financing of a range of services, and encouraging entrepreneurship in rural areas.
- The 7th FYP placed considerable emphasis on the development of the rural roads network. This will play a major role in poverty reduction through accelerated economic activities in rural Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh has a rich experience in administering microcredit programmes. The Government has been supporting these programmes through enabling regulations and financial assistance. The 7th FYP puts due emphasis on microfinance. Government sponsored PKSF lends funds to NGOs for poverty alleviating, income generating activities in the country amounting to around Taka 5000 crores.
- In the 7th FYP, ICT sector was accorded highest priority in line with government's Digital Bangladesh Vision to help transform the rural economy. This will significantly reduce the transaction costs of trading with the urban economy, bring farms closer to growth centres, and financial services to the doorsteps of rural population.
- The Sixth Five Year Plan (FY 2011-FY 2015) developed strategies, policies and institutions that allowed Bangladesh to accelerate growth and reduce poverty and inequality. As a result of successful implementation of the plan Bangladesh has been declared as a Lower Middle Income Country (LMIC) by the World Bank on 1st of June 2015. Rapid reduction of poverty has been pursued through attaining high economic growth and ensuring productive employment and incomes for large number of people of Bangladesh

2. Status of Human Resources Development in Bangladesh

2.1: Education

Significant progress has been made in increasing equitable access in education (In 2014, Net Enrolment Ratio-NER: 97.7 percent; Girls: 98.8 percent, Boys: 96.6 percent), reduction of dropouts, improvement in completion of the cycle, and implementation of a number of quality enhancement measures in primary education. Initiatives have been taken to introduce pre-school education to prepare the children for formal schooling. The primary school grade-5 survival rate in 2014 was 81.0 percent (Boys: 77.65, Girls: 84.45) which indicates a modest increase from 43 percent recorded in 1991.

The Government is in the process of implementing a comprehensive National Education Policy (2010) to achieve its objectives. The Constitution of Bangladesh has provision for free and compulsory primary education. The faster and relatively consistent growth in girls' enrolment vis-à-vis boys has been an important driver of the observed improvement in Net Enrolment Ratio. Focused and substantive initiatives undertaken by the government such as distribution of free textbooks among students up to the secondary level, providing scholarship to female students up to the higher secondary level, holding public examinations and releasing results within the stipulated time and creation of the Education Assistance Trust Fund for the poor and meritorious students, food for education, stipends for primary school children, media outreach, and, spreading of community or satellite schools have all helped in boosting the NER. The Government has been working to improve the quality of education alongside increasing literacy rate to build an illiteracy-free Bangladesh.

Despite a dearth of comprehensive information on education quality, experts widely agree that the quality of education needs to be appreciably improved for the vast majority of the primary school children. While it is true that Bangladesh has managed to achieve high enrolment rate at a low cost, there is a link between the quality of education and investment in the education sector. The Government of Bangladesh owing to budget constraint has so far not been able to invest more than 2.5 percent of its GDP in education. Limited staff development opportunities and low compensation package and inadequate teaching staff often provide little incentives for sustained quality teaching. Extreme poverty, marginal population groups, special need children, child labour, hard to reach areas, aftermath of natural disaster such as cyclone and floods are major hindrances for completing a full course of primary schooling target for all.

2.2 Health, Population and Nutrition

2.2.1 Health Status

Since independence, Bangladesh has made significant progress in health outcomes. Infant and child mortality rates, under-five mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio have reduced significantly in 2015. The Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) also reduced from 81/1,000 (1981) to 20 (2015). Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) coverage evaluation survey 2015 reveals that 82.5% children were fully vaccinated. Deliveries attended by Skilled Health Personnel (SHPs) increased from 5% (1991) to 42% (2014). Proportion of birth in health facilities by wealth quintile from 4.4:43.4 in 2007 to 15.0:69.5 in 2014 (BDHS) indicates a sharp reduction in inequity in Bangladesh.

The prevalence of malaria dropped from 456 (2005) to 300 (2015) per 100,000 persons; the death rate has also reduced to 0.07 per 100,000 populations in 2015. According to the National Tuberculosis (TB) Prevalence Survey (2007-2009) Report of Bangladesh, the overall prevalence of new smear positive cases among adults aged 15 and older was estimated at 79.4 people over a population of 100,000. The overall case notification rate was 119 per 100,000 populations which have come down to 53 (2014). Polio and leprosy are virtually eliminated. HIV prevalence is still very low, but there is a high risk of infection. Regarding tobacco control, legislation was first enacted in Bangladesh in 2005 and was strengthened in 2013 to increase compliance with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Most significant recent achievements include: (a) Introduction of pictorial health warnings covering 50% of tobacco packaging since March 2016; (b) Implementation of a strong taxation policy by raising tobacco taxes to 79% of the retail price of the most popular brand of cigarettes.

A fundamental factor in better health outcomes in Bangladesh has been the continuity of political commitment. Another factor has been the government's ability to collaborate with non-governmental actors. The Government views NGOs as a way of extending their reach, particularly in the implementation of national strategies and policies. NGOs have developed strong capacity and innovative delivery models that have prompted a two-way learning exchange between government and non-governmental entities. The Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) has reduced duplication and also financial waste in the health sector and has simplified the process of programme development and implementation. The government has framed the 'National Health Policy, 2011' with a view to revamping the health sector and the 'National Population Policy 2012' has also been finalized. The National Drug Policy 2014 is in the formulation stage to modernize public health system. Moreover, in order to strengthen primary healthcare facilities, the government has launched 13,126 community clinics to expand health services to the grassroots level in rural areas. The innovative idea to use the Information and Communication Technology for progress of the health of women and children has already been acclaimed by the world. However, challenges remains in the area of access to reproductive health services.

Bangladesh is a global leader in developing low-cost interventions such as the use of zinc in the treatment of childhood diarrhea, oral rehydration solution, delivery kits, tetanus vaccinations for pregnant women, and iodized salt. These interventions have been rolled out locally, scaled up and even used in other developing countries. Bangladesh's strong emphasis on childhood immunization has resulted in almost universal access.

Non-health particularly poverty reduction initiatives have played an important factor in Bangladesh's progress in health sector. Participation in microcredit programmes has been connected to better child survival and the expansion of electricity coverage in rural areas, and road infrastructure has assisted roll out of immunization programmes to rural areas. An increase in net primary education enrolment has resulted in improved literacy rates. The economic and social position of women has improved in line with education, income-generating activities, access to microfinance and employment in the garment industry. Bangladesh's disaster preparedness has shown the world that it has the ability to plan, coordinate and implement crises action. This demonstrates the improving governance structures across public sectors.

2.2.2: Population Status

Bangladesh is now Asia's fifth and world's eighth populous country with an estimated population of about 160 million with per square density of population 1090. Strong policy interventions led to continuous reduction in the annual growth rate of population from the level of 2.52% (1974) to 1.37 (2011). The total fertility rate (TFR) also went down from 6.3 (1975) to 2.1 (2015). The contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) increased from 7.7% (1975) to 62.1% (2015).

2.2.3: Nutrition Status

The Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2010-2021) envisions a minimum intake of 2,122 k.cal/person/day of food for all. The government also envisages ensuring standard nutritional food for at least 85% of the population. The 7th FYP targets are interdependent and called for coordinated interventions across diverse sectors such as agriculture, health, water and sanitation, education, food and disaster management. The National Food Policy-NFP (2006) and the National Food Policy Plan of Action (2008-2015) comprehensively addressed food security and nutritional issues.

Bangladesh has made commendable progress in eradicating hunger in the last two decades. The underweight children under-five years of age have come down to 32.6% in 2014 (female: 33.1%, male: 32.2%) from 66% in 1990. The level of stunting has declined consistently from 50.6% in 2004 to 36.1% in 2014. Increased food production and availability, crop diversification, increased availability of livestock and poultry products, increased literacy of women aged 15-24, reduction of fertility rate, enhanced measles vaccination coverage, increased safety-net coverage, smaller family size, spread of vitamin A supplementation coverage have all been the factors contributing to the success, and improving nutritional status of the population.

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