

Remarks for Hon'ble State Minister of ICT H.E. Zunaid Ahmed Palak, MP at the High Level Side Event: E-Governance-Partnerships for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

**[Co-hosted by Bangladesh, Estonia, Namibia, Colombia, UNDP]
20 September 2017, 01:15-02:30pm, Conference Room 9, UNHQs**

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

H.E. Mrs. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of Estonia;

H.E. Mr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Cooperation of Namibia;

H.E. Mr. Luis Fernando Mejia, Minister of National Planning of Colombia

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon.

It is an honour for me to be here today with you and have the opportunity to share with you Bangladesh's perspectives and experiences in E-Governance. This is a topic highly pertinent for our national development.

Under the leadership of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh aspires to reduce poverty sharply, attain equitable human development and become a middle income country by 2021. Our development agenda which we fondly call "Vision 2021" is mostly about turning our country to a ***Digital Bangladesh***. We are now the world's fifth fastest growing economy and our GDP growth rate has touched the 7% mark. Bangladesh is now the 32nd largest economy of the world. By 2040 it would be the world's 23rd largest economy.

Bangladesh had a very impressive record in implementing the MDGs. We are equally committed to achieve the SDGs. We have focused on facilitating e-governance as an effective tool in our efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Traditional resources as well as approaches to development will not be sufficient to achieve and sustain economic progress. With the capital Dhaka ranking third in freelance IT and IT-enabled services outsourcing globally, over 125 million mobile phone users, 43 million internet users, 14 million Facebook users and 99% geographical coverage in voice and data connectivity, the country is on the fast lane towards massive digitization.

Bangladesh is going through an e-transformation; processing of public services, data belonging to private individuals, and data/information related to public safety and security are all being transferred to digital forms. The nation is also investing heavily in building digital infrastructure and new technology such as 'public cloud'. We plan to leverage the potential of ICT, with a good ICT infrastructure in place, to respond not only to our ever-expanding development needs but also to ensure good governance.

ICT has been the key driver in deploying the rapid expansion of technologies in delivering public services to citizens. As a part of service decentralization, 6 million e-services are delivered on average per month to citizens from rural and remote regions through 407 City Corporation Digital Centres, 321 Pourashavas Digital Centres and 4,547 Union Digital Centres (UDCs). The centres provide 102 types of services. The Centres serve 4.5 million beneficiaries on average per month.

400 services of 36 public directorate/organizations made available in Sebakunjo (Service Portal), a web platform where citizens can find all required important information about services provided by public offices.

E-filing system has been introduced to provide prompt, transparent and efficient services to the government and to create paperless environment-friendly public offices.

Digital Mobile Court System has been initiated with the aim to modernize the activities of the courts.

With the support of Cabinet Division, skill development programme is going on in promoting innovation in public service delivery for government officials.

'Digital Innovation Fair' are being organized every year at all divisions and districts.

Under Access to Information (a2i) programme, the Prime Minister's Office has undertaken financial inclusion activities to bring people under financial services that were out of the banking services.

Rural e-Commerce activities have started through 5275 Digital Centres established throughout the country. Digital Centres are helping in creating an alternative virtual market for the goods and services produced in the marginalized or rural areas.

An e-commerce platform named 'ejoyeeta.com' has been developed with goods produced by small-scale women entrepreneurs with the assistance of Service Innovation Fund (SIF). 5,000 women entrepreneurs of Digital Centres are involved with this virtual shop.

We have adopted policies to attract investment in the ICT sector for its growth.

Our vision is to build a connected nation with high speed broadband internet connection with last mile access which enables connected citizenship. The mobile communication network will be upgraded to leverage 'location based service' which will allow a message to reach to all phones of a particular geographic location.

Good Governance and inclusion of all citizens in the development process are the preconditions for implementing SDGs. By instituting e-governance, we are making efforts to leave no one behind in our development vision.

Thank you.