

BANGLADESH



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN at the General Discussion of the 9th Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
CR 4, UNHQs, New York, 23-27 July, 2018**

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Bangladesh delegation is pleased to attend the ninth meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing under your chairmanship. We align ourselves with the statement made by Egypt on behalf of Group of 77.

We welcome the deliberation of the **9th session of the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing** on focus areas of “Autonomy and independence” and “Long term and palliative care” as a follow up to the resolution 72/144.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh is on its way to graduate from LDC category. In our impressive march towards inclusive development we are also going to face the inevitable phenomenon of rapid ageing sooner than later.

The percentage of the population 60 years or older in Bangladesh is expected to triple from 7 per cent in 2015 to 22 per cent by 2050. While we have seen in many European countries that the ageing process took more than 100 years, in Bangladesh it is expected to happen only in 17 years- between 2029 and 2046. And we are accordingly preparing ourselves for this eventuality.

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is dedicated to deliver the benefits of economic development to her people including the older people. The government has already taken a number of steps including strengthening safety net programmes like food for works, cash for work programmes, vulnerable group feeding, with focus on the older people. We have also introduced old age allowance. To benefit from the experiences of ageing population, retirement age for the government employee have been increased from 57 to 59 years. We are redoubling efforts to increase coverage and the benefit level for older persons every year. Besides, taking care of the elderly is ingrained in our socio-cultural construct which we continue to nurture.

Bangladesh adopted the National Policy on Older Persons in 2013 embracing the spirit of the Madrid Plan of Action. Our Hon'ble Speaker attended the high-level panel on the Global review of the outcomes of the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 (MIPAA) at the UN during the 56th session of the CSocD and shared the perspective of the Asia-Pacific region.

Bangladesh also introduced a "Parents Maintenance Act" to ensure that the younger generation provides support to their parents reflecting intergenerational interdependence.

The government has set up six free shelters as "Shanti Nibash" one each in divisional headquarters providing food and shelter. Some NGOs also have established such homes.

Bangladesh Association for the Aged and the Institute of Geriatric Medicine with financial help of the government established a Senior Citizen's home where various services are provided to elderly people.

Mr. Chair,

Our government is continuously striving to expand our healthcare services, palliative care and medicines to all of our population including older persons. Our extended community healthcare system is providing primary healthcare and expanding coverage all over the country.

NGOs in Bangladesh have also been playing a significant supporting role to the government efforts to ensure the health care services, recreational and socio-economic activities for the older persons.

As a developing country with all the right intention to deliver healthcare and other benefits to the older persons in order to uphold their rights and dignity, we find that domestic resources often fall short of the requirements. Therefore, a multi-stakeholder approach in channeling required support and assistance, be it financial or in the form of capacity building, including sharing of best practices in areas such as palliative care delivery and technological assistance will be imperative. I hope our development partners and the UN system would step forward in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, I would like to say something to the younger generations- you should remember that you are going through a biological process of ageing, and as we move towards attaining sustainable development, our society is evolving rapidly. In the process, while the youth shall work as agents of change it would also be wise to make the best use of the wisdom of the older persons.

I thank you.