



BANGLADESH

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the 73rd Session of the UNGA on
Agenda Item 70: Promotion and protection of the rights of children
10 October 2018 at UNHQs, New York

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Next year we shall be observing the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At this important juncture we need to review what the international community has done so far and what more needs to be done in implementing the SDGs related to children.

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh Constitution guarantees the rights of children. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has made children's development as one of the thrust areas of our overall development as envisioned by her late father and the Father of our Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Bangladesh was among the early ratifying countries of the Convention on the rights of the Child. In recent years, we have been able to create an enabling environment so that all the children of our country can fully realize their potentials.

Bangladesh believes that rights of the child can be best protected by ensuring their education and healthcare, among others. Our government has been working relentlessly to deliver the required services to children even at the far-flung areas. One of the great successes since 2010 have been providing students free textbooks from pre-primary to secondary levels at the beginning of the year. This year we have distributed 354.92 million books among 43.76 million students, perhaps the largest such undertaking in the world.

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 not only ensured 100% enrolment at the primary level but also reduced school dropout. We are happy to find reference of our efforts in Secretary-General's report which mentioned that girls in remote areas have been provided with education opportunities through schools established on boats and mobile learning centres. The result has been overwhelming as girls are outnumbering boys! We operate buses equipped with computers which travel across the country to impart ICT training. We also have programmes for children with disabilities. Our vision impaired students are receiving braille books.

We are extending education services to the Rohingya children in the camps in Cox's Bazar. This has been duly noted in the report of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Chair,

The Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is committed to the wellbeing of women and girls particularly. Bangladesh has been mentioned in the report of the Secretary General in the list of countries where marriage of children under the age of 18 is allowed in certain circumstances but it also recognizes the need for contextualizing local laws and their implementation to local level realities. Bangladesh updated its Child Marriage Restraint Act in 2017 and also put in place National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage, 2018-2030. Due to government's determined efforts in increasing social awareness and ensuring law enforcement, child marriage is gradually reducing.

Our delegation has welcomed the report of the SRSG on Violence Against Children in which Bangladesh has been mentioned in reference to the implementation of a regional action plan on child marriage for 2015-2018.

Bangladesh has developed action plans which focus on access to information for children and adolescents about sexual and reproductive health rights and services. Secretary-General's report notes that Bangladesh, in partnership with Plan International and UNFPA, has undertaken a pilot project on comprehensive sexuality education in schools and madrasas targeting predominantly adolescents.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome Secretary General's report on the 'Follow-up to the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on children' highlighting the progress in the implementation of the plan of action especially in the four major goal areas of "A world fit for children".

As the original proponent, Bangladesh expected the Migration Compact to be the guiding document for protecting the rights of migrant and refugee children and for guarding against trafficking in persons.

Mr. Chair,

We thank the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict and SRSG on Violence Against Children for their interactive discussion with the Committee particularly in regard to grave violations perpetrated by Myanmar authorities against Rohingya children. These children form a significant portion of the 720,000 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals having taken shelter in Bangladesh post August 25, 2017.

In our continued effort to address violence and oppression against women and girls, we have established One-Stop Crisis Centers all over the country; we have set up many other facilities including Victim Support Centres, National Toll free 24/7 helpline, Mobile Apps and a national database. We are extending similar support to Rohingya women and children in the camps in Cox's Bazar.

Mr. Chair,

Tomorrow, on the 11th of October, we shall observe the International Day of Girl Child; the Universal Children's Day falls next month. We must re-commit ourselves for realizing the rights of children taking inspiration from such occasions.

I thank you.