

Remarks by Mr. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in New York as the Lead Discussant at the Session III: Raising Ambition for UN-Associated Partnerships at the 2019 UN ECOSOC Partnership Forum 11 April 2019 at 4:30 pm, Trusteeship Chamber, UNHQs, New York

Thank you, Madam Moderator.

I appreciate all the Panelists for their thought-provoking presentations.

The UN has been a great partner in the global sustainable development efforts. However, the UN needs to revisit its way of delivering support to the Member States in attaining the SDGs. Funding is a major issue for the UN entities. Therefore, they must explore ways for securing new, more predictable and more flexible funding. To that end, the private sector which has funds as well as enormous potential in other means of implementation can complement the traditional partnership, that is partnership with and between the governments.

Evidently, multi-stakeholder partnerships have acquired a new importance in the SDG era. However, the challenge remains in incentivising the private sector in the efforts that would contribute to accelerate sustainable development when practically the idea of profit is its biggest consideration. While we acknowledge the importance of the existing safeguards regarding due diligence and risk management, I believe that the UN must embrace a system-wide approach to partnerships at the global and country levels.

At the global level, the member states should seriously consider encouraging, and giving stronger mandate to, the UN to get into partnerships with the private sector, foundations, civil society, NGOs and other non-state entities.

At the local level, the UN must always strive to work closely with host governments to ensure all local stakeholders are mobilized, and contribute to the SDGs in an integrated and strategic way that helps to deliver accountable results on national priorities.

It is heartening to see that the ongoing UN reform process has recognized the importance of the stronger system-wide approach to partnerships. I would underline a few activities which a stronger partnership between the UN and the private sector can leverage:

- First, Innovative financing for the SDGs- To unlock innovative financing in support of national SDG implementation, the UN at the local level needs to consider the private sector as partners for 'financing.' Of course, these activities should always be undertaken in close consultation with the government. Private financial flows should be directed towards the SDGs wherever possible, but must always complement and reinforce government priorities, as set out in national sustainable development plans.
- Second, in the area of finance, partnerships across sectors will be critical if we are going to succeed in developing SDG Bonds, Green Bonds, Social Impact Funds, blended finance and work with Islamic finance. The organizations such as the Global Compact

can help broker connections between the UN, government, private sector and others to examine these important new sources of SDG financing.

- Third, Public-Private Partnerships - The UN at country level must work closely with Governments to find ways to leverage the unique assets and capabilities of the private sector and other stakeholders to help solve the biggest challenges facing local communities.
- Fourth, partnerships can also be mobilized to support advocacy efforts around the SDGs, especially at the local level – and dialogue and data from a variety of sectors can feed into the Voluntary National Review process.

On the part of the UN system, there is still a big emphasis on fundraising by the UN at local level. This needs to change if we are going to fully leverage the force of business for SDG progress. We need to focus on building lasting relationships through more strategic engagement. In the morning session, one panelist observed rightly that companies are often approached by numerous different UN entities for similar opportunities without the necessary internal coordination. The United Nations needs to find more organized ways to work together to create impact at a larger scale. For example, rather than investing precious time and resources in cultivating one-to-one partnerships between specific companies and UN agencies, we should encourage collaboration at scale through working groups, coalitions, or multi-stakeholder platforms with much greater potential impact. The UN Office for Partnerships should play a more vigorous role in forging partnership between the UN and private sector and other non-state organizations.

It's also very important to ensure that UN Country Teams have the skills and training necessary to understand local challenges, engage with the local private sector – including SMEs - and the local business communities in a way that can deliver greater results.

Finally, I would like to highlight that the ECOSOC Partnership Forum offers an important opportunity for Member States to come together with leaders from the private sector and other groups to take stock of progress, share new ideas, and inspire each other to sustain and build partnership momentum for the SDGs. We must ensure that this Forum remains open, inclusive, inspiring, and impact-focused as a key mechanism for raising awareness of the importance of collaboration between the UN and the Private sector for the SDGs.

Thank you.