

**Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature in
Commemoration of International Mother Earth Day
Theme: Mother Earth Approach in the Implementation of Education and Climate
Change
Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQs, New York, 10:00 am, 22 April 2019**

Thank you, **Madam President**, for organizing this interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Bangladesh is happy to be a part of this Dialogue that puts the spotlight on climate change, the biggest threat to the existence of our Mother Earth. We remain grateful to Bolivia and its Mission for leading our struggle to save the Mother Earth.

Climate change is destroying our harmony with nature that our planet requires for its sustenance. However, we cannot blame any other creature for climate change. It is the human actions which have caused environmental degradation and climate change.

Scientific researches such as the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degree Celsius warn us about the dangerous consequences that our Mother Earth is going to face if we fail to limit the global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius. Our oceans are already feeling the heat as is evident from the extensive coral bleaching.

International Mother Earth Day is the occasion to reaffirm our commitment to protect and preserve the planet that nourishes and nurtures us like a mother.

Madam President,

We need development for poverty eradication, food security and stability. If our pursuit for development fails to recognize the environmental concerns, that would lead to more poverty, more hunger and surely more conflicts.

The most transformative global development agenda, the 2030 Agenda, sends a strong message that climate change and implementation of the SDGs are interlinked and interdependent.

Today the cry for climate actions, particularly among the children and the youth, is louder than ever and rightly so. We owe a pollution free ecologically balanced earth to our future generations. We are encouraged to see the demonstrations of children and students across the world against the lack of actions to halt climate change.

We need transformative and corrective actions from now on. And these actions should not be limited only to hardcore mitigation and adaptation efforts. We need to look beyond that and bring change in our day to day production and consumption patterns.

However, this is possible only when we have been able to create awareness and that must start with the children. Education can be our most progressive and effective tool in this endeavor.

The SDGs, the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement guide us to stronger climate actions including through education to safeguard the environment from further deterioration by climate change.

Through SDG 4, we have committed ourselves to 'quality education' for our people. To me, the definition of quality education is imparting knowledge and skill to better equip the future citizens of the world against the factors that would challenge their well-being. Our education system must inculcate in our children the consciousness for sustainable use of natural resources and encourage them to build scientific infrastructure essential for sustainable development.

In this connection, may I refer to the impacts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution the impacts of what we have started witnessing across the globe. Children are the biggest stakeholders of this new revolution. We must transform our education system in a way that our children find the yields of 4IR useful for combating climate change and creating a stronger bond with Nature.

Madam President,

The people of Bangladesh have an umbilical relationship with Mother Earth. From time immemorial, we thrived on the bounty of Nature and our lives, livelihood and culture moved ahead keeping pace with the rhythm of Nature. Floods and other natural calamities ravaged our region regularly, but they could not disturb our intrinsic association with Nature.

Regrettably, we are now one of the most ecologically fragile countries in the world, although we had hardly contributed to the deterioration of the environment. Just 1-degree centigrade increase of global temperature and further sea level rise will result into inundation of a large area of Bangladesh and thus displacement of 40 Million people by the end of this century.

However, these have just emboldened our resolution to tackle climate change and build resilience. We amended our constitution in 2011 to include a constitutional directive to the State to protect the environment and natural resources for current and future generations.

Our Government is determined to utilize the voice of the youth and children to accelerate the pace of climate actions at the national level. It has taken all out efforts to build awareness about climate change among the children and the youth. The textbooks in

primary, secondary and tertiary levels are making our children aware of the human actions that contribute to climate change and the efforts required for tackling this menace.

The Government has been successfully implementing a National Service Programme (NSP) since 2009-10 using its own resources which opened up a new horizon for the youth by enhancing their skills through training. While developing the training curriculum, emphasis has been laid on making the youths aware of the dangers of climate induced disasters so that they can play a proactive role in curbing climate change.

We have taken a pragmatic approach to education in respect of climate change. Bangladesh is the largest jute producing country in the world and students are being made aware of this biodegradable fibre to be a good alternative to plastic products. Moreover, the students are encouraged to actively take part in afforestation programmes. The Government is also training community groups about early warning systems and promoting higher studies and researches on climate-friendly agricultural technologies.

Our aim is to create climate conscious citizens and skilled entrepreneurs through quality education who would take up environment-friendly enterprises and recognize the necessity of clean and renewable energy for establishing harmony with nature.

Political leaders must demonstrate their concerns for the future generations. I would like to recall here that this global body awarded its highest environmental accolade 'Champions of the Earth' to our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina back in 2015 for putting confronting the climate change at the core of Bangladesh's economic and social development through the far-reaching initiatives that I have just mentioned.

Madam President,

Mankind has an intricate and delicate relationship with nature. We need to respect this relationship. We will prosper only if we foster harmony with nature. If we fail, the harmony in mankind will also be in great peril. The sooner we realize it the better.

Thank you.