



Bangladesh

Statement of

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**Prime Minister
Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh**

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Mr. President, fellow delegates, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the very outset, I congratulate you on your well-deserved election as the President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly. I believe, through your able leadership, wisdom and commitment to the United Nations and its visions and missions, you would be able to steward the Assembly deliberations towards a meaningful conclusion. I thank H.E. Mr. Joshef Diess, President of the 65th UN General Assembly for concluding a very fruitful session. I take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his team for their relentless efforts for the cause of the millions towards eradicating poverty, improving peoples' empowerment, democracy, development, peace and stability.

Mr. President,

Last year during my General Assembly statement, I referred to the address of our Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the maiden speech in our mother tongue Bangla (Bengali) at this august assembly of nations which he delivered in this very podium in 1974 where he underpinned the fundamental spirits of the newly liberated Bangladesh. Thirty-seven years on and we still nourish (harbor) those spirits deep inside the hearts of each and every Bangalee that inspire us to go through the odds of economic and political turmoil, pass the test of global recession and finally unite us to surface as a sovereign country free from the curse of terrorism, religious extremism and social inequalities. I pay deep homage to our father of the nation for upbringing us as a homogeneous nation which, through the landslide mandate of our people, now shows us good hope of converting Bangladesh as a middle income country- his Golden Bengal by 2021.

A fair and credible election is only the first step towards democratic governance and its institutionalization requires constant vigil and nurturing. During the past two years and a half, my government has relentlessly worked to institutionalize democracy. We in Bangladesh believe that democracy is a prerequisite for development and stability. For democracy to promote development, it must ensure good governance with effective checks and balances against abuses of power. It must also promote cohesiveness, inclusiveness and accountability to prevent social exclusion, terrorism, extremism and militancy. Security is essential for development, for people to thrive and live with hopes and dreams. In Bangladesh, we are

proud of our heritage deeply rooted in the spirit of Islam that promotes universal peace, tolerance, harmony, love for humanity, social and economic justice for all. From my own experience we have learnt that, without people's participation democracy cannot sustain and without a sustainable democracy, accommodation and regional peace especially with own people and neighbors, and without women empowerment and their participation at every level of economic and social life there can't be any economic development, and finally, without economic development and job creation, peace cannot be achieved and sustained. I have dubbed this interlinking scenario as the 'people-centric development sustainable peace.

In this august gathering, I would like to declare that, current government of Bangladesh is actively following and practicing this philosophy of peace with the right to development at its heart and it is my firm conviction, by dint of adherence to this strategy, it is only a matter of time that our country will emerge as the 'Golden Bengal', a land of peace, prosperity and happiness that our father of the nation dreamt.

Mr. President,

The world is passing through hard times and upheavals. The financial and economic crisis, sky rocketing fuel and food price, sudden crash in stock market, climate debacle, widespread unemployment and stalemate in world trade and commerce has posed the developing economies with unprecedented challenges. The world did never face such a calamity save the great depression. This is irony that, though the Least Developed Countries did not cause this crisis, they have been the worst victims. It has resulted in the slowing down of their foreign trade, reduction in their remittance flow, negativity in the balance of payments, rise of inflation and unemployment and as a consequence, their national development activities has stalled midway and social safety net and protection measures has tumbled .

In this backdrop, we gathered in Istanbul in last May to launch the 4th UN LDC Conference. On the wake of a waning aide flow, we called on the development partners to fulfill their commitments that they made nearly one decade ago in Monterrey. But we failed to increase the level of aid commitments against all the hyperboles uttered world-wide in the civil gatherings. Similarly, we once again failed to get 100% duty free and quota free market access to the LDCs pending the conclusion of the Doha Round of Trade Negotiations. This is an irony for the poor countries of the world and a failure on the part of our development partners that constantly advise us to open up the market and enjoy free trade.

I know, mere narration of the calamity will not suffice for way forward. I am an optimist. Having lost my parents and members of my family, I have nothing to lose but the welfare of my country and fellow countrymen. The brave people of my country are surviving and thriving fighting various odds, debacles and natural disasters.

In this august gathering of the nations, I have come to narrate the saga of those brave men and women and urge fellow countries to follow the suits by ourselves. My country has achieved over 6% GDP growth rate despite the worldwide financial and economic crisis. We have topped all records of the past in foreign currency reserves. Amidst the rise of global unemployment, we have created thousands of employments. We have been giving cash money to the poor, women and elderly under social protection schemes like VGD, VGF etc. and such has reduced incidence of extreme poverty. All these activities at grass root level have buoyant the national economy.

I believe, immediate culmination of trade fiasco is vital for the viability of the poorer countries. In the same note, I call upon the international community for taking necessary action not to allow any protectionist venture in the developed economies that are detrimental to the developing world, especially to the LDCs. Protectionist measures are likely to create unemployment both at home and abroad and especially amongst millions of migrant workers. The Mode-4 under WTO should immediately be negotiated and concluded in this regard. I urge the world community to utilize the stimulus package not only to generate further employment to soothe the restive commodity and service markets but also to keep the engine of trade in force.

I also believe, the administrative restructuring of the current global economic governance is a demand of the day, as it has contributed a great deal towards the ongoing crisis. Without a true and adequate representation of the developing world in both quota sharing and vote sharing, these institutes would never be able to cater the need of the majority people of this planet earth in future as it has failed to do so in the current debacle. From a pragmatic view point, I propose in this august gathering to form a special fund under the aegis of the United Nations to exclusively to deal with SDRs and Grants, leaving the BWIs to cater long term development assistances. I also propose that, all stake holders should be respectful towards the country-led ownership and strategy of all development projects as enshrined in Accra Agenda for Action. Finally, let us refrain from shying away from the MDGs pledges under the pretext of the global financial and economic crisis. I remind the world again as I did during the last year's High Level Plenary Meeting-- MDG goals and pledges were joint commitments from both of the developing and the developed countries and each of us should be committed to those pledges which were made long before the crisis ushered in. In this respect, in addition to further intensifying the efforts towards realizing all MDGs, a post-2015 plan for the MDGs may immediately be chalked out as I doubt most of the developing countries including LDCs will not be able to accomplish the MDG targets if the current unfavorable trade regimes is not reshaped as I highlighted.

Mr. President,

In the field of MDGs, despite hundreds of obstacles, we have been able to succeed substantially. We have almost achieved MDG-3, the gender equality and empowerment of women. We have championed the cause of gender equality in every level of our state, society and administration. Today, with pride and dignity, I can tell you, apart from myself, the deputy leader of our national parliament, the foreign minister, the home minister, the defense minister, the agriculture minister, the minister for women affairs all are women. The leader of the opposition is also a woman. (We have ensured 30% parliamentary seats reserved for women---***This goal has not been achieved yet***). We have also delivered on the commitments of reserving 30% seats for women in all local governments and primary education. We are proud that we have contributed maximum all-uniformed Women Police forces to the UN Peacekeeping Missions. So, the empowerment of women has not only been limited to the national stage, it has been effectively disseminated in the grass root level as well.

In the field of education, we have given highest budgetary allocations. In spite of budget constraints, we are giving free schooling including books to all school going students up to the 12th grade. We are contemplating, with the help of international community, to extend this provision up to the level of graduation. We have already declared our vow to achieve 100% school enrollment by 2011 and 100% literary rate by 2014. In terms of primary school enrolment, we have topped second position in South Asia. Unfortunately, as elsewhere we have challenges of quality education, drop-out rates and quality teachers.

Health is a priority sector for us. We enacted national health policy in 2000, where we planned to reduce children mortality rate from 54 to 15 by implementing 100% coverage of expanded program on immunization. We have already been 100% successful in polio eradication. We believe, before the deadline of 2015, we will be able to reach our goals of all health related MDGs. However, to implement our programs and plans, the cooperation of our development partners is critical.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the negligence and sufferings of a particular fraction of human society---the autistic children. It has been estimated that 1 in every 110 individuals, or about 1% of the world's population, suffer from an autism spectrum disorder. What does that mean when a country like Bangladesh has a population of more than 162 million people? Unfortunately, in many developing countries like Bangladesh we have no data for how many children or adults suffer from this lifelong debilitating developmental neurological condition. Needless to say this and many other scientific and medical questions need to be addressed urgently.

Bangladesh, despite its limited resources have taken extensive initiatives to address the causes of the autistic children. Through the development program called: Protibondhi Sheba O Sahajya Kendro (organization for the assistance and services of the disabled) created in 2009, 5 main districts across Bangladesh are providing physiotherapy, occupational therapy, counseling,

assistive devices and other related services to nearly 15,000 individuals many of whom are diagnosed with autism. It is scheduled to be expanded to 10 more districts by the end of this year. A 'One Stop Mobile Service' program has also been introduced in order to reach families that live in villages that lack accessibility to medical services. In April 2010, 2 hostels were opened in Dhaka in order to help access to medical services to families in Dhaka. The Autism Resource Center was also established in 2010 to provide free therapeutic services. At present 55 special needs schools are run by the NFDDP through two separate NGOs. Seven of these schools are based on an inclusion model. In June 2010, the Center for Neurodevelopment and Autism in Children (CNAC) was inaugurated. It is the first government initiative that is linked to a medical university. In partnership with the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) it aims to provide training to medical professionals, comprehensive management of services and research on autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Last July, my government, partnering with *Autism Speaks* and the World Health Organization launched the Global Autism Public Health Initiative (GAPH) in Bangladesh. Many distinguished dignitaries including Chairperson of Indian Congress Ms. Sonia Gandhi laminated the occasion. The mission of the GAPH and the National Advisory Committee will be to develop and implement feasible, effective, and sustainable programs and solutions that are applicable to the Bangladeshi population. It is important to customize the programs based on the culture, social expectations, financial and professional resources, and existing infrastructure within Bangladesh. We plan to achieve these objectives by facilitating collaboration among local stakeholders, community and international experts to work towards a common goal. The development of GAPH will be guided by the National Advisory Committee which will be comprised of both national and international experts on autism and mental health as well as representatives from Autism Speaks. Its vision is to enhance current programs and services and ensure coordination and cooperation between the ministries of Health, Education and Social Welfare so that individuals with autism and other disabilities can become independent and productive members of society.

We also took national and regional initiatives to end trafficking of women and children and I am pleased to mention that the South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation or SAARC adopted resolutions to work together to end this perverse practices.

Mr. President,

Very few nations face the challenges that we face in Bangladesh. Our development gains - achieved through the work of years and decades - can be wiped out in matter of hours. One ferocious cyclone can push hundreds of thousands of people back below the poverty line. A severe flood can increase the number of malnourished children by thousands. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals will become a mirage if we fail to contain our environmental insecurity. Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to climate change given that we are a low-lying delta in one of the highest rainfall areas of the world. There is growing concern that an irreversible climatic shift will displace tens of millions of our people. By some estimates, a one

meter sea-level rise would submerge about one-third of the total area of Bangladesh. This would result in an untold number of climate refugees, and, given our population size and its vulnerabilities, would represent the greatest humanitarian crisis in history. Inaction is simply no longer an option. It is nothing less than a basic moral imperative that countries which have contributed little to this crisis, such as Bangladesh, not be left alone and unsupported to suffer most from its consequences. Therefore, we demand the global community to share the burden of climate migrants and displaced people. We are thankful to the LDC IV Conference which has come out with the specific call in Istanbul Program of Action to address the relocation and rehabilitation of the refugees and displaced persons owing to climate change. I urge this world body, through you Mr. President, to immediately convene a special high level meeting to finalize the mode of operation of this relocation and rehabilitation program.

Adaptation is necessary, but may not be sufficient to cope with the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Countries like Bangladesh will face the worst consequences in the absence of a legally binding commitment on mitigation. International efforts to minimize emission levels should not, however, disproportionately tax poorer nations. We must have guaranteed and easy access to appropriate mitigation technologies and know-how at affordable terms. Bangladesh will not be able to attain sustainable development without appropriate technological support. In line with the Cancun Declaration, I would like an early implementation of the Climate Fund for the most vulnerable countries.

While Bangladesh has made commendable progress, we still face formidable challenges, both on account of climate change and due to other intrinsic factors. Our agricultural production is showing signs of diminishing marginal returns. Given the finite amount of land and a growing population, land use is approaching an upper limit. This severely limits the ability of many poor people to earn a livelihood from farming. New investments and innovations in agriculture to boost productivity will remain key to maintaining our food security. We also believe that innovative financial instruments – such as weather derivatives - can help vulnerable communities reduce their coping costs. In the developed world, there are various weather-related financial products that help farmers and other vulnerable groups to hedge against weather induced uncertainties. Bangladesh will strongly welcome international initiatives to develop financial derivatives and transfer of technology to cope with natural disasters.

Mr. President,

Given the escalating food price worldwide, we have given top priority to food security. We have already reduced prices of fuel and agricultural equipments, fertilizer, seeds, insecticide and irrigation to increase food production. We have extended our social food security networks to cover all the population under vulnerabilities and the farmers are being given high yielding varieties of seeds. It is hoped that, with the help and assistance of the international community,

we will be self sufficient in food production very soon. However, the natural disaster is a persistent threat towards that venture. In this vein, we urge the international community to provide us with saline, drought and flood compatible high yielding varieties of seeds to get rid of production loss due to natural calamity.

We have intensified our research works for generating high yielding varieties of crops, especially of rice. Our scientists have already discovered the genome sequence of jute, the golden fiber of Bangladesh. There is a silent revolution in science and technology, especially in the field of Information Technology in our country. It is our thrust sector. We have given extra emphasis on this sector to realize a Digital Bangladesh by 2021.

We believe, to reduce global prices of food and to enhance food security, we need to increase the productivity of agriculture. There is plenty of fallow land uncultivated in many countries. I have a proposal and my proposal is that, you allow my farmers and agriculturists to cultivate your land and in the process, your food production will go up reducing your food insecurity and at the same time would increase the global food stock. This could be done under South-South and Triangular cooperation.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

To achieve development and to sustain it, peace and stability is a must. We claim ourselves to be the harbinger of peace. We have manifested it by topping the list of troop contributing countries under UN Peace keeping operations. We are now putting more emphasis on peace building. In this regard, let me tell you that Bangladesh is a founding member of UN Peace Building Mission and we are number one country both in Police as well as troops contribution in the UN Peace Building Missions. We have also given gender dimension in this venture. We have sent a complete contingent of women police to UN Peace Missions who are now working in Haiti. Against our leadership role on the ground, we wonder why our representation has been neglected in the planning and strategy of the DPKOs. Last year I stated it here and this year, may I reiterate it again for speedy and favorable consideration.

Peace and stability is also entwined with culture. In line with peace building missions of UN, I believe, true peace can only be built not merely by deploying troops, but by disseminating 'culture of peace' worldwide. We spearheaded the flagship resolution on 'Culture of Peace' in last years' session. It was adopted without a vote, especially for its reference to International Mother Language Day. On this very day in 1952, our people sacrificed their lives to save the right to talk in their mother tongue. The power of language to sustain cultures and identity of a nation was thus established. Our parliament therefore enacted a law requesting UN to declare Bangla as one of the official languages of the United Nations. I seek the valuable support of all UN members towards our appeal.

Mr. President,

A Digital Bangladesh self sufficient in food, developed in education, health and gender equity, free from the curse of poverty and climate change is our dream. This is a realizable dream. And it is only possible through a conducive atmosphere both home and abroad. While we stride for peace, stability and rule of law in our country towards achieving the development goals, we expect the same from our fellow members outside. And what I dream for my country, I do the same for all fellow members of the United Nations. Our policy is as our father of the nation laid down before in 1971 is 'friendship to all and malice to none' and we proudly follow to it.

Millions are beholding with hope what we are doing for them. For the sake of those faces, those teeming millions and hungry mouths, let's vow to make a giant step together to keep the division behind and face the challenges with flying colors. We can try to empower them by democracy; they will give the world stability, development, peace and prosperity. This is the prerequisite for sustainable peace what we are longing for in the United Nations and elsewhere.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Khoda Hafez

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh live forever.

Long Live United Nations.