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Statement by
H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Bangladesh
at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the 67th Regular Session of
the UNGA on Agenda item 27: Social Development
New York, 09 October 2012

Mr. Chair,

Let me begin by joining the previous speakers in congratulating you and other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. We are confident that your able leadership will surely guide our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the agenda item 27.

Bangladesh delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of the G-77 and China.

Mr. Chair:

Despite forward looking initiatives made by our leaders over the years for social development, we are far from reaching the desired goal. Our efforts have been staggered against concerns like poverty, unemployment, food

insecurity, income inequalities, malnutrition, lack of quality education and healthcare services. Moreover, non-implementation of ODA commitment by developed partners and climate change have further complicated the scenario for developing countries. It is alarming to learn that with the current pace of decrease of poverty, we will need another 88 years to eradicate extreme poverty. Achieving MDG targets within the stipulated time will remain a distant dream for many countries, especially the LDCs.

Mr. Chairman:

Bangladesh has been making sustained efforts for ensuring social development. To this end, sustainable social development through poverty eradication is a high priority agenda for the Government of Bangladesh. We have been following a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for quite some time now and have been able to reduce the level of abject poverty. There are social safety net programs in the form of Food for Work, allowances to widows, destitute women. Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and Vulnerable Group feeding programs are carried out for ensuring food security to vulnerable extreme poor. Support is also given to small and medium entrepreneurs particularly women entrepreneurs by creating a dedicated fund and by providing collateral free loan to them.

Vulnerable social groups like women, elderly people and persons with disabilities always receive special attention in Bangladesh. The Government, in spite of its limited resources has taken a range of social

safety net programmes targeting the women and elderly people. Currently, about 2.4 million elderly people are covered under old age allowance programme. For ensuring the rights of disabled persons, a comprehensive national legislation is in place. We are now in the process of harmonizing the law in line with the provisions of the Convention. Stipend Programme for the Students with Disabilities has been introduced. Special and inclusive schools are set up for visually and hearing impaired students. Free school is run by the government for Autistic children. In order to ensure employment for persons with disabilities, special quota has been allotted in government service. In line with our commitment to the rights of disabled persons and autistic children, my delegation will table a draft resolution titled "Addressing the socioeconomic needs of individuals, families and societies affected by autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disorders."

We welcome convening a High-level meeting on disability in 2013. My delegation supports the recommendation made by the Secretary-General for ensuring inclusion of disability in the post-2015 development framework.

Mainstreaming youth in the overall development process is a priority for the Government. Comprehensive initiative has been undertaken for skill development of young people by providing extensive training in different sectors. A national Service Programme has been introduced. Skill enhancement training programme has been undertaken with a view to enhancing the capacity to access the domestic as well as overseas labour markets. At the same time, arrangements have been made to provide

micro-credit on easy terms to encourage the trained youths to be self-employed.

Mr. chair:

My delegation is happy to note that preparation has started for observance of the International Year of Family. Family as the fundamental unit of society can play pivotal role for social cohesion. By nurturing family and promoting family values, we will be able to overcome social ills.

Mr. Chair:

It has been rightly pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General that Climate change is a major threat to sustained economic growth, agricultural productivity and poverty eradication efforts, especially in developing countries. In my country, owing to rise of sea level, thousands of our residents of low-lying areas are being forced to move to urban cities aggravating slum situation, joblessness and poverty. Our development gains achieved over the years are eroded by frequent natural disasters. It is therefore necessary that climatically vulnerable countries be compensated adequately to cope with the impacts caused by climate change.

Finally, while national governments are responsible for formulating and implementing policies for the social development within the country, development partners should support developing countries in their development endeavor. In this regard, my delegation would like to urge

our development partners to honor their ODA commitments, encourage debt relief measures, fulfill their promise of financial and technological transfers for responding to climate change, avoid taking trade protectionist measures against developing countries, facilitate regular migration.

Only through a concerted effort and partnership we can address the plights of the millions of poor people living throughout the world.