



## BANGLADESH

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Statement by H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York at the General Debate of the Third Committee of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA on

‘Promotion and protection of the rights of children’ [agenda item 65]

New York, 19 October 2012

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**Mr. Chair,**

At the very outset, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the agenda item ‘rights of children’.

**Mr. Chair,**

The international community, over the years formulated numerous documents, established a number of international frameworks in order to ensure rights of children, time-bound targets were set for improvement of the lives of millions of children. The global initiatives have brought many successes. The under-five mortality rate has dropped by nearly 60 per cent worldwide. However, the progress is slow and uneven. Nearly 40 years required to achieve 60 percent reduction of under five mortality. Nearly

one in five children under age 5 in the developing world is still underweight. An estimated 70 million children will remain out of school in 2015.

**Mr. Chair:**

As one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its two optional protocols, the government of Bangladesh is committed to ensure full rights of its children. We are also a party to ILO Convention the Prohibition & Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Form of Child Labour (NO 182). The constitution of the country guarantees the rights of children. In line with the constitutional and international commitments, Bangladesh adopted various policies and legislations - the latest being the *National Children Policy 2011*. A National Plan of Action for Children has been in place. To address the issue of violence, the "Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act, 2000" (amended in 2003) was enacted. A 5-year term project entitled "Empowerment and Protection of Children" is being implemented to create a culture of respect for children's protection rights.

At the regional level, we have endorsed the SAARC Convention on the Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia 2002 and the SAARC Convention on prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution 2002.

**Mr. Chair:**

Bangladesh believes that rights of the child can best be protected through education. We whole-heartedly support the Secretary-General's *Education First initiative* launched during the High-level segment of the General Assembly this year. At the national level, we have a comprehensive Education Policy 2010 for ensuring education for all. Special emphasis is given to girls' education. Free girls education in the primary and secondary level and introduction of stipend programmes for girls contributed to achieving gender parity. Distribution of Free Text books and School feeding programme are helping reduction of drop out rates. A "Prime Minister's Education Assistance Trust Fund Act 2011" has been enacted to ensure education for the poor meritorious students.

The present Government has banned corporal punishment in all educational institutions across the country.

**Mr. Chair:**

Under-nourished mother gives birth to under-nourished babies. The Government of Bangladesh is promoting delayed marriage to improve the nutritional status of adolescent girls and lowering incidences of low birth weight babies. We welcome the observance of the International Day of girl child to encourage to ending of child marriage. We are also focusing on the necessary care during the first 1000 days of life. Maternity leave has been extended from 4 to 6 months. In order to ensure nutrition of lactating

mothers, programmes called “Maternal Health Voucher Scheme and lactating mother allowance are in place for poor mothers. There are notable declines in iodine deficiency disorders, and maternal and neo-natal tetanus. Vitamin 'A' supplementation and Oral rehydration therapy, polio vaccination, universal immunization programmes have saved many child lives. We have reduced under-nutrition from 42% to 36% and stunting from 43% to 41%. Our success in reducing child mortality is widely acclaimed. In this regard, we thank UN agencies and development partners for supporting our country-led programmes. We also thank the Secretary General for his SUN movement, which aims to mobilize a global collective action against malnutrition, particularly in children.

**Mr. Chair:**

Private sectors and NGOs in Bangladesh are partnering the government in its various initiatives. This has been most significant in the implementation of special programmes for the disadvantaged children including abandoned children, street children and children with disabilities. To cater to the special medical needs of the autistic babies, a Specialized Hospital and special schools have been set up.

**Mr. Chair:**

Children are most hard hit in situations of armed conflicts and under foreign occupation. In this connection, UNDPKO's 'Child protection policy directive' is a useful document in relation to peacekeeping processes,

peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. Each of the peacekeeping mission now has a child protection adviser.

**Mr. Chair:**

To conclude, while governments and international community are working hard for rights of the children, we should not forget the crucial role of schools, family and family values in this regard. It is in the families that children learn moral and cultural standards of societies, develop their humane qualities. Family gives the first education to a child. It provides a healthy environment for upbringing of the children. Therefore, we must respect, preserve and encourage family and cultural values for the betterment of our children.

I thank you Mr. Chair.