

Draft statement by H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and PR of Bangladesh to the UN at the plenary session of the Second Committee on 9 October 2013

Stipulated time: 7 minutes

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chair, on your election and also the members of your Committee at a time when we are looking forward in designing and developing post-2015 agenda: an equitable, inclusive and sustainable world for all. I assure you that my delegation will support to you in all your efforts for a better world.

May I state that we align ourselves with the statements made by Fiji on behalf of Group of 77 and China, and Benin on behalf of the Least Developed Countries.

Mr. Chair,

At this crossroad of history, we have to be conscious of the responsibility bestowed upon us by the global community. We are nearing the end of the implementation deadline of the MDGs, with around 800 days left to achieve the targets. UN members and other stakeholders outside the system have already started seriously talking about the issues beyond 2015 agenda and no wonder, the theme of the present session is “Post 2015 development agenda – setting the stage”. In this context, the role of the Second Committee will be of utmost importance in shaping the future priorities and designing corresponding road-map in achieving those goals.

Let me first touch on the issue of sustainable development. A number of excellent reports and recommendations have come out and they indicated certain priority areas of UN in the years beyond 2015, particularly how to ensure development that is sustainable, that is inclusive, that is equitable, that would eradicate poverty, and that would be pro-people and pro-planet. Bangladesh has already come up with its national Post-2015 development agenda strategy and it outlined 11 goals and 58 specific targets to achieve sustainable, pro-people and pro-planet development goals. We are an active member in the OWG, and are committed to contribute substantively to the process.

At the same time, let us remind ourselves, MDGs are not yet over, and we are not yet ready to feel complacent. Bangladesh is one of the few developing countries that have made substantial progress in achieving many of the MDGs. However, we are yet not there in all MDGs. More importantly, there are many countries – including most of the LDCs and post- conflict countries that have not been able to achieve significant progress in MDGs. Therefore, we need to go for the ‘big push’—an accelerated approach to achieve as many targets as realistically possible within the target date. In this regard, let me refer to the outcome of the MDG Special event that was universally adopted the inter-governmentally negotiated document to guide us in the future days. We strongly believe that is a building blocks and the post-2015 development goals must be built on a strong base of successful MDGs.

Mr. Chair,

I would also like draw attention of this Committee to the issues of key importance to the LDCs, a vulnerable group. Although many efforts were made to help this group to graduate, unfortunately, progress is dismal. Nearly 73% of people in this group live below the poverty- level and their share to the global trade which was around 1% in 1971 basically remained same in 2013 although their numbers both in population and in terms of countries doubled from 400 m to 900 million and 25 to 49 countries respectively.

Global leaders over the last decade or so, repeatedly stated that international trade is the engine of development and prosperity and they promised to allow them duty-free-quota-free access to markets. However, we are yet to see the fulfillment of their commitments to the LDCs. LDCs have not yet got duty-free quota-free market access for all of their products yet. They still face non-harmonized, and in some cases stringent rules of origin, barriers in different modes. In the services agreement, although LDCs have the waiver, we need offers from in the area of Mode-4 from the Member Countries that are effective and meaningful to the LDCs. With the WTO Bali Ministerial Meeting scheduled for December 2013, we call upon the developed countries, and the developing countries that are in position to do so, to fulfill their pledges and commitments to the LDCs in terms of international trade as part of early harvest. For my delegation, meaningful market access is of key importance from our national development strategy perspective.

Another area that I would like to touch upon is the issue of ODA. In all major UN conferences in the last decade or so, development partners have repeatedly expressed commitment to provide 0.7% of their GNP as ODA to developing countries, with 0.15-0.20% of GNI to LDCs as ODA. In fact, just two weeks ago, the global leaders reiterated their pledge through the Outcome of the MDG Special Event. However, we are yet to see any action to fulfill these pledges. Only a few countries have realized the commitment, and we thank them. However, we are alarmed to see that for the major development partners, the ODA disbursements have rather declined in the recent years. The present global financial meltdown should not be used as a pretext to avoid abiding by the obligations repeatedly made over the years. It is of importance that the Second Committee deliberates on this point of failing to fulfill the international pledges that can jeopardize development plans of the poorer countries.

Mr. Chair,

The issue of migration is now an integral part in the global development discourse. Remittance plays a key role in the development plan of many developing countries, including Bangladesh. Doha Declaration on Financing for Development pledged to work on reducing the cost of remittance. This should be considered when we deal with the issue of financing for development. The cost of migration also needs to be reduced significantly, with the rights of migrants guaranteed in the host countries. Last week the President of the General Assembly organized a High Level Dialogue on migration and development, with an agreed outcome. It is important that these issues are deliberated in the Second Committee, and we are ready to contribute in the discussions.

Another issue of importance is climate change. Bangladesh, being a climate vulnerable country, is concerned about the non-action by some major industrialized countries to address the challenge of climate change. It is imperative that the developed countries as well as the fast growing developing countries take on the responsibility of the impacts of the fast track growth activities – the impact that is victimizing country like Bangladesh that has significantly less carbon footprint than the threshold level. Let me flag here, Mr. Chairman, that Bangladesh on its own has taken several significant steps to address this global challenge. Nationally we have set up two Climate Funds, one Climate Change

Resilience Trust Fund and another Climate We are an active member of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and Ambassadors with Responsibility to Climate Change (ARC), and have been working with other countries that may be adversely affected by climate change to address this challenge in a coherent and united manner.

Mr. Chair,

This Committee is supposed to be dealing with “economic and financial” issues – subjects that affect our citizens with zero time-lag and hardly any reaction time. That is why, our deliberations will have to be pro-active and visionary, our discourse should be future looking and at the same time pragmatic and action-oriented. Mr. Chair, we have a great opportunity with you as a Chair and we must do our best to send extreme poverty to a museum, to create job opportunities for our youth, end financial instability and lop-sided development, and more importantly, provide hope and achievable vision for a world that is sustainable socially, environmentally and economically so that our future generations could be proud of us.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.
