

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 68th Session of the UNGA on
'Promotion and protection of the rights of children'

New York, 18 October 2013

Mr. Chair,

The Universal Declaration of Human rights recognized the need for special protection measures for children as early as in 1948. Later, the right of children was further elaborated through the landmark convention CRC, which has gained almost universal ratification. World Summit for Children in 1990 proclaimed actions in the 'best interests of the child.' Ten years later the world leaders came up with MDGs -some action-oriented goals, and most of them addressed the issue of children. Good news is; the global initiatives have brought many successes and the Secretary-General in his report mentioned that under-5 mortality fell from 63 in 2005 to 51 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011, percentage of underweight children declined from 18.1 to 15.7. However, the pace of progress is slow and not even either. Many children in poorer area are still lacking basic health care, education and opportunities to achieve goals. Many more are still dying of causes which are preventable.

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 two of the optional protocols of CRC,

ILO Convention 182 concerning Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, Convention on the consent of Marriage.

The constitution of the country guarantees the rights of children. 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.

In line with the constitutional and international commitments, the Government of Bangladesh has adopted, revised, and enacted various policies and legislations. Our recently revised **Children Act 2013** has defined a Child as a person below the age of 18 years. A new **Children Policy 2011** has been adopted highlighting children's right to health, education, cultural activities and leisure, protection, birth registration and identity. Birth registration is made compulsory and free.

Our National Child labor elimination policy 2010 aims at prevention and elimination of child labor especially in its hazardous forms.

The Government fully recognizes the value of nurturing children to become an effective human capital for tomorrow. With this vision in mind, the government gives special emphasis on access to Education of children. Our **National education policy 2010** has extended compulsory education upto grade eight with special emphasis on vocational education at the primary level. Education for girls has made completely free up to grade 12. Free education is supported by free books, free school meals and special stipends for girls. To cater to the special needs of children with disabilities, special schools have been set up. However, due to resource constraints, our coverage is yet universal.

We also believe that the rights of children will best be achieved through ensuring their access to healthcare services. In order to ensure a healthy and safe birth we are promoting delayed marriage to improve the nutritional status of adolescent girls and lowering incidences of child mortality. Our programs like Vitamin 'A' supplementation and Oral rehydration therapy, polio vaccination, universal immunization programs have saved many child lives.

Mr. Chair:

I would remiss if I do not acknowledge the strong support that our government is receiving from the civil society and NGOs as well as development partners including UN agencies in our various child related programs. Such partnership has proved to be significant also in the implementation of special programs for the disadvantaged children including abandoned children, street children and children with disabilities.

Mr. Chair:

During the Special Session on Children in 2002, we identified four priority areas for ensuring the well-being of children. First two of these were focused on health and education. Good Health and quality education have proved to be effective enabler of development of children. Therefore, these two sectors require adequate investment. The modest national led efforts of developing countries specially LDCs, in the area of education and health of children, needs to be supported by development partners.

At the same time, while investing in these two areas, cultural and religious sensitivities of concerned countries needs be respected.

Secondly, sustained efforts towards poverty eradication are vital for ensuring rights of children.

Thirdly, family, as a natural and fundamental unit of society, bears the primary responsibility for the development of children. In the family environment, children's lives are molded, moral values are developed. Therefore, more family-centered policies need to be adopted.

To conclude, our aims to ensure better life for children can only be achieved through partnerships across the broadest possible spectrum, through concerted and consistent actions, through implementation of our commitments instead of advocacy. Only thus, can we move forward from hope to fruition.

I thank you Mr. Chair.