

Statement by  
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Your Excellency, Chair of this Commission Session, Hon'ble Heads of delegations, Madam Executive Secretary, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, A very good morning to you all.

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to speak on behalf of Bangladesh at the 71st Session of UNESCAP. I am delighted to see you as the Chair of our session and I wish to extend my heartiest felicitations to you. I am confident that under your wise guidance and able leadership, we will have a successful outcome at this Session.

2. I also convey our appreciation to the Royal Thai government for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for this meeting. I wish to congratulate Dr. Shamshad Akhtar for her dynamic leadership of UN ESCAP.

3. The Asia-Pacific region is now regarded as the vanguard of global economic and social development. The region now has achieved considerable success with the MDGs, particularly in reducing income poverty. The region still grapples with a number of issues that pose threats to its development. While some countries of the region face persistent and emerging threats including rising inequality, gender discrimination and violence, demographic shifts and unplanned urbanization, some others encounter the scourge of climate change and environmental mishaps such as pollution and water scarcity.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The idea of sustainable development is not new. The 1972 UN Conference on the Human Development (UNCHD), held in Stockholm focused global attention on this inter-dependency, noting that "...man's capability to transform his surroundings, if used wisely, can bring to all peoples the benefits of development... Wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to human beings and the human environment." In response, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was constituted by the UN Secretary General in 1983 under the chairmanship of Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Prime Minister of Norway. The Commission submitted its Report, *Our Common Future*, in 1987. It called for sustainable development defined as *'development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Inclusive growth is the cornerstone of sustainable development and "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and The Pacific 2015 -Making Growth More Inclusive For Sustainable Development" has rightly recognized its multi dimensionality. *"Taking a multidimensional approach, and tracking 15 indicators of inclusiveness, the Survey for 2015 assesses the extent to which the Asia-Pacific region's rapid economic growth over the past two decades has improved welfare for different groups. The region stands out for its accomplishments in achieving high growth and leading progress on the MDGs since the 1990s"*. The survey highlighted small and medium enterprises and the agricultural sector as high-priority areas, among others, given their high employment-intensity and potential for productivity gains and growth.

6. In this context, it is important to re-examine the future state of governance and practices that are crucial for integrating sustainable development into local, sub-national, national and regional planning and the scaling-up of implementation at all levels. In this context, the following recommendations may be considered: (i) strengthening multi-stakeholder processes and institutions; (ii) integrated planning for vertical and horizontal collaboration; (iii) scaling up of implementation using cross-cutting policies and programmes, particularly in achieving co-benefits for water, energy and food security; and (iv) institutions and practices for monitoring, reporting and accountability.

Mr. Chair,

7. The national proposal of Bangladesh for Post 2015 Development Agenda contains 11 goals, 58 targets and 241 measurable indicators. It is comforting to note that out of 11 goals proposed by Bangladesh, 9 goals are common with the General Assembly agreed set of sustainable development goals. The issues of the common goals are: Poverty, Gender equality, Food security & nutrition, Healthy lives, Quality education, Productive employment, Good governance, Environmental sustainability and Global partnership.

Mr. Chair,

8. Bangladesh has been maintaining an average annual growth rate of about 6 percent for more than a decade. The fact that this growth has been achieved despite occurrence of natural disasters, world food price crisis and global recession indicates the resilience of the economy supported by good economic management and favorable external factors. Sustained growth has contributed to faster reduction in poverty from 49 percent in 2000 to 24.0 percent now. Growth has also been associated with improvement in social indicators such as education, health and nutrition, housing and sanitation. However, the recent progress has been facing fundamental challenges including maintaining

macroeconomic stability, increasing energy supply, lifting investment rate, improving competitiveness of the economy and achieving sustainable development.

9. Bangladesh Government is aware of the grave challenges confronting the country. It has prepared the Perspective Plan of 2010-2021 and the 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan for FY2011-FY2015 which is considered as the vehicle for implementing the Perspective Plan. The Perspective Plan envisions that by 2021, the fight against poverty will have been won, the country will have crossed the middle income threshold, with the basic needs of the population ensured, and their basic rights respected. Furthermore, this progress will be ensured in an environment where every citizen has the opportunity to fully and positively contribute to the economy and society, and equitably share the benefits of progress. Bangladesh has been trying to promote an integrated approach, involving all the three pillars of sustainable development, as indicated above. Indeed, the ultimate goal is an inclusive society in which human dignity will be ensured for every citizen.

Mr. Chair,

10. Sustainable development is a constitutional obligation for Bangladesh. Bangladesh adopted National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). The NSDS has addressed mainstreaming sustainable development challenges across sectors and integrate economic, social and environmental objectives. It also includes mechanism for monitoring implementation progress and institutional mechanism for people's participation.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished participants,

11. Asia-Pacific LDCs need additional resources for financing sustainable development efforts, and that policy reforms must be put in place to increase their economic activity (GNI per capita) and to build their social infrastructure, especially by investing in basic services as well as by enhancing their resilience. In view of their current economic vulnerability limited link to developed markets ODA can continue to play a critical role in reducing financing gaps to help LDCs progress. Policy reforms inter alia could include the following:

- *raising tax-to-GDP ratios* by broadening tax bases and improving collection and administrative efficiency;
- *strengthening the banking sector*, including public sector institutions, as well as increasing focus on broadening and deepening capital markets and strengthening regulatory frameworks to encourage investor confidence and increase the scope of financial inclusion;

- *strengthening the legal and regulatory framework* to promote FDI inflows for greenfield projects, as well as to expand the use of remittances for productive activities;
- *advocating and positioning blended finance for graduation*, especially to promote PPPs, encouraging financial systems to finance infrastructure projects which can enhance productive capacity of LDCs;
- *emphasizing the need to create a pool of resources to address the growing concerns of climate change consequences*, and to facilitate the availability of adequate financial resources and technical expertise to develop appropriate and new technologies to address climate change shocks;
- *promoting the complimentary role of South-South and triangular development cooperation* to share knowledge more widely and increase the availability of funding for capacity building; and
- *strengthening the role of ODA flows* to enhance capacity to access other forms of financing, for instance to fund infrastructure, basic health services and education. ODA can also support the creation of a positive environment for investment and trade.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen.