



# BANGLADESH

*Please check against delivery*

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. M. Morshed Khan, MP  
Hon'ble Foreign Minister  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

at the General Debate of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly

New York, 25 September 2006

---

**PERMANENT MISSION OF BANGLADESH  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

227 East, 45th Street, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10017  
Tel: (212) 867-3434 • Fax: (212) 972-4038 • E-mail: [bangladesh@un.int](mailto:bangladesh@un.int)  
web site: [www.un.int/bangladesh](http://www.un.int/bangladesh)

Madame President,

Please accept my delegation's sincerest congratulations on your well-deserved election.

I would like to felicitate your predecessor Foreign Minister Jan Eliasson for his stewardship of the historic 60<sup>th</sup> UNGA.

A special tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his dedicated service to the Organization over the past decade.

It is also my pleasure to welcome Montenegro as the newest member of our organization.

Madame President,

The sixty-first session is meeting against the backdrop of dire human tragedies. The recent wanton Israeli aggression in Lebanon has shocked the world. Most disconcerting was the fact that the international community failed to respond promptly and effectively as colossal devastation wrecked Lebanon. In the end the Security Council redeemed itself through its action to put in place a ceasefire in Lebanon.

Let us hope that the Security Council will exercise its mandated responsibilities so that such atrocities and violations of human rights do not occur in the future under any pretext.

Alongside Lebanon, the dire situation in Palestine has been worsened by the continuous use of disproportionate force by Israel. We call upon the international community to make sincere efforts to put the peace process back on track.

Madame President,

The scourge of terrorism knows no boundaries. It is professed and carried out by a handful few and the victims are the vast majority of innocent men, women and children.

The efforts to combat terrorism and its protagonists globally and nationally may have seen some positive results. However, actions to combat terror by individual countries have created divisions among peoples and affected interfaith harmony. Many are being subjected to racial or religious profiling, thus fomenting suspicion, misunderstanding and even hatred. This is what the terrorists are looking for. We must ensure that they do not have their way.

Madame President,

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, has unequivocally declared that "Bangladesh abjures religious extremism and does not and will not support any kind of militancy."

The Prime Minister has reasserted her Government's vow to eliminate all militants and their networks. She has called for the passage of tough laws to punish the perpetrators whom she has dubbed repeatedly as "enemies of Islam, democracy, development, humanity, the people and the country".

In this connection, I must mention that a small group of extremists had carried out a countrywide bombing attack on August 17 last year. But the extremists underestimated the will of the Government and the people of Bangladesh. Instead of fear, there was anger. The Government mobilized all available resources to hunt down the leaders and the operatives without relent. I am proud to inform this august assembly that we have been able to bring all the leaders of the outlawed militant group to justice.

Bangladesh today is what it has always been: a moderate, tolerant, democratic society where equal rights of each and every citizen are preserved. Our determined action did not allow the opportunists and the perpetrators of terror to destroy the values of democracy and tolerance that we treasure most.

Madame President,

Turning now to the United Nations, for smaller states, the UN remains the premier world body addressing the challenges they face. Despite its shortcomings, the United Nations has been invaluable in times of crises, in the preservation of global peace and security and in promoting sustainable development.

Of late, we are seized with the issue of reform of the United Nations. Bangladesh holds that reform is a process and not an end in itself. We do not think that arbitrary deadlines to pressurize an outcome are helpful. It is our belief that for meaningful reform, an environment of mutual trust, confidence and respect for divergent positions is indispensable.

The new Human Rights Council, we hope, would not be a mere replication of the Commission on Human Rights. It must not indulge in politicization of its work. Bangladesh, as an elected member, is committed to advancing the work of the Council in a fair and balanced manner.

We also hope that the newly constituted Peace Building Commission would fill the existing institutional gap in the UN system to facilitate transition from peacekeeping to peace building. Bangladesh being one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations, will bring its experiences to the work of the Commission.

As the United Nations deals with individual post conflict situations, it must not lose sight of wider issues such as disarmament and proliferation of small arms as well as weapons of mass destruction. Bangladesh would like to see sustained efforts by the United Nations in these critical areas.

Madame President,

The outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, that had Development as its centerpiece, has hardly progressed beyond mere pledges. For the LDCs, the savings-investment gap and lack of capital remain the primary constraint for development. The Official Development Assistance to the LDCs in 2004, the most recent data available, amounted to US\$ 23.8 billion or US\$ 35.7 per person living in these countries. This is certainly not sufficient to complement income or boost investment. Faster growth in export, and consequent rise in income, can help the LDCs accumulate the resources needed for development. For this, we would need unhindered market access for all LDC exports. The Doha Development Round must resume to

ensure special and differential treatment for the LDCs. We would also need increased ODA, full debt cancellation, FDI and transfer of technology to enhance the "Global Partnership for Development."

Madame President,

We can also increase capital flows in LDCs by addressing one of the fundamental inequities in the global financial system. It is utterly inefficient and unfair that the LDCs cannot utilize their foreign exchange reserves - a staggering \$28 billion - to finance their development efforts and that these reserves yield very low interests. On the other hand, when we borrow against our own reserves, we pay a huge premium. The UN system must lead the international efforts to reform the global reserve system and make arrangements so that the LDCs can borrow at zero mark-up in interests.

The General Assembly has just concluded the Mid-term Comprehensive review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs. In this context, I would like to flag that unless duty free and quota free market access for all LDC products is ensured, the agreed development goals and targets will remain unattained. We call upon the developed countries to fulfill their pledges of support for the LDCs. We need to activate the Enhanced Integrated Framework to facilitate aid for trade. An effective monitoring capacity under the auspices of the UN can significantly facilitate the task.

Madame President,

Let me now turn to two issues that particularly concern us. I begin with migration. Liberalizing movement of labor can generate significant benefits and a "win-win" result for both sending and receiving countries as well as the migrants themselves. Numerous studies have found that a modest commitment under GATS mode IV would offer substantial welfare gains for both developing and developed countries. It may even exceed the gain of complete market liberalization in merchandise trade.

Next is the threat of natural disasters which often undermines our development efforts. The Asian Tsunami was a serious wake-up call for all of us. In these times of increasing global interdependence, disaster risk management is a matter of global concern as impact in one region adversely affects others. Bangladesh has made considerable advancement in the field of comprehensive disaster management. We stand ready to share our own experience, which has been internationally recognized as the best practice model. The UN must gear its efforts to introduce weather insurance and weather derivatives to manage the risks of natural disasters.

Madame President,

Within weeks of her assumption of power five years ago with a massive mandate from the people, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia launched her reform program to restore discipline in the economy. Due to our relentless efforts we could accelerate the growth momentum remarkably, without destabilizing macro-economic fundamentals.

After maintaining a growth rate of nearly 6 percent for the last five years, we expect a growth rate of 6.7 percent this fiscal year. Given the natural disasters, political unrest and many external shocks like global economic recession, phasing out of MFA and oil price hike that affect our economies, this is a remarkable achievement.

Keeping our commitment to the Millennium Declaration, we have already achieved two MDGs by ensuring access to safe drinking water and removing gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Enrollment in primary education for 97 percent of our children has been ensured.

Apart from these, Bangladesh has achieved remarkable success in reduction of child and maternal mortality and malnutrition and in improving food security. We have begun channeling of resources to targeted programmes in the light of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Our development efforts, however sincere, will not reach the goals if they are not complemented by international support.

Madame President,

Bangladesh has been pursuing meaningful regional cooperation to improve the socio-economic conditions of South and South-east Asia. As the current Chair of SAARC and as members of BIMSTEC, ACD and the D-8, Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to work with other countries of the region. Our recent partnership in the ARF bears testimony to this commitment.

Madame President,

The present Government will complete its tenure towards the end of next month and will hand over power to a neutral caretaker government in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

We have had peaceful transfers of power over the past three elections under neutral caretaker governments where the voters exercised their franchise freely and without fear or intimidation. The system has worked and has been accepted by the people. Democracy has taken firm root in our country and the next general election will be one more opportunity for the people to vindicate that they are the ultimate source of power.

I thank you.