



BANGLADESH

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Statement by

His Excellency
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THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON
FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

New York, 14 September 2005.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates

Five years before the world leaders had made the unprecedented promise of the MDGs. This time we again meet not to make new targets, but to assess how far we achieved the MDGs and to intensify further steps to achieve them.

Mr. President ,

It has been three years since Monterrey. The world has been changing rapidly. Particularly on the volatility of food and commodity prices including petroleum seriously denting the financing capacity of many poor countries though wealth and resources are ever expanding but they are unequally spread resulting in huge gap between the rich and the poor. Today International Financial and trade architecture is such that it adversely affects the poorer countries. The UN Report has very rightly highlighted that the threat to peace and security come not just from war, but also from poverty, deadly infectious diseases and environmental degradation. Peace and Poverty are never friends. Hence there can be no sustainable development without peace and security.

It is in this backdrop that we the world leaders are meeting here again in the UN HQ to find best strategy to enhance domestic capacity building to address issues like good governance, and most crucial of all, to mobilize adequate resources and ensure its fair and equitable allocation among the deserving countries so that the MDGs could be achieved within 2015.

Mr. President:

I believe money by itself will not do. Aid by itself is unlikely to achieve the desired degree of development. What is most important is the governance and the manner in which it is used. For funds, whether from internal or external source, must be used effectively in a transparent manner for a pro-poor growth instead of for a section of people. Large sum of money without good governance, prudent expenditure management and transparency and accountability is unlikely to produce the desired result.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh believes that development must be home driven and domestically owned. In line with Paris Declaration, we believe that aid must be predictable and time – bound and the donors are to align with the country procedures. For aid effectiveness, harmonization is a must among the development partners on the one hand and between the recipient country and the development partners on the other. We must also ensure mutual accountability and strengthen our public financial management capacity. I feel constrained to note here that even ounces of failure on minor issues holds up release of funds for major projects and programmes, despite tons of reasoning to go ahead with the project – Mr. President. Social and political issues should not overwhelm the compelling economic rationale.

Mr. President,

As we all know, people are at the centre of all development process. From our experience , we have seen that development can only be achieved against a backdrop of pluralism , democracy, good governance, rule of law and gender sensitivity. Greater domestic resource mobilization, action against fiscal indiscipline, sound policies to encourage private sector participation, dynamic administration, fiscal and monetary reforms, increased domestic capacity through building up sound oversight institutions, better expenditure management may work as effective tools to achieve the MDGs.

Mr. President,

I am very happy to inform that we in Bangladesh made significant progress in various areas, I have just mentioned. We have undertaken series of reforms in both public , financial and monetary sectors. We have liberalized our economies and adopted free market policies. Our achievement in the social sector like health and education is the best in South Asia. Our success in the primary education sector is perhaps be most remarkable. Given the paucity of resources, the gross enrolment rate in primary education in 2004 was 97%. Bangladesh has virtually achieved gender parity in primary school level and access to safe drinking water as envisaged in the MDGs.

Mr. President,

The Bangladesh MDG Progress Report 2005 published jointly by our Government and UNDP, recognizes that we made impressive progress in the key human development indicators, which was also reflected in the 2004 UNDP Human Development Report. Bangladesh ranked 138 among 177 countries, graduating from a long term low scale to a medium scale human development.

Mr. President,

We have been able to achieve these progress because of sustained macro-economic stability, low rate of population growth, women's empowerment, sound internal revenue generation and expenditure management, effective disaster management capacity, promoting NGOs, spectacular food growth, a vibrant , pluralist, democratic civil society marked by cultural activism , development debates and an active and free press. That we have been able to cater for a people of 140 million living in a small land mass of only 147,000 square kilometer, this in itself is an indicator of the resilience, vigour and entrepreneurship of our people against the unpredictable nature . Dear Mr. President, despite all these progress we have still a long way to go.

Mr. President,

To address the critical challenges of the poor, immediate and substantial scaling up of aid is the dire need of the time. We also must enhance our capacity and mobilize more and more domestic resources. A true partnership including all stakeholders will be the key to this endeavour that can bring about a real change. We urge that a system be put in place that would reward genuine reforms and good performers. Let our future commitment be result based and performance oriented. We must give more attention to the good performers so that they may soon graduate from the clutch of poverty. This is all what I would like to say on behalf of Bangladesh.

I thank you Mr. President.