Country Statement by Hon’ble Planning Minister
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Madam Executive Secretary

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, My Dear Friends

Bangladesh’s Vision 2021 to turn the country into a digitized, middle income economy coincides with the celebration of 50th anniversary of its independence and the birth centenary of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It would also be an important year when Bangladesh is going to be qualified for consecutive second time by the UN-CDP for its graduation from the LDC status. These all historic events are happening at a time when Bangladesh spearheading towards magic figure of double digit growth crossing 8% in the fiscal year 2019.

Madam Chair,

Under the visionary leadership of our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we have been achieving a robust and consistent high GDP growth over the last decade. The growth rate has increased from 6.5 percent in 2014 to 8.13 percent last year. Bangladesh’s per capita GNI has increased by more than 250 percent between 2006 and 2018.

The poverty has come down from 40 percent in 2006 to 21.4 percent in 2018 which manifests our adopted inclusive and equitable development policy.

In today’s world, the importance of ensuring people’s empowerment, social inclusiveness and equality can hardly be over-emphasized.

Our Government has prepared the ‘National Social Protection Strategy’ to protect vulnerable and disadvantaged and promote
inclusiveness and equality in the society. More than 7.6 million people are covered nationwide under 130 social safety net programs. Total expenditure on social safety net programs comprise 13.81 percent of the national budget and 2.53 percent of GDP during the ongoing fiscal- one of the highest among the peer countries.

Madam Chair,

Over the last decade, the country has gained commendable success in achieving gender parity in education. The female enrollment rate at the primary schools is now 99.4 percent. About 2.7 million girls are receiving stipend at the secondary and higher secondary level throughout the country. Back in 2009, the government introduced gender budget, which is unique and exemplary to the whole world.

Increasing access to mobile financial services and the agent banking scheme for the unbanked and marginal rural people significantly contributed to the financial inclusion and empowerment. To ensure adequate access to financing for the micro, small and medium enterprises, our central bank has provisioned that banks must set aside 20 percent of the loans for SMEs which has to be raised to 25 percent by 2021.

Education is the most crucial instrument for empowering the people and creating an inclusive knowledge-based society. Keeping that in mind, education sector has received the highest national priority and the largest allocation in the budget. The literacy rate in the country has increased to 73 percent— rising from 46 percent in 2007.
With a view to bring quality healthcare services to the rural doorstep, the country has set up more than 14,000 community clinics across the country. The average life expectancy in the country has increased to 72 years while the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate has dropped significantly.

Excellencies,

As you are aware, the recent influx of more than one million Rohingyas from Myanmar is indeed a considerable stress on our development efforts. I call upon the international community to come forward in support of these forcibly displaced people and to devise a permanent solution to this problem.

Madam Chair,

We are a nation of 160 million people with a common dream of transforming the country into a developed nation by 2041 as dreamt by our Father of the Nation. However, it is unfortunate that Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change—although our contribution to the global carbon emission is almost zero. Climate change induced disasters are causing millions of lives and creating extreme poverty in the country—posing great threat to the peoples’ empowerment and equitable society. It is also leading to massive migration of our rural people to urban area—challenging the sustainable urbanization and creating “Climate Refugee” within the country.

Therefore, I would appeal to the whole international community through ESCAP for collective action without any delay to save the people and the planet. Otherwise, all our development effort would be meaningless.

Thank you all.