

**Strategies for strengthening regional cooperation on social
protection in Asia and the Pacific**

**Seventh Session
Committee On Social Development**

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Honourable Chair of the Session

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning /Afternoon

I express my sincere gratitude and thanks to the Economic and Social Council for Asia and Pacific for hosting this prestigious event .

Excellencies

2. For your kind information that the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has expressed especially in the clauses of 15, 17, 19, 20 and 29 ensured its commitment in ensuring equal rights of all citizens, upholding their dignity as human beings, protecting basic human rights and establishing the social equality. We have adopted various programs for social protection, human resource development, poverty alleviation, welfare, development and empowerment of the bypassed and disadvantaged segments of the people of Bangladesh. All the Programs are related towards achieving the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Delta Plan 2100, Vision 2041 and Eighth Five Year Plan of Bangladesh to build a peaceful society with the approach of comprehensive development keeping with the commitment.

3. We have some legal instruments for ensuring **Social Security**:

- The Rights and Protections of Children Act- 2013
- The Rights and Protections of PWDs Act- 2013
- Neuro Developmental Disability Protection Trust Act-2013
- The Pensions Act, 1871
- The Provident Funds Act, 1925
- Bangladesh Labor Act, 2006
- Insurance Act, 2010
- Disaster Management Act, 2012
- Parental Maintenance Act, 2013
- Vagrant and shelter less (rehabilitation) act, 2011
- National Elderly Policy-2013
- National Social Security Strategy(NSSS)-2015

4. The Government has short, medium and long term Development Plan including Social Protection programs:

- Vision 2021/2041
- Perspective Plan 2010-2021
- 8th Five Year Plan 2021-2025
- Sustainable Development Goals 2030
- Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP) 2100

Distinguished Participants

5. Bangladesh has recognised and acted on the importance of social security as a core strategy to address the problems of poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation. A strong foundation has been laid through financial commitment and a huge portfolio of safety nets is in place. The Government of Bangladesh formulated a comprehensive strategy for its social security engagement to coordinate and consolidate the existing safety net programmes for better efficiency and results. The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) has been developed under the leadership of the Cabinet Division and General Economics Division (GED), and an action plan of the NSSS for implementing Ministries was launched in 2018.

Following actions have been taken considering NSSS:

- Five years Action Plans with programme and Institutional reforms have been prepared.
- MIS for SSPs has been established by different Ministries;
- National House Hold Database is about to complete by BBS
- Government to Person (G2P) Payment for Social Safety net beneficiaries is started;
- Government provides the services to the beneficiary's doorsteps,
- GRS has been included in MIS.
- Beneficiary coverage has been increased;
- Rate of benefit per month has been increased.

Honourable. Chair,

6. Bangladesh has made remarkable strides over the last decade by implementing a lot of **Social Security Programs** like

- a) Old Age Allowance;
- b) Allowance for the Widow and Husband Destitute Women;
- c) Allowance Program for Persons with Disabilities;
- d) Education Stipend for Students with Disabilities;
- e) Honourium for Freedom Fighters (MoLWA);
- f) Mother and child benefit (MoWCA);
- g) Employment Generation Programme for the poorest (EGPP) (MoDMR);
- h) Pension for Retired Government Employees and their families (MoF);
- i) Primary School Stipend (MoPME);
- j) School Feeding Programmes(MoPME);
- k) Secondary Education Stipend (SHED);
- l) Stipends for students of technical education institutions (TMED);
- m) Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) (MoWCA);
- n) Development of the Living Standards of the Hijra Community, Gypsy Community and Backward Community;

- o) Livelihood Improvement Program for Tea Workers;
- p) Financial Support Programs for Patients with Cancer, Kidney and Liver; Cirrhosis, Stroke Paralysis, Congenital Heart Disease and Thalassemia;
- q) Cochlear Implant Program;
- r) Rehabilitation and Alternative Employment for People involved with Begging.

7. Now I would like to share how we are implementing these programmes.

- For every programme has Implementation Manual.
- Different tier committees are formed including elected public representatives for Policy formulation, Budget allocation and beneficiary selection;
- Committees are-
 - Cabinet committee, headed by the Honorable Finance Minister.
 - National Steering Committee headed by the Honorable Secretary,
 - District Steering Committee headed by Deputy Commissioner (DC),
 - **In the field level**, there are some committees for selection of beneficiaries headed by public representative of local government unit who are elected by the people such as Union Parishad chairman, Upazila Parishad chairman and Mayor of Municipalities.
 - **Receive Application through online base software and manage it electronically.**

Ladies and Gentlemen

8. The GoB is implementing several types of disability oriented following programs to ensure employment, rehabilitation and re-integration to society for the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) by the Ministry of Social Welfare like Disability Detection Survey;

- a) Allowance Program for PwDs;
- b) Educational Stipend for Students with Disabilities ;
- c) Therapeutic Services;
 - (1) Therapeutic services through 103 Integrated Disability Service Centers (IDSCs);
 - (2) Therapeutic services through 32 Mobile Therapy Vans;
- e) Providing Assistive Devices to the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs);
- f) Providing one-time medical grant to the Persons with Neuro-Developmental Disabilities (PwNDDs);
- g) Employment for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) through training & job fair;
- h) Employment through training by Physically Disabled Protection Trust, Maitri Shilpo.

Distinguished participants,

9. The Government has established some Institution based Child Protection Programs for PwDS like-

- 1) Integrated Education Program for the Visually Impaired (Blind children);
- 2) Schools for the Visually Impaired;
- 3) School for the Speech and Hearing Impaired;
- 4) Schools for intellectually disabled children;
- 5) Schools for the children with autism;
- 6) Institution for the Mentally Retarded Children.
- 7) Physical Handicapped Training Center, Institute of the Mentally Retarded Children;
- 8) Employment & Rehabilitation s for Persons with Physical Disabilities (ERCPH);
- 9) National Training & Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired (NTRCV);
- 10) Rural Rehabilitation for the Persons with Disabilities (RRC);
- 11) Braille Press;
- 12) Artificial Limbs Production ;
- l) Cochlear Implant program.

10. The Government has established some **Institution based Child Protection Programs** like Sarkari Shishu Paribar (Child Family), Baby Home, Day Care Centers, Government Shelter Home, Safe Home, Child Development Centers, Training and Rehabilitation Centers for the Destitute Children, Pre-vocational Training, **Juvenile Development Center**. The Government also provides the Capitation Grant for orphan living in Non-Government Orphanages.

11. We are providing medical aid to poor patients through government and non-government 105 hospitals/medical college and 420 upazilla health complexes in totally 525 units. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Hospital Social Services have been distributed nutritious food, masks and hand sanitizers along with regular medical aid to the needy patients specially focused on disabled persons. At the same time free therapeutic & counseling service is provided to the disabled people in 64 districts and 39 upazillas with remote areas of the country through Protibondhi Sheba O Sahajjo Kendro and Mobile Therapy Vans. We also provide one-time medical grant for PwNDDS, financial support for Patients with Cancer, Kidney and Liver Cirrhosis, Stroke Paralysis, Congenital Heart Disease and Thalassemia, Assistive Devices to the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and Cochlear Implant.
12. The Government of Bangladesh is committed to achieve the SDGs by 2030 where quality education for all is one of the influential goals. Moreover, the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, 1990 and National Education Policy, 2010 pledge that no child will be deprived of educational opportunities and no child will be subjected to disparities in access to primary education arising from gender, age, earnings, cast,

cultural or ethnic distinction and geographic isolation. Government is providing free education at the primary level. Some of the following activities are mentioned here :

- A total of 13 Million students of primary schools are receiving monthly stipend. Stipend money is being sent to mothers of these students through mobile money transfer.
- Distribution near about 100 million free text books to all students at the pre-primary and primary level on the first day of the year.
- School feeding program through providing high energy biscuit to 3 million students of pre-primary and primary level in poverty stricken areas has been implemented. Despite resource constraint, within next five years it will be covered school feeding program in all government primary schools covering 14.1 million boys and girls.
- Construction of 13,010 WASH Blocks with the provision of separated toilet facilities with running water supply for boys and girls in primary schools through Primary Education Development Program.
- Provide online lessons using radio, TV and online platform of Primary Education Directorate during deadly pandemic, COVID-19 where schools had been closed for almost 2 years.

13. Some Institution based Child Education Programs for students with disabilities like

a) Integrated Education Programs for the Visually Impaired, schools for different type of disable students like Visually Impaired, Speech & Hearing Impaired, Children with Autism, institutions, special education center and training center are running for the inclusion of the disable persons in the society. Moreover we have the arrangement for Education Stipend for the Students with Disabilities and Training program for teachers of special schools and parents of NDD persons in the country under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

14. Existing payment System:

Now I will share our existing payment system. In the FY 2020-21, Ministry of finance, on favour of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, issued a circular, all types of cash assistance will be paid through Government to Person (G2P) Payment system (electronically). According to the said government circular, beneficiaries are receiving their money through Mobile Financial Service (MFS) and Agent Banking (Using Biometric) quarterly. In this case, beneficiary can receive their money from Agent point in their door-steps and they can reduce their time, cost and visit. It is the great achievement of present Government.

Ladies and gentlemen,

15. We have implemented several types of disability oriented following programs like financial assistance, food assistance, healthcare materials etc through different ministries to ensure employment, rehabilitation and reintegration to society for the persons with disabilities during Covid-19 period.

16. While implementing Safety net programs, several challenges have been raised. These are-

- Establish a Single Registry MIS.
- Prepare a complete Database for Targeted People.
- Awareness about G2P through modern Payment System
- Budget allocation considering NSSS;
- Strengthen the infrastructures of related departments;
- Appointing the Skilled Personnel;
- Skill development of existing personnel;
- Co-ordination among concern Ministries/Divisions;

Steps should be taken to resolve the challenges:

- a) Expansion of Social safety net coverage gradually each year,**
- b) Upgradation of training module.**
- c) Create employment opportunities.**
- d) Raising awareness**
- e) Social awareness program**
- f) Validation of beneficiary data, payment process and post payment reconciliation of different allowance Programs.**
- g) Find out data gap, leakage and rectify the inclusive, exclusive error.**

Despite COVID 19 pandemic, Bangladesh has sustained its economic development and has become a role model in Disaster Management and Disaster Risk Reduction which is well recognized globally. It has adopted short-term, medium-term and long-term action plans and supervised, evaluated work plans so that the poorest and the most vulnerable section of the country can be integrated into its national development efforts keeping the vision 'leaving no one behind'.

Thank you all.