

Final
78th Session of the UNESCAP

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Speech by
HE Sheikh Hasina
Hon'ble Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Her Excellency Executive Secretary, UN-ESCAP,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalmu Alaikum and Good Morning.

I am happy to join the 78th Annual Session of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The theme of the session, “A common agenda to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”, is rightly chosen to strengthen regional cooperation, partnership and solidarity for a sustainable world. The event marks the culmination of the commemorations of the 75th anniversary of ESCAP. I wish every success of the Commission.

Excellencies,

When the world is struggling to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict came as a huge blow to the global economic and social stability. The poor and developing countries are experiencing the brunt of the war. The war must be stopped immediately and joint actions are needed to tackle the situation.

Bangladesh has been recommended to graduate from the LDC status in 2026. It is the global recognition of our planned development journey that we have been following for the last thirteen years. Our government has been working with the aim to transform Bangladesh into a knowledge-based developed and prosperous country by 2041.

People are at the centre of our development pursuit. So is the SDGs. We have incorporated the framework provided in the SDGs to address the challenges of social inclusion, economic development, environmental protection and integration of ICT as enablers in all of our planned documents.

Our government has been working diligently to build a hunger and poverty-free Bangladesh which is the main theme of SDG-1 and SDG-2.

Dear President,

COVID-19 pandemic battered the health systems and economies of most of the countries across the world. The poor and developing countries were the worst sufferers. In Bangladesh, while tackling the pandemic, we have tried to strike a balance between lives and livelihoods. Our timely and prudent interventions greatly helped manage the macroeconomic stability. While many countries in South Asia experienced negative or nominal GDP growth, we maintained a commendable growth during the pandemic. We are expecting over 7 % GDP growth in 2021-22.

We have already brought almost all targeted population under vaccination.

Distinguished delegates,

As the Chair of Climate Vulnerable Forum-CVF, Bangladesh has drafted the ‘Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan,’ with a vision of achieving energy independence, and setting Bangladesh's trajectory from vulnerability to resilience to prosperity.

We see regional cooperation as the most viable option for shared prosperity. Bangladesh is engaged in different regional initiatives like SAARC, BIMSTEC, BBIN, BCIM-EC and Trilateral Highway. The establishment of the ‘South-South Network for Public Service Innovation’ helps Bangladesh’s experts to share their knowledge and experiences on various issues, including the SDGs.

Bangladesh is actively engaged in the Cross-border Paperless Trade, Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, public-private partnership networking, renewable energy and other initiatives of UN-ESCAP.

We gave support to ESCAP's initiatives for the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway and other approaches.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh has been hosting 1.1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. This humanitarian crisis poses a serious security threat. We expect enhanced focus and active support of the international community for safe, sustainable and dignified return of these displaced people.

In conclusion, I would like to propose the following steps that ESCAP may take into account:

- Take action-oriented steps to facilitate collaboration in pursuit of knowledge and innovation;
- Request for International Support Measures to the graduating countries in a more pragmatic way;
- Assist member states to get united to pursue sufficient allocation of funds and technology for climate change victim countries.
- Enhance regional financial cooperation to improve regional crisis management capacity; and
- Leveraging ICT for employment generation and growth of IT, and IT enabled services to cope with the 4th IR.

I thank you all again.