

Bangladesh

Global Partnership and
Peacebuilding

2020



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Introduction

Bangladesh upholds peace and cooperation in its external relations with the international community and in maintaining harmony at home. The country pursues a moderate and cooperative foreign policy which prioritizes multilateral commitment, especially at platforms like United Nations. Since independence in 1971, the country has adopted a principle of “friendship to all, malice to none” in its interaction with the world. Inspired by its first President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s vision, the government of Bangladesh works to translate the ideal into a policy that would boost economic cooperation and transnational solidarity for post-colonial developing countries.

Bangladesh ranks among the top contributors of troops to UN Peacekeeping missions. It has been practicing a “zero tolerance” policy against terrorism, extremism and gender-based violence - which has been coined by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Bangladesh’s outlook towards a peaceful society means addressing various forms of violence and intolerance with the aims to uproot them. By implementing a “leave no one behind” development strategies, Bangladesh government along with its development partners have set an example for the developing countries to replicate the model. The model surely inculcates the inclusion of over 1 million Rohingyas who have taken shelter in Bangladesh after being forcibly displaced from Myanmar. Achieving food security and staying focused in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals have also been part of the strategy. Peace at home is a necessary ingredient which has led to the rapid growth of Bangladesh’s economy, especially during COVID-19 era.

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LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL ISSUES

Bangladesh leads Climate-vulnerable nations

In recent years, Bangladesh has emerged as the leading voice in advocating for actions against climate change. The country is leading the charge to hold the developed world accountable for their high-consumption leading to climate change harms. Bangladesh has been a prominent voice on the negotiation tables to see-through the delivery of adequate compensation. Bangladesh made a name for itself as a global leader particularly in innovative adaptation strategies to deal with climate change. It is seen as a global model in safeguarding people from disasters induced by climate change. In 2009, Bangladesh became the first country in the world to formulate an action plan oriented national adaptation program.

In 2020, Bangladesh took over the reins of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) for the next two years. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina became the chair of CVF. She chaired the CVF leader's virtual event in 2020 hosted by Bangladesh along with Global Center on Adaptation (GCA). One of the new initiatives under her leadership is that each CVF member country would develop a Climate Prosperity Plan (CPP) on top of their respective National Adaptation Plan (NAP). The aim of CPP is to go beyond coping with the adverse impacts, rather transform the socio-economic systems, so that each country is able to prosper while they build resilience to climate change impacts.



It needs a greater collaboration from the international community for a unified, stronger and green mechanism to tackle the negative impacts of climate change and uphold sustainability.

Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister, Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

*In her keynote speech in the event
"Resilience and Recovery: Highlighting
Solutions for the G20 on Climate and
Sustainability"*

As part of the broader partnership in climate adaptation, Bangladesh launched the South Asian regional office for Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) in Dhaka on September 2020. Together with the regional countries, the GCA Bangladesh office will promote indigenous nature-based sustainable solutions and innovative adaptation measures. It will facilitate strategies to accelerate adaptation and address climate change vulnerabilities across South Asia. It will also integrate international expertise to support Bangladesh to prosper amidst changing climate.



I hope we can take new steps to prepare the world better for the effects of climate change... And I know that we will be able to count on Bangladesh's leadership, cooperation and commitment, even in this time of crisis.

Mark Rutte

Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Safe migration and protection of migrants' rights

Bangladesh is persistent in advocating for good governance of international migration and protection of migrant rights. Migration has been an integral part of its development aspiration. The role of remittance, which is around \$15 billion in recent years, is immense in raising national income level. PM Sheikh Hasina's government has initiated a number of steps to ensure safe and orderly migration. Her government formulated the national strategy on migration governance to address migration in all its forms. In light, the country stands out

as exception to the world owing to its robust role in managing over 1 million Rohingyas who fled their homeland in Myanmar to evade persecution.

In 2019, the UN appointed Bangladesh and Spain as co-facilitators to the intergovernmental negotiations to determine the modalities and organizational aspects of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF).

Bangladesh remains an active participant and has played its role in the implementation of UN Global Compact for Migration (GCM). Bangladesh actually played the pioneering role in mooted the idea of a global compact for migration. PM Sheikh Hasina articulated the idea of a global compact for safe and orderly migration in her address to the United Nation General Assembly in 2016. Her proposal was adopted by intergovernmental conference of UN in Marrakesh, Morocco, on December 10, 2018. Bangladesh was among the first few countries to adopt policies and strategies to implement the compact.





Working with the UN

Under the prudent leadership of PM Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh not only recorded strong performance in growth and human development but also pushed for the development agenda of the other developing nations. The country has a strong legacy of working together with UN entities and executive boards for socio-economic emancipation of people living in developing countries. Bangladesh is renowned for sharing its best development practices with the rest of the world.

Bangladesh has been a member of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations from January 2020. Through the membership of ECOSOC, it will mobilize implementing the Agenda 2030 through various forums, commissions, committee, executive boards and regional forums such as UNESCAP under ECOSOC. Bangladesh is also a current member at the executive board of UNICEF. Bangladesh has been elected as a member of

the executive board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) for the term 2021-2023 beginning from January 2021.

Currently, Bangladesh is a member at the executive board of UN Women. Previously, Bangladesh served as Vice-President for the UN-Women Executive Board. Electing Bangladesh in this important UN entity is the recognition of its leadership and progress in ensuring social, economic and political empowerment of women. Through commitment to work towards the social, economic, and political empowerment of women and girls, Bangladesh continues to create more opportunities for women's participation in politics, business and government. Bangladesh is committed to addressing all forms of discrimination and violence against women and fostering a safer environment for women and girls to thrive as agents of change, in part through eliminating child marriage across the world by 2041.



PEACE AND SECURITY

Bangladesh remains committed to implement its "Culture of Peace" resolution through policy interventions in different areas. The areas are education, sustainable economic and social development, respect of human rights, equality, democratic participation, understanding tolerance and solidarity, free flow of information and knowledge and international peace and security.

In this backdrop, the United Nations has unanimously adopted Bangladesh's flagship resolution on the "Culture of Peace". The resolution was first adopted on September 13, 1999. The High-Level Forum held on September 10, 2020 focused on the theme 'The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19'.

Bangladesh is also committed to tackle any kind of terrorist threats with robust adoption of modern tools and techniques to prevent and counter violent extremism. Bangladesh has made commendable strides in promoting peace and sustaining security within its borders. It has managed to secure its position as the most successful South Asian nation in countering terrorism with its rock-solid fortitude in tackling terrorism. Over the past several years, Bangladesh government has initiated several initiatives aimed at maintaining inter-religious harmony, preventing violent extremism and ensuring inclusive development.

Bangladesh has been tackling terrorism with a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of terrorism. Multi-stakeholder cooperation and relentless efforts made by the government is at the core of the policy. With 90% decrease in terrorist events in the last three years, Bangladesh has demonstrated a tough stance against all forms of extremism.



According to Global Terrorism Index 2019 published by the Sydney-based Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), Bangladesh showed the most improvement by any country in South Asia with a 70% reduction in deaths from the prior year. Bangladesh ranked 31 in 2019 while it was 25 in 2018, 21 in 2017. Global Terrorism Index 2020 ranked Bangladesh 33 out of 163 countries in the world in 2020.

The law enforcement agencies are now more active and better equipped than ever with increased capacity, learning sharing atmosphere and international exchange. The forces regularly receive counterterrorism training on building unit capacity in crisis response, evidence collection, crime scene investigation, infrastructure protection and enhancing cyber and digital investigation capabilities.

National Emergency Helpline '999'

Bangladesh Police launched the National Emergency Helpline '999' in 2017. The emergency helpline is a toll-free number that allows citizens to call and ask for police assistance. The helpline provides a number of emergency services such as assistance for preventing any kinds of crime, accident, abduction, fire, and call for ambulance. The helpline provides emergency services to people all across Bangladesh.

National emergency helpline '999' has prevented 3,685 child marriages in 2020 and 2,542 in 2019 and 1,028 in 2018. A total of 7,304 child marriages were prevented through '999' helpline. The national emergency helpline received 204,985 calls between January 2020 and November 2020 of which 165,521 asked for police assistance. The '999' helpline received 25,644,382 calls till November 18, 2020. At least 467 people work for the emergency service.

Police Cyber Support for Women

Bangladesh Police launched an all-woman special cell named 'Police Cyber Support for Women' on November 16, 2020. The special cell's motto is 'safe cyberspace for women.'

Upon receiving complaints, the cell will provide necessary advice and legal assistance to the victims. Majority of the cases are filed by female victims. The cell is composed solely of women -- both for investigation and counselling. The idea is to make victims feel comfortable to share their problems. At least 1,936 victims received legal services so far.



To avail the support service

Dial National Emergency Helpline '999'

Dial Police Cyber Support for Women helpline '01320000888'



BANGLADESH AT UN PEACEKEEPING

Bangladesh is the largest troops contributor of United Nations peacekeeping missions. Bangladesh is top among 118 countries. Bangladesh first deployed troops to serve the UN peacekeeping operations in 1988. United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) was the first operation Bangladesh took part. Bangladesh has successfully participated in 54 missions out of the total 69 UN peacekeeping missions since 1948. Up to now, 163,887 peacekeepers from Bangladesh have participated in UN mission in 40 different countries. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are deployed in 9 peacekeeping missions in 8 countries out of 22 current UN peacekeeping missions. Currently, Bangladesh deployed a total of 6,730 troops to the UN peacekeeping missions. On July 2020, Bangladesh deployed a Quick Re-Action Force of 160 peacekeepers in the Central African Republic.

Bangladesh Police has also demonstrated its expertise and professionalism in the UN peace operations. As of November 2020, Bangladesh Police was the 4th largest Police Contributing Country (PCC) in the world with 651 police personnel deployed in UN peace operation. In November 2019, Bangladesh Police received the Best Police Unit Award for its contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping.

Bangladesh's position in terms of troops contribution to UN peacekeeping

Year	Position
2020	1
2019	3
2018	2
2017	2
2016	4
2015	1
2014	1
2013	2
2012	2
2011	1
2010	2

Source: Armed Forces Division, Bangladesh



Bangladesh has proven itself to be a committed actor in promoting peace and development both globally and nationally.

Mia Seppo

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh
October 2019

Women peacekeepers

Bangladesh Armed Forces have been deploying women as peacekeepers in frontlines of field missions. Up to now, total 413 female peacekeepers from Bangladesh Armed Forces participated in UN peace operation. Currently 86 women from Bangladesh Armed Forces are deployed in different peacekeeping missions. Bangladesh has achieved a UN set target of deploying 16% women staff officers in UN peacekeeping operation.

Bangladesh is also the top contributor of women police officers to the UN peacekeeping operations. Currently, 162 women police officers from Bangladesh Police are in different peacekeeping missions. Bangladeshi women play critical roles in war-ravaged countries, particularly in addressing sexual and gender-based violence, building mutual confidence, and inspiring women in those societies to contribute in nation-building efforts.

Promoting participation of women peacekeepers

Bangladesh has been leading the charge of issues related to women, peace and security. Bangladesh has pioneered women's participation in peacekeeping and is committed to increase women's participation in tackling security threats, including violent extremism. UN's effort to increase women's participation in peacekeeping missions is strongly supported by Bangladesh. To this end, Bangladesh have advocated for training, women-friendly space and conducive environment in all the missions.



National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2022)

The government of Bangladesh has launched its first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2022) in November 2019. The 4-year action plan recognizes women's important role in peacebuilding and preventing conflicts. Bangladesh is the 83rd UN member state to adopt a national action plan following the 10 resolutions on women, peace and security by the Security Council.

Targets of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-22)

- Expand women's roles in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, disaster management and preventing violent extremism
- Guarantee participation of women at all levels of administration and public representation, especially in decision making on peace and security
- Make disaster management and recovery systems more gender-responsive
- Enhance protection of women's human rights before, during, and after conflict and crisis

Bangladesh assumes presidency of Conference on Disarmament

Bangladesh has become the President of the Conference of Disarmament in the United Nations on August 14, 2020. As the President of the conference, it reiterated its commitment to complete disarmament to preserve global peace and security. Bangladesh also urged the member states to rejuvenate multilateral negotiations in pursuit of the disarmament goals.



A portrait of Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, wearing a blue and green sari and glasses, looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile. The background is blurred, showing other people in a public setting.

SHEIKH HASINA AT GLOBAL STAGE

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Sheikh Hasina, the longest-serving prime minister in the history of Bangladesh, is currently serving her fourth term in the office. She ranks 39th in Forbes magazine's list of the world's most influential women of 2020.

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Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's engagement in international issues and humanitarian causes has brought her acclaim and recognitions from various quarters across the globe. She has received a number of prestigious awards and titles as recognition of her outstanding contributions towards distressed humanity. With the decision to provide shelter to more than one million Rohingyas in Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina has truly emerged as a humanitarian.

Due to the efforts led by the Bangladesh premier, the country has been successful in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh set an example of successful recovery amid the global economic fallout. How Bangladesh dealt with the challenges was reflected in December 2020 Bloomberg rankings of countries in terms of their COVID-19 resilience. The country was ranked as one of the top 20 countries which fared well in tackling the challenges of the pandemic. PM Sheikh Hasina even floated a number of proposals at international stage underscoring the need of a collective approach to fight the pandemic.

Call for collective approach to fight COVID-19 at the World Economic Forum

PM Sheikh Hasina participated in the World Economic Forum's (WEF's) 'Enhancing regional cooperation in South Asia to combat COVID-19 related impact on its economies' virtual event on 23 April 2020. She underscored the need for an approach of collective responsibility and partnership to fight COVID-19 and its economic impacts. "The world will need new thinking on human well-being, tackling inequality, supporting poor and getting back our economies to pre-COVID levels," said the Prime Minister. She emphasized on the leadership role from G7, G20 and OECD and UN-led multilateral system in the process of recovery from the fallout.

For equitable access to vaccines at the 75th United Nations General Assembly

PM Sheikh Hasina in a speech to the UN General Assembly said, "the pandemic is a stark reminder that our fates are interconnected and that no one is secured until everyone is secured and therefore we need to ensure the timely availability of this vaccine to all countries at the same time." She reminded that the way the Second World War had prompted countries to join their hands to establish the United Nations, the ongoing pandemic has also warranted "collective action" in an identical manner. The situation reflected how the pandemic affected the global economy and health systems. Bangladesh achieved its record high 8.2% growth in the pre-pandemic fiscal year. She outlined a number of emergency stimulus and social protection measures initiated by her government. Despite the COVID-19 induced stagnation in global industrial outputs, Bangladesh registered a growth rate of 5.2%.

Leading the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF)

PM Sheikh Hasina, as the current chair of Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), presided over the "Midnight Survival Deadline for the Climate" panel. To save the developing countries from climate change impacts, she called for ensuring \$100 billion fund every year. She also placed a four-point proposal including "establishing climate justice."

Call to address climate refugee issue

PM Hasina addressed the virtual event "Resilience and Recovery: Highlighting Solutions for the G20 on Climate and Sustainability" as keynote speaker organized by F20 Foundations. Sheikh Hasina said G20 has a greater responsibility to come forward with stronger commitment to mobilize global support to address the issue of climate change induced displacement. She urged G20 countries to mainstream the issue of losses and damages as in severely affected parts of the world.

ILO Virtual Global Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work

Bangladeshi premier addressed the International Labour Organization Virtual Global Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work. It was the largest ever online gathering of workers, employers and governments to discuss the coronavirus crisis and ways to overcome it. During her address, she emphasized working together to create decent jobs for all across the world in order to rebuild economies in the post-pandemic recovery. She ended her address by urging global leaders, international financial institutions, the UN and the civil society to converge around the ILO's Centenary Declaration to build a better world. Leaders from over 80 nations, as well as UN Secretary General António Guterres and chiefs of other UN and international agencies also addressed the summit.



We, the CVF leaders and our partners, call everyone to take urgent and strong global actions to address climate emergency before the 2020 Nationally Determined Contributions Enhancement deadline.

Sheikh Hasina
*Chair of Climate Vulnerable Forum
In 2020*

PM Hasina made co-chair of global body on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

On November 20, 2020, PM Sheikh Hasina was made the co-chair of "One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance" launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the World Health Organization (WHO). The high-level global leaders group will advocate for urgent action to combat antimicrobial resistance across all sectors and ensure the availability of important medicines for the future.

Dhaka – OIC Youth Capital 2020

While inaugurating the two-day celebration of "Dhaka – OIC Youth Capital 2020" virtually, PM Sheikh Hasina called for engaging youths with decision-making, ideas and innovations to fight the COVID-19 pandemic to build a resilient and sustainable future for them. OIC Secretary General Yousef Bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen among others also spoke on the occasion.

Italy visit, February 2020

With PM Hasina's four-day visit to Italy, the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Italy found a new momentum. During her stay, she held talks with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte where both the leaders agreed to increase trade and business.

Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2020

In January 2020, PM Sheikh Hasina attended the opening ceremony of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2020 (ADSW) and Zayed Sustainability Prize Ceremony in Abu Dhabi. The agenda of the ADSW 2020 global platform was to accelerate the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It brings together a unique fusion of policymakers, industry specialists, technology pioneers and the next generation of sustainability leaders. At the function, PM Sheikh Hasina along with other heads of state and government handed over the prizes to the winners.

18th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

During her address at the 18th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), PM Sheikh Hasina has sought international support to resolve the prolonged Myanmar Rohingya refugee crisis and fight the adverse impacts of climate change. On the sidelines of the NAM Summit, she met with a number of NAM leaders including Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohammad.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a bilateral meeting with Italian counterpart Giuseppe Conte at Palazzo Chigi, Italy





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Sheikh Hasina Wajed

Prime minister, Bangladesh

In stark contrast to Aung San Suu Kyi, the “lady of Dhaka” has promised aid to Muslim refugees fleeing Myanmar, allotting acres of land in Bangladesh for the refugees. Bangladesh’s own state suffered during 1971’s Liberation War. Hasina is the bulk of the cost of the violence inflicted on her country. The UNHCR has issued ID cards and aid.

Bangladesh economy recovered more strongly than expected



ACCOLADES AND RECOGNITIONS

Forbes enlists HPM Sheikh Hasina as one of the successful woman leaders in fighting Coronavirus

“She was quick off her feet standing up to this one, with a response the World Economic Forum called “admirable.”

WHO praises Bangladesh's COVID-19 response

World Health Organization Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus lauded the various initiatives taken by the government of Bangladesh to control COVID-19.

Bloomberg COVID-19 Resilience ranking

Bangladesh is among the top 20 nations in terms of resilience to COVID-19, says Bloomberg COVID-19 Resilience ranking. Bangladesh fared highly in several key indicators identified by the Bloomberg.

Bangladesh economy shows sign of recovery from pandemic: ADB

Bangladesh economy has started recovering from the hurdles it faced during COVID-19 pandemic, according to Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020.

Bangladesh 9th strongest emerging economy during COVID-19: The Economist

The Economist, a globally acclaimed magazine for economic and political analyses, has put Bangladesh even before China and India, in a global league table of 66 emerging economies measured according to their financial strengths to cope under the strain of COVID-19 outbreak.

“Bangladesh has adequate stock of food grain and is expected to have surplus food stock in the post-pandemic situation.”

Rapid Assessment of Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of COVID-19 in Bangladesh by FAO

Bangladesh closed 72.6% of its overall gender gap.

Global Gender Gap Report 2020, published by the World Economic Forum

Bangladesh successfully lifted about 19 million people out of multidimensional poverty between 2014 and 2019.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by UN

Bangladesh tops in per capita GDP among South Asian countries: IMF

Bangladesh Improves 5 notches in Sustainable Trade Index 2020: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

Bangladesh has surpassed India and Pakistan in terms of sustainable trade on the back of better performance in economic and social areas. On the economic front, the country ranked at the top in the economic growth indicator and performed better in the export market concentration, gross fixed capital formation and growth in the labour force.

Bangladesh's score in all three criteria well above for graduation from LDC: UNCTAD

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that the country's scores in the three essential criteria needed for graduation from a least developed country league would be much higher from the threshold.

Bangladesh's Human Development Index (HDI) value increased by 60.4% between 1990 and 2019:

UNDP

Bangladesh's 2019 HDI was above the average for countries in the medium human development group. The country's life expectancy at birth rose by 14.4 years, mean years of schooling went up by 3.4 years, and expected years of schooling increased by 6 years in between 1990 and 2019. Its GNI per capita has also risen by about 220.1% during the time.





ACHIEVING GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Bangladesh was an active participant in formulating the 2030 Global Development Agenda (SDGs). Since the declaration of SDGs, the country has made notable progress in a number of indicators under the SDG framework. It has embraced the SDGs through inclusion of the 17 Global Goals into its National Development Plan. The SDGs have been included in the national plans - such as the 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP), the Delta Plan 2100 and the Perspective Plan 2041. Bangladesh also regularly publishes analysis and reports to track the progress made to achieve the goals on time. Bangladesh government also published two Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Progress report in 2019 and 2020 tracking the progress of the previous years. This provides glimpses of progress made in the 17 goals.

SDG 1: End Poverty

National poverty measured as the proportion of population living below the national upper poverty line has consistently declined reaching 24.3% in 2016. Recent estimates suggest it has further declined to 20.5% in 2019. Moreover, the population below extreme poverty line has also decreased to 10.5%. Bangladesh also made laudable progress in expanding coverage of social safety through some key services. The government has adopted policies and programs

to address multidimensional nature of poverty in the country including fostering inclusive and resilient growth. Bangladesh will continue to work to achieve SDG 1 through job creation, social protection, human capital development, improving private investment climate, mitigating various shocks and empowering marginalized communities.

SDG 2: End Hunger

Bangladesh has made laudable progress in dealing with malnutrition. The percentage of undernourished population in Bangladesh has gone down to 14.7% in 2017 from 16.4% in 2016. Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in reducing the percentage of stunted children under-5 years by almost half. The proportion of wasted children has gone down to 9.8% in 2019 from 14% in 2014. The proportion of underweight children under five years also reduced by half between 2007 and 2019. The government has adopted the national social security strategy (NSSS) in 2015 which has been made consistent with SDG 2 targets.

SDG 3: Healthy Lives and Well-being

Maternal mortality ratio has persistently dropped and the number of births attended by skilled health personnel has remarkably improved in Bangladesh. Furthermore, a continuous decrease has been observed in U5MR during 1995-2019 from 125 to 28. Bangladesh is on track to achieve the 2020 target for U5MR. Government is implementing the 4th Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Program (HPNSP 2018-2022). The 4th HPNSP is the first of the three successive programs that would be implemented by 2030 to achieve health, population and nutrition sector targets of Bangladesh and SDG 3.

SDG 4: Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education

Bangladesh lacks recent information on global indicator of achieving at least a minimum proficiency level at the end of primary education and lower secondary education. However, as per Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019, the minimum proficiency in reading native Bangla is achieved by 25.9% of the students, when it is tested on Grade 2 and 3 students. Math solving proficiency is achieved by only 13% students of grader 2 and 3. The government is taking several initiatives to increase physical access to schools, such as food/cash for education programs for girls at the primary level and stipend and tuition programs at the secondary level. The adult literacy rate has increased significantly from around 53.5% in 2005 to 73.9% in 2018.

SDG 5: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Bangladesh was ranked 50 out of 153 countries in 2019 in Global Gender Gap Index. Bangladesh ranked 7 in terms of women's political empowerment. It has stayed ahead of its South Asian neighbors for the 5th time in a row, indicating significantly better performance in promoting women empowerment. For attaining SDG 5, the government has adopted several legal and policy actions to advocate the rights of women.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

In 2019, the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services stood at 47.9% at the national level. Also, 98.5% of household members were using improved sources of drinking water and 84.6% household members were using improved sanitation facilities.

SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy

In the national grid, around 68.8% of energy production capacity is from natural gas and 19.1% are from liquid fuel. Only 1% comes from hydro and 0.2% comes from renewable sources. Bangladesh has a national target of increasing the share of renewable energy to 20% of total energy consumption within 2030. In 2020, Bangladesh has focused on renewable energy production. Around 98% people have access to electricity in Bangladesh.

SDG 8: Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth and Decent Work

With sustained high economic growth, Bangladesh has successfully fulfilled all three criteria for graduation from the UN's LDC status in 2018. Bangladesh's upward shift in the average annual growth rate of real GDP per capita to 6.91% in 2018-2019 from 5.1% in the baseline year 2014-2015 is noteworthy. Yet, there are significant uncertainties over the growth prospects due to the recent outbreak of Coronavirus

SDG 9: Resilient Infrastructure, Sustainable Industrialization and Innovation

The share of manufacturing value added in GDP has increased significantly in Bangladesh. The government is persistently providing policy support to the manufacturing sector. Government has been prioritizing the building of resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive sustainable industrialization and fostering

innovation in its overall policy framework. The Road Sector Master Plan (2010-2030) guides the investments in the road sector with the objectives of protecting the value of infrastructure assets, increasing connectivity, and improving road safety. The Railway Master Plan 2018 was formulated to revive the railway network of the country and have a long term integrated transport system.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Income inequality is higher than consumption inequality in Bangladesh. In the 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020), the target was to increase in the spending on education to 3% of GDP, on health to 1.2% of GDP, and on social protection to 2.3% of GDP. To facilitate and coordinate inequality reducing efforts, the government has aligned many of the development strategies of the 8th Five Year Plan with the SDGs. The first phase of SDGs implementation has already been carried out.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

The rapid urbanization in Bangladesh has led to the growth of slums and the share of urban population living in slums is noticeable. Government is working to develop urban strategic plans and work with slum-dwellers to improve conditions and provide basic services in slum areas. The Perspective Plan 2041 and Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 incorporate an urban policy aligned with environmental sustainability.

SDG 13: Climate Action

Bangladesh government has approved the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies of Bangladesh (2016-2020) in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Bangladesh has pledged to reduce its carbon emissions by 5% from the business-as-usual scenario voluntarily and has agreed to reduce additional 15% with support from the development partners. Moreover, the government has also updated its climate change strategy action plan (BCCSAP).

SDG 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Food wastage and food loss during consumption are major concerns. Data suggests, in Bangladesh food waste is around 5.5% in the rural areas and 3% during procurement and preparation stages, 1.4% during serving and 1.1% at the plates. Nearly 10% of the crops are lost during post-harvest operations. Bangladesh has been formulating various agricultural policies, including the Agricultural Good Practice Policy 2020, to make the food supply chain more efficient.



SDG 14: Life below Water

Bangladesh has successfully expanded its marine protected area with the introduction of four zones around the Swatch of No Grounds in the Bay of Bengal. Greater coordination of activities in the areas of fisheries, offshore energy, tourism, and shipping is under discussion in order to strengthen regulatory frameworks.

SDG 15: Life on Land

The total area of forest land is around 15% of the country's area excluding inland water area, which is targeted to increase to 20% by 2030. Increasing tree density is a major target in the Bangladesh's greening policies. The current estimates show that the proportion of terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, increased more than 3% in 2018.

SDG 16: Ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Bangladesh government-initiated measures, such as the formation of National Human Rights Commission and the issuance of Right to Information Act, suggest that Bangladesh is on track for SDG 16. The number of victims of

intentional homicide and human trafficking has reduced significantly in the country. The government has also implemented governance initiatives such as annual performance agreement (APA), citizen charter publication, and national integrity strategy (NIS).

SDG 17: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The majority of the indicators suggest that Bangladesh have achieved notable success and are on track in compared to other developing countries. Data on official development assistance (ODA) to Bangladesh indicate modest growth although its contribution to the national budget fell in recent years. However, the inflows of FDI and remittance has significantly increased between 2018 and 2020. However, international community will have to extend adequate and timely support to Bangladesh in trade and private sector development, identifying and removing barriers to investment.





THE ROHINGYA RESPONSE

Bangladesh currently hosts more than 1.1 million displaced Rohingyas who live in camps located in the south-eastern Cox's Bazar district. Since 2017, after three years into the exodus of Rohingya people fleeing genocide in Rakhine State of Myanmar, the country continues to bear the burden of one of the biggest refugee populations in the world. The government of Bangladesh and its people has shown great compassion by providing shelter to the displaced Rohingyas. The humanitarian undertaking is deemed as the biggest in the last one decade which has earned praise from the UN and international community.

It the endeavor of looking after over 1 million Rohingya people, a number of international organizations, especially the relevant UN agencies joined forces with the government of Bangladesh to provide services in the camps. However, the burden of a large refugee group for Bangladesh, a country moving up lower-middle income ladder, is too heavy to bear for a long time. Several attempts for repatriation have failed since Myanmar could not ensure progress in terms of citizenship, rights and security for their sustainable return to the Rakhine state.

Bangladesh government, UN agencies and humanitarian organizations, both national and international, have been on the ground to support with emergency aid including food and nutrition, drinking water, health care, security and other essential needs. Rohingya children

and youths are provided with education and other training for building their skills, so they can be mainstreamed on their repatriation to Myanmar.

Bangladesh's economy is burdened with an estimated \$1.21 billion a year for supporting the Rohingyas and the cost may go up with their population growth and decline in international support. So far, the country has managed the situation despite a fund crunch. The Joint Response Plan (JRP) for 2020 initially sought \$877 million for this year and later added \$181 million as part of the initiative to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus in the Rohingya camps. As of Oct 31, 2020, the JRP received \$574.9 million of the total fund. Fund collection got disrupted after the pandemic upended the global economy. Bangladesh is likely to face a severe economic pressure if the fund crunch for the Rohingya response continues.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, concerns grew that Rohingyas living in congested camps might be infected in large numbers. The National Task Force, which provides strategic guidance to the Rohingya humanitarian response, developed a plan for infection control in the camps. To manage COVID-19 in the camps, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) in coordination with UN organizations, and other stakeholders scaled up health response and facilities for both the Rohingyas and the host communities. The UN and international community have lauded the efforts to protect the Rohingyas amid COVID-19 outbreak.

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Bangladesh spent around \$280 million transforming Bhashan Char, an island that emerged from the sea two decades ago, into a planned housing project for a million refugees. The government has completed the project by fast-tracking construction of shelters (440 buildings) and evacuation centers. A newly-constructed three-meter embankment will keep out tidal surges in the event of a cyclone. The infrastructures in the island have been sufficiently elevated for flood protection. There are cyclone shelters, schools, hospitals, livelihood opportunities and playgrounds that are far better than those in the camps in Cox's Bazar. Recently, two batch of 1,642 and 1,772 Rohingyas Have been relocated to the island from the congested camps as of January 2021. Local NGOs have already engaged in humanitarian activities in the island, under the regulatory supervision of the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (RRRC).

Safe, dignified, and sustainable return of the Rohingyas to their places of origin in Myanmar is the comprehensive solution that Bangladesh seeks along with the Rohingya people themselves. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has consistently underscored the need for addressing the root causes of the forced displacement. She has urged the international community to intensify its efforts in resolving the protracted crises. In her address to the UN General Assembly 2020, she reiterated her call to the global community to play a more effective role in solving the protracted Rohingya crisis saying, "I request the international community to play a more effective role for a solution to the crisis." She suggested the solution of the crisis is in Myanmar as the crisis was created by Myanmar.

Three years into 2017 Rohingya exodus

864,200

Rohingya are hosted in Cox's Bazar district

78%

women and children

6,000

acres land allocate for shelter camps

34

shelter camps

12,200

metric tons Food every month

35

health/MHPSS facilities

21

nutrition facilities

56,400

latrines built

8,771

drinking wells set up

15,566

bathing points set up

315,000

children and adolescents study at over **3,200** learning centers

95,933

households receiving LPG support by UNHCR since January 2020

Conclusion

Eliminating poverty, responsibly engaging with the international community and building an inclusive society are among the top priorities of Bangladesh government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. All out effort has been provided by the government to uphold its aim of being a responsible member of the international community. To address the issue of accountability the formation and strengthening of the Human Rights Commission and Information Commission has been an exemplary initiative. The “zero tolerance policy” against drugs, militancy, terrorism and religious intolerance has been having noticeable impact in public life.

Bangladesh has rigorously promoted multilateralism, regional cooperation and economic relations at the international stage. It has become a leading voice in the global fight against climate change. Other issues such as international migration and women empowerment have also taken a bulk of Bangladesh's advocacy and development agenda. With membership in bodies such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the executive board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women, Bangladesh has been keeping its commitment of building partnership with different countries across the globe.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's engagement in international issues and humanitarian causes has brought her acclaim and recognitions from various quarters across the globe. Sheikh Hasina, the longest-serving prime minister in the history of Bangladesh, is currently serving her fourth term in the office. She ranks 39th in Forbes magazine's list of the world's most influential women of 2020.

Bangladesh as active contributor in formulating the 2030 Global Development Agenda (SDGs), has already made notable progress in a number of indicators under the SDG framework. The SDGs have been included in the national plans - such as the 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP), the Delta Plan 2100 and the Perspective Plan 2041. Poverty, hunger, access to energy and climate action are some of the notable indicators in which Bangladesh is already ahead of the race.

After three years into the exodus of Rohingya people fleeing genocide in Rakhine State of Myanmar, Bangladesh continues to bear the burden of one of the biggest refugee populations in the world. The government of Bangladesh and its people has shown great compassion by providing shelter to the displaced Rohingyas. The humanitarian undertaking is deemed as the biggest in the last one decade which has earned praise from the UN and international community. Bangladesh continues to believe that after creating a conducive environment in Myanmar for the safe return of the Rohingyas is the only solution to the crisis.



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H 2, R 11(New), 32(Old), Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka- 1209

Email: info@cri.org.bd

www.cri.org.bd

CRI Centre for Research
and Information

