



**Statement by Hon'ble State Minister for Ministry of Health and Family Welfare H.E. Mr. Zahid Maleque MP at the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of Commission for Population and Development at UNHQ on 3 April, 2017 at CR-4.**

**Thank you, Madam Chair,**

**Excellencies, Ladies and gentleman, Good Morning,**

It is an honor for me to represent Bangladesh at the 50<sup>th</sup> session of United Nations Commission on Population and Development. We thank Secretary General for his reports. The Special theme for this session, **changing population age structure and sustainable development** is very important for every country, as it emphasizes on demographic transition, harnessing the demographic dividend, calls for attention to special groups like migrants, ageing, adolescent and their consequences in the present and future of all countries on social, political and economic condition.

**Madam Chair,**

The world is undergoing a demographic transition due to economic upliftment, progress in education and better health care. Both fertility and mortality rates are declining in most of the countries. Most of the Asian countries are having growing youth population including Bangladesh.

In the intervening years, since adoption of ICPD, Bangladesh has made considerable progress in realizing the ICPD programme of actions. By putting peoples' empowerment at the heart of national development agenda, Bangladesh under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is marching forward and aspires to join the ranks of middle income countries by 2021 and industrialized country by 2041.

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. However, the indomitable will of our people and the various initiatives by the government help our country to achieving inclusive economic growth at a rate of over 6 percent for the past decade and more than 7% in the current year, resulted in impressive poverty reduction which is below 21% in the recent years.

**Madam Chair,**

The special theme of this session is extremely important for Bangladesh, as it has got a huge population of 160 million and is experiencing a positive population transition. 35% of our total population is child and youth -- 59% is working population and 8% is elderly. Our government is committed fully to harness our demographic dividend by taking various measures.

Our government has invested heavily in education for children and youth by allocating 17% of its national budget which is the highest allocation compared to all other sectors. The Government has ensured free education up to secondary level for all - providing free books to 44 million children. Special attention has been given to the education of girls. We achieved 100% enrollment in the primary education.

Bangladesh has given also special attention to primary health care through 18000 community clinic and union health center by providing free medicine and health counseling. All contagious diseases like: diarrhea, cholera, AIDS, TB, etc. are under control. As a result, maternal mortality rate has gone down from 542 to 170, child mortality from 132 to 43; life expectancy has increased to 70years plus in the recent years.

**Madam Chair,**

My government is committed to ensure social security and woman empowerment. Bangladesh has got achieved self-sufficiency in food. Special quota for women has been reserved in all government services as well as 60% quota in education sector. To protect girls from malnutrition and early marriage, government has taken many initiatives including prohibition of marriage before 18 years, keeping provision for penal action on violation.

Due to increase in social and economic development, Bangladesh is facing urbanization at a faster pace and at present 30% of the country is urbanized and within two decades it will be over 50%, for which our government is investing heavily in infrastructure and utility services.

In Bangladesh, ageing population is gradually becoming a matter of concern though it is still less compared to that in developed countries; however, our government is undertaking initiatives for the wellbeing of elderly population by creating pension scheme, housing and medical treatment facilities.

Bangladesh is already enjoying population dividend from its young and working force. About 10 million of our people work abroad - who are sending remittance of \$ 15 billion yearly - which is second in the world. Ready-made garments have employed nearly 4 million young girls and they are contributing \$40 billion export- which is 70% of total export of Bangladesh.

Migration has turned into one of the most active contributors in our population dynamics. Bangladesh acknowledges and attaches high importance to the contribution made by migrants and has been advocating for safe, regular and orderly migration at the international level.

[Bangladesh would like to further utilize its membership in the Inter-governmental alliance of 'Partners in Population and Development (PPD)' to promote South-South Cooperation for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.]

Finally, I want to reiterate that under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh is determined to achieve all the goals and targets of 2030 Development Agenda and offer a better life to our people, within 2030.

**Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu**

**Thank you**