



**Closing Statement by H.E. Mr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen,
Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations,
Vice-President, Economic and Social Council**

ECOSOC AMR Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific

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**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Please allow me some brief concluding remarks on our meeting today.

Although time has been scarce to address the complex issues before us, our discussions have been fruitful and illuminating. As we wrap up this high-level regional meeting, I would like to thank you once more for attending and active participation. Your engagement here has been invaluable as we prepare for the 2012 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review.

On behalf of the ECOSOC President, Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, I extend my sincere thanks to the Government of Japan for its generous hospitality.

To all our panellists and presenters I convey a heartfelt appreciation.

I express my special gratitude to the youth representative who shared with us her vivid perspectives on our topic, of particular importance to young women and men all around the globe.

Distinguished guests,

During the last decades, economic performance in Asia and the Pacific region has been impressive with millions of people lifted out of poverty. But this success has also been accompanied by increasing inequality and persistent vulnerability.

Moreover, the ongoing economic crisis puts at stake what has been achieved and causes the most severe harm to those who are least responsible: developing countries and especially the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

The twin challenge of employment creation and climate change calls for immediate action and poses a particular threat to the many SIDS in the Asia and Pacific Region.

I believe our discussions have underscored that promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work is not only an issue of creating jobs for people to make a living. It is about

achieving an environment of sustainability in which women and men can live their lives in dignity and security, with gratification and future prospects.

Social reformer and Noble Laureate Jane Addams once said and I quote, “of all the aspects of social misery nothing is so heartbreaking as unemployment”. Let us keep her words in mind for our future work on this pressing topic.

The way ahead of us is long and arduous. Creating an environment of economic, social and environmental sustainability is a process that takes time as the successful examples in this region have demonstrated.

But we have to act now to actualize a framework that makes this development possible. Reducing inequality, addressing vulnerability, ensuring food and energy security, providing social protection, alleviating poverty and hunger, fighting youth unemployment and creating green jobs are the urgent tasks on our agenda.

To achieve these overarching goals we need to take concrete steps.

Full employment must be made a main macroeconomic goal alongside with sound fiscal and monetary policies. Necessary measures are the facilitation of access to credit for micro, small and medium enterprises and a strengthened social protection floor for the most vulnerable.

Furthermore, to achieve decent work opportunities we must promote entrepreneurship – especially among young people – and improve working conditions by involving the relevant social partners in dialogue.

Finally, overall labor market governance must be improved. This includes enhanced wage-setting mechanisms, enforcement of fundamental labor standards and labor law reform to enable enterprises to create decent jobs and reduce job-related harassment, non-payment of wages as promised, exploitation, extortion and inhuman treatment to them.

Until 2015, the MDGs serve as benchmarks that guide our actions and against which our progress is being measured. But we must look beyond, beyond 2015.

The insights of this regional preparatory meeting call for an action-oriented agenda to achieve our objectives of promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work in a framework of sustained, inclusive and equitable growth. Let us help each other in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect so that half of the LDCs could graduate by 2021 as IPoA postulated. Let us dedicate our time and energy to implement all internationally agreed commitments and promises so that we can build global confidence and can help assist millions of people especially in Asia-Pacific region to achieve their hopes and dreams.

So let me appeal you all to join hands and brains to achieve a successful AMR in July 2012! Today’s work has been an important step to pave this way.

I thank you.