



# **BANGLADESH**

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Statement  
By

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At the  
Forty-second Session of the  
Commission for Social Development

On  
Agenda items 3 (a) and 3 (b):  
Priority theme: Improving public sector effectiveness

And  
Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action  
pertaining to the situation of social groups:  
Family, Persons with Disabilities and  
Ageing

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Mr. Chairman,

Could I begin by felicitating you and the bureau for your excellent stewardship of the Commission. I wish you and your Bureau every success. Appreciation is owed to the Secretariat for the documentation at hand.

Bangladesh associates itself with the statement made in the Commission by the distinguished delegate of Qatar as the Chair of the Group of 77.

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary General for his report on the priority theme "Improving public sector effectiveness". We agree with his recommendations. Improvement of the public sector effectiveness is important for the promotion of social development. We need to recognize the importance of a strengthened international cooperation as well as good governance, transparency and accountability while improving the public sector effectiveness.

The establishment of poverty eradication has emerged as the principal goal of the social agenda over the last decades. Poverty marks its presence in many forms, and it relates to a set of multi-sectoral components, such as employment, education, housing, health and nutrition. Obvious therefore, public sector needs to play a critical role in national policies for social development including poverty eradication. We need to continue to strengthen the capacity of States in this regard. Many of the developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), do not have a sufficient level of financial resources to establish public social services. They require financial and technical assistance. They need to benefit from a favourable international economic environment. Forging meaningful international cooperation is essential for assisting developing countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in their efforts to improve public sector effectiveness.

Mr. Chairman,

We, in Bangladesh, are intellectually persuaded that development is basically a national responsibility. But it cannot be fully achieved without international support, empathy and sympathy. Participation and partnership are also essential to promote social development. Moreover, international cooperation is a categorical imperative in fulfilling social development goals. Active involvement of the civil society in the development process and their cooperation with governments are also essential. Such partnership can enhance the effort of the government in the delivery of social services. At the same time, the governments must ensure that there is a wide enough safety net to catch those on the flipside of the coin of success.

We believe that economic and social development can take place only against a matrix of pluralism, democracy, good governance, human rights, gender justice and women's empowerment. Today, Bangladesh is undergoing a positive societal transformation by adhering to these very values.

For improving public sector effectiveness, a wide range of programmes have been undertaken in my country. These aimed at promoting good governance, transparency, accountability and rule of law. Also at reforming the legal framework to ensure speedy justice, strengthening administrative institutions and building capacity for enhancing people's participation.

We are fully cognizant of the critical role that public sector can play in creating an enabling environment for the true realization of good governance. Towards this end, a project of an independent National Human Rights Commission has been undertaken, with the help from the UNDP. This aims to ensure good governance as well as transparency and accountability in our society. Other measures include the decision of the government to the establishment of the office of an Ombudsman, and an independent Anti-Corruption Commission; the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive, removal of all black laws, autonomy of the electronic media

and overall strengthening of the rule of law. "The Public Expenditure Review Commission (PRRC)" has been established to improve the quality of work of the public sector activities.

Mr. Chairman,

I now turn to the issues concerning the family, persons with disabilities and the older persons.

In Bangladesh, the family, as a basic social unit, plays a vital role in the social scene. The family has always provided primary care for all social groups. This year we observed the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (1994) at the national and international levels. This was geared to strengthen and support the family in performing its societal and developmental functions. We must advance and strengthen our efforts on family issues at national and international levels, and at the UN while promoting social development goals.

We are pleased that the Working Group established by the Ad Hoc Committee on Disability held its meeting in last January. The Working Group prepared a draft text (ad referendum) to serve as a basis for negotiation of the Ad Hoc Committee. We look forward to the next meeting of the Committee this year.

Bangladesh has adopted a National Policy for persons with disabilities. Also, a National Work Plan for implementation of the policy. The government is working in close cooperation with the civil society organizations to provide education, training, economic opportunity and rehabilitation program for them. A Disability Welfare Act has been enacted in the year 2001. A Special Foundation for the welfare of the disabled has also been established.

Today, older persons living in developing countries throughout the world face serious challenges. There is an urgent need to work towards their overall well-being. They need to be supported in consonance with the promises made in Madrid.

In Bangladesh, we have targeted programmes for the aged population. These include old age pension, allowances for widows, distressed and deserted women, homes for the abandoned, dispossessed and disabled aged. We have been implementing the commitments of Madrid Plan of Action. Our public sector is playing a pivotal role in such process. It has been working on the issue 6 of Madrid, entitled 'Eradication of poverty'. In this regard, the government has introduced Old Age Allowances Programme. This aims at eradicating poverty of rural elderly people. Geriatric related subject has also been added in the fifth five-year plan of the country.

All of us Member-States need to strengthen the national programmes. Also at the same time, international cooperation on ageing, and on the follow-up and review process of Madrid Plan of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

The great UN Conferences of the 1990s had laid down the path for us to tread. Commitments that were made, and resolutions that were undertaken, require persistent, and consistent action, if they are to be fulfilled. In this follow-up, it is necessary that we continue to strengthen the work of the UN in promoting social and economic development goals. The Commission has a unique role to play to stimulate action and strengthen international cooperation in this regard.

I thank you, Chair.