



## Bangladesh Development Forum 2020 29-30 January 2020 Dhaka, Bangladesh

### Joint Communiqué

In upholding the spirit of partnership for sustainable development, the Government of Bangladesh convened the Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) 2020 on 29-30 January with a wide range of development partners and stakeholders. The two-day event was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, dedicating and attributing the occasion to the centennial celebrations of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth anniversary.

Ministers and leading government representatives together with high-level delegates and experts from development organizations, bilateral missions, private sector, non-government organizations, community-based organizations, civil society organizations, research institutes, and academia took part in the event.

With the aim of a multi-stakeholder consultation on the upcoming national development priorities, the Forum focused on:

- Taking stock of stakeholder assessments of selected priority areas that are likely to have a strategic impact on Bangladesh's long-term development including the 8th Five-Year Plan (8FYP), Sustainable Development, Agenda 2030 and Vision 2041;
- Acknowledging and bringing together various strands of development actions taken by different stakeholders;
- Devising a broadly agreed partnership position and indicating steps towards its implementation on approaches to be adopted by actors in the short to mid-term time frame — especially in light of the 8th Five-Year Plan, Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and Vision 2041.

The Forum also provided a stage for assessing the progress made in implementing the 7th Five-Year Plan and for evaluating the country's progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The unique attributes of this year's BDF were the balanced panel of experts and the participation of young people.

The keynote session on "Effective Partnership for Implementing the 8th Five Year Plan Aiming towards Achieving SDGs", set the tone for discussions in the subsequent eight sessions over the

two days. Based on the common principles of leaving no-one behind, the eight sessions were focused on:

1. Private Sector Engagement and Trade Facilitation
2. Partnership for Climate Change and its Financing
3. Innovative Financing for a Self-reliant Bangladesh
4. Rural Transformation: Creating Opportunities for All
5. Health Services: Inclusive Delivery Options
6. Energy Security for Sustainable Growth
7. Sustainable Cities: Services and Protection for the Vulnerable
8. Quality Education for All: Preparing for 4th Industrial Revolution

The Secretaries of the lead ministries presented keynote papers on the above thematic areas and received views from panelists who are experts and thought leaders in the respective areas. While applauding the country's impressive growth and poverty reduction as well as progress on various other socio-economic indicators including human capital development, participants recognized that the following inter-linked challenges now face the country: transitioning from a lower middle-income to an upper middle-income country; reaping its demographic dividend and the benefits of digital technologies; adapting to and mitigating climate change; and continuously improving governance to leave no-one behind. Putting the issue of governance and fighting corruption high on the agenda will help ensure inclusive growth and an enabling business environment. We reaffirm the Honorable Prime Minister's commitment to furthering gender equality and women's empowerment. The Forum sought to deepen policy dialogue on key areas including addressing critical challenges in the 8<sup>th</sup> FYP, and cooperation on strategic priorities; and thereby support to Bangladesh.

The Forum acknowledged that Bangladesh, on this trajectory of development, demands greater partnership in a more holistic way. An effective partnership framework for sustainable development needs to reflect government leadership on policy reform; and bring together the full range of partners to align their strategies with the national development priorities focused on results ensuring development co-operation is transparent and accountable to all citizens.

The Forum ended with the following commitments to take forward the recommendations that came out of the BDF sessions:

- a) Developing a BDF 2020 Outcome Document based on mutual accountability that sets shared objectives and targets;
- b) Agreed actions of the Outcome document will be followed up through the Local Consultative Group (LCG) Government-DP Plenary;
- c) The 8<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan will guide the discussion on the LCG Working Group reform.