



Draft Statement by H.E. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Ambassador and the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, New York

**The first meeting of the Open Ended Working Group of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under agenda item 3: general discussions
General Assembly Hall, 14-15 March 2013**

Distinguished Co-Chairs
Honourable Ministers
Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by Fiji and Benin on behalf of G-77 and China, and LDCs respectively.

Once Mahatma Gandhi observed that ‘God has created enough to meet the needs of people but not enough to meet the greed of the few’. The global community is producing enough but in spite of this, over a billion people go to bed every night with a burning belly and nearly 900 million people still find poverty a guaranteed partner in their life time. While they suffer for a bowl of food, sadly, nearly a quarter habitants of this planet earth are misusing and abusing the provisions of life and livelihood in such a way that environmental and economic sustainability are being compromised.

Good news is; to address these issues; I mean the issues of sustainability, the issues of inequality and inclusive development, to ensure minimal livelihood of the have-nots, to eradicate poverty and hunger, and to facilitate development of less developed countries; the LDCs, LLDCs, SIDs, the developing and the developed ones the world has agreed in Rio+20 Conference to develop and design certain achievable goals popularly known as the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs, a holistic approach to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

We are going to charter the future of humanity for at least next 20 or 30 years. Unless we rise to the occasion and take a bow for the good of humanity, for the sustainability of this planet earth, this small village, our future generations may not pardon us. With this conviction, may I put forward some specific suggestions, as the nature of the meeting has largely been described as open and interactive?

First: Out of the three pillars of Sustainable Development, the Social and the Environmental Pillars have been addressed over a long period of time under the guise of MDGs and CSD. With some reservations, a partial achievement has also been obtained in those fields. But I am afraid, nothing could sustain and most achievements

could be reversed in many of the developing countries on the wake of multifaceted global crises and emerging challenges like environmental risks. It has been pointed out that, without economic development, development in social and human rights areas are not sustainable and therefore, time has come to put utmost emphasis on economic pillar of sustainable development to make a real difference on the ground and end poverty and hunger and ensure respect for fair rule of law and justice.

Second: Since Economic pillars have been neglected in the past, it should be prioritized in the formulation of SDGs or/and post-2015 agenda, more so to ensure a balanced treatment among the three pillars of sustainable development.

Third: Eradication of poverty is the overarching goal of the Rio+20 Conference; the 'Future We want'. All probable SDGs should, therefore, be targeted towards a job-rich growth to ensure sustained economic growth leading to social and economic safety locally, regionally and globally. In this connection, SDGs should be tailored to the country and region specific requirements with specific vision, with clear mission, targeted goals, objectives, time-line, appraisal, indicator, evaluation and means of implementations. Poverty anywhere means poverty everywhere; if critical elements of SDGs are not implemented in the field owing to paucity of resources, financial, technical and technological co-operations, the world will continue to be an unequal world busy with containing repercussions of injustice.

Fourth; Special emphasis should be put on, on the economic development of the developing countries, particularly LDCs, so that these countries can chart their social development and environmental protection plans by themselves. Instead of helping for economic emancipation, if the development partners continue to aid them in the social and human rights safety nets, they will ever remained bottle-fed, while the partners will not be excused from the blame of keeping them ever dependent and not helping them stand on their own feet. However, short-term social safety net assistance should be continued and phased out with economic development in the long run.

Fifth: In this regard, Means of implementation such as ODA, trade, investment, debt relief, global financial restructuring and technology transfer should be integral part of each of the SDGs. This is of special importance for LDCs, and I urge to all development partners, irrespective of the South and North, to fulfil their long pledged ODA of 0.2% GDP and to open their market for 100% duty free quota free market access for all LDC products in the spirit of the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting. In the same note, I urge to implement the provisions of TRIPs for LDCs to facilitate transfer of technology in the industrialization of these countries' commodity and service sectors.

Sixth: Members should ponder on framing SDGs in the fields of crucial importance for countries like Bangladesh. These include productive capacity, infrastructure development, agriculture development, food and energy security and efficiency, water development, migration and population management, implementation of big projects like roads, railways, ports, electricity, gas and telecom to aide industrialization, development of skills, quality education, funds and service line for youth and women for SMEs to ensure maximum employment, Migration, Trade liberalization for developing counties, particularly for LDCs and indicator-specific health and education development to build healthy nations locally and also globally.

Seventh; the world will face newer and emerging challenges and unless people, both men and women are empowered, they will find difficulty to face the upcoming challenges. Therefore, it is necessary to empower them. Bangladesh Prime Minister has outlined seven interlinked variables to empower people. You can empower them by providing education, skills and training, ensuring their participation in governance; empower them by eliminating poverty and hunger, by eliminating all sorts of discrimination and deprivation, by including the excluded people, and empower them by eliminating all forms of terrorism.

Last but not the least, the SDGs should not be considered as 'new and improved' MDGs; neither they should be solely built on the MDGs which are mostly social goals. However, considering the lessons learned from MDGs and considering their social nature, the SDGs under Social Pillars of Sustainable Development may be built on the vestige of MDGs. But they should in no way, undermine the Economic priorities of SDGs, which are essential for the 'Future We Want', an inclusive world without poverty and hunger, a world with decent jobs and decent living for all.

In conclusion, distinguished Co-Chairs, while I am thrilled to observe that the UN Secretariat and its agencies are focusing their energy and resources on the post-2015 development agenda, a non-mandated agenda, may I kindly request them, to come up with equal enthusiasm and with specific suggestions in framing matrix-oriented SDGs which is the sole mandate given by all 193 member states of this august body. Let's respect the will of this august body with full sincerity and honesty. Let's address this with all our energy, creativity, skills and efforts. This call is to my fellow Member States, UN Agencies, all civil society, major groups and other non-government organizations, private sectors and the media. And this is a call from the poor people of the world, the most vulnerable, the most at stake. May I remind you that if there is no development especially in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDs or in post-conflict countries, can we be proud of our performance?

I have a hope, with your commitment, one day, we will overcome hunger and poverty, we will overcome social injustice and misuse of resources, one day we are sure to achieve our goals of economic, social and environmental sustainability that would surely lead us to sustainable peace and prosperity for all.

I thank you.

