

Remarks by Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh

5th OWG–SDGs

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To begin with, we would associate ourselves with the views and position expressed by Fiji G 77 and China, and Benin on behalf of the LDCs.

Much of the analogies, analyses and ways forward that have been put forward by the distinguished speakers, are known among the policy planners and the development practitioners. We generally concur with the principle thrust of the deliberations. In our national context, through innovations in social policy, Bangladesh has demonstrated how an LDC, with considerable stress on scarce resources and quite often in the backdrop of less-fulfilled promises on ‘enabling environment’, could advance in the fiercely competitive global market. Indeed, this is done being mindful of addressing inequalities. Bangladesh’s multi-faceted attainments should vindicate our focus and drive towards attainment of inclusive and sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Yet, we saw, over the recent years, how in spite of ensuring prudent macro-economic policies and management, our decades of so-painstakingly attained ‘development gains’ could suddenly appear ‘**vulnerable**’. This is visibly due to the reversal of policies and measures at the other end of global supply chain. Clearly, our national efforts need to be complemented by enabling international environment.

In this connection, let me lay some specific points – for our consideration.

We recognize, **governance** is a systemic issue and important on equity consideration. And we ought to agree, governance is indivisible. Yet, as we speak of **good governance** at national level, we do not see a concomitant reflection in terms of desired practice of the same principles on global governance – be that in global trading regimes, financial architecture or in climate discourse. Clearly, compartmentalized application of governance won’t deliver us on the global commons. And, this should apply equally and truly in democratizing the processes, institutions, including decision-making, of the global institutions.

Reference is made about securing ‘*transformative shifts*’ – by way of having aspirational, creative and succinct SDGs. In spite of so many constraints and almost existential climate challenges that we face, Bangladesh is ready to embark on this exercise. No where else than in a climate-vulnerable country like ours, do we witness the stress on planetary limits, so starkly. Though one quarter of the global membership – the LDCs - contribute least to global emissions, we now risk losing somewhere between 2 to 3% of our GDP! This is increasingly evident in large parts of Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Therefore, macro-economic issues and overarching challenges emanating from climate change must be properly addressed.

That logically should bring us back to the issue of **enabling environment**. We do emphasis on creating an enabling environment, be in global trade or in attracting FDI. Though we connected ourselves with the global economy some two decades back by opening our economy, there was little concomitant response from other economies. So, the point that we want to make here is, we must have a fuller understanding of and putting in practice of enabling environment – nationally as well as globally. It is only then we would be able to reap the complementarities that we have been looking for through the

Post 2015 Agenda. Nowhere this applies more prominently than in global trading regime. And, this would be tested by next week in Bali!

As World Economic Forum and numerous other global assessments contend, the next decade and a half or so in human history may pose a period of huge **contrasts** and **promises** in terms of increased uncertainties, vulnerabilities and risks. The world collectively also has substantial knowledge, innovation and technology under its command to tackle such eventuality. It is well known that technological advancement and innovations are key for sustained upgrading of our productive capacity. However, although much promise is offered, for example, as a consequence of digital revolution and other technological advancements, we might see widening gap and inequities in terms of technology access. Prof. Bhagwati has also highlighted this eloquently. Here, I would particularly mention about the IPR regime that pose quite an insurmountable challenge for accessing technology. Even within the UN, on the proposal to establish a Technology Bank for the LDCs, agreed 2 years back, we sadly see reticence although the mandate is coming from internationally agreed IPoA! Last week, in Warsaw, within Climate Change discourse, we saw the difficulties once again. What we truly need is bold and innovative ways to get over the barriers to technology access by poorer countries. And, I must stress, LDCs or low-income countries are talking about 'life-saving' technologies – be in agriculture, health, climate change adaptation. This is an area in which clear, honest, bold pronouncements relating provision of ODA is called for to make the future global partnership meaningful, result-oriented.

Also, within this cluster, we must think about **responsible conduct of all players and stakeholders in the global supply chain**. Quite often, when we talk about 'ethical trade' and climate justice, we see there is little corresponding response from the international community. In a globalized world, such incongruent actions aggravate inequities and create distortions. So, when we talk about private sector, we must stress on the responsible and ethical role of the multinational corporations who are enjoying increasingly important position in global development discourse. The UN has Guidelines and OECD has a Global Business Responsibility Principles. If we are to make global trading beneficial to all, this is also an aspect that we would need to carefully factor in.

Finally, we would need to have a frank conversation on continuity in partnership. During the global food crises in recent years, we were disappointed to witness how countries closed doors very selfishly though. Often things left to market to address. This truly put many of the net food importing countries to precarious situation. We must ensure that in such future times of uncertainty, our partners should fulfill their commitments and deliver on agreements.

Mr Co-Chair,

Of so many issues and determinants, we have highlighted a selection only. These are, by no means exhaustive. But, we believe, these are strategic that deserve our attention in designing appropriate policies, strategies and actions in the future development agenda.

Thank you for kind attention.
