

**Statement by Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN at the Seventh Session of Open-ended Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals on “Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction ” New York, 10 January, 2014**

Mr. Co-Chair,

Climate change and disaster risk reduction are priority issues for my delegation, as we come from a country, which is highly disaster prone and climatically vulnerable and since, Bangladesh has emerged as a lead example notably in the disaster risk reduction area.

From our experience we know, climate change and disaster risk are fundamental threats to sustainable development. Adverse affects of climate change are already disrupting livelihoods, particularly in areas that are dependent on predictable temperature and rainfall, clean water availability, and arable land. It is one of the biggest threats to sustainable agriculture and food security. Climate change poses existential threat to some countries including ours. On the other hand, the number of people affected by disasters is also increasing, and economic losses are rising, partially due to the changing nature of weather. As a result, both disasters and climate change should be considered as an integral part of a development continuum.

Disaster risk reduction and climate change action, including mitigation and adaptation, should not be seen only as an imperative to protecting investments in development, but also as an opportunity for a transformative shift towards more resilient development. The interconnectedness of climate change and disasters with poverty reduction, social protection and sustainable development makes a strong case for inclusion of these issues under the post 2015 development framework.

Some progresses have been achieved at the global level in both these areas. Comprehensive disaster risk reduction and climate mitigation and adaptation policies and practices have been designed and implemented in many countries. Bangladesh’s ability to manage disasters has improved dramatically since the devastating impacts of the cyclone in 1970 which saw more than half a million people perish in a single night. Whereas, over the last three decades, when Bangladesh experienced more than 200 extreme weather events, death tolls and damages were reduced drastically. This reduction happened because, since early nineties, Bangladesh replaced its reactive approach to disasters with a proactive stance that sought to minimize risks posed by these extreme weather events. It has also mainstreamed climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in its sectoral development plans, like agriculture, livestock, water, energy, all linked to poverty eradication.

Mr. Co-Chair,

There are several global frameworks currently addressing issues related to climate change and disaster risks. The HFA serves as the global framework for international

cooperation on disaster risk reduction. Consultations on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, or HFA2 as it is called, are currently underway. This is being helped by the international community's commitment towards building resilience to disasters in the context of sustainable development. I cannot convincingly say the same about the climate change discourse, although UNFCCC established a number of institutions, important among them are, the Cancun Adaptation Framework, which introduced a work programme on Loss and Damage, a Technology Mechanism to design, develop and disseminate climate-friendly technologies; and the Green Climate Fund to support financing adaptation activities of developing countries on climate change. The fact remains, effectiveness of all these mechanisms is yet to be visible on the ground.

Mr. Co-Chair,

It is being rightly said that the current model of development is not climate sensitive. It needs significant realignment in order to adapt with the changing world facing major climatic and disaster events and consequences. This requires consideration and action on climate change and disaster risk across all policies and sectors, and at all levels of decision-making, given their linkages with all aspects of sustainable development. The ongoing discussions on post 2015 development agenda has offered us an opportunity to address both the issues appropriately and adequately.

The SDGs are, by nature, supposed to be aspirational, political pronouncement to guide national development efforts underpinning global partnership and international cooperation. Ambitious goals and targets on climate change and disaster risk reduction may inspire the discussion in the technical fora and bring in desired progress. On the other hand, successful climate agreement and a strong HFA2 can provide important instruments for implementing the aspirations of sustainable development goals. Thus, this can be a virtuous relationship. With the inherent interconnections and opportunities, coherence between the post-2015 development agenda, HFA2, and the 2015 climate change agreement in Paris will be complementary and mutually reinforcing. A strong focus on climate change and disaster risk reduction will enable us to adopt an inclusive, equitable, risk aware and comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

In concluding, my delegation would join the emerging consensus here that we need to frame goals and targets on climate change and disaster issues. Climate change is multi-dimensional, and difficult to capture in its integrity in any one sustainable development goal. Disaster risk reduction is also a cross-cutting issue that is intricately tied to different elements of sustainable development. As such, even though it is important to have a stand-alone goal on climate change, with specific target on CO2 emissions and adaptation challenges, aspects of both the issues should be captured under various other closely related goals for example on agriculture, water and sanitation, health, energy and technology transfer.

I thank you.