

UN Summit on Climate Change

Statement

by

Her Excellency

Sheikh Hasina

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

22nd September 2009

As one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, Bangladesh attaches high importance to the Climate Change Summit in New York as much as to COP-15 in Copenhagen later this year. Our expectations from these two high-level events are high, yet pragmatic. I am confident that the global community would be able to reach an agreement on directions for collective action in the face of climate change challenges.

Though Bangladesh's contribution to climate change is negligible, it is one of its worst victims. Recent years shows Bangladesh traumatized with increased frequency and erratic pattern of floods, cyclones, droughts, weather conditions, and even earthquakes. Scientific evidence reveals these trends are outcome of mankind's relentless abuse of mother-nature. They have offset Bangladesh's development programs with budgeted resources diverted to humanitarian support. They have eroded our development gains of decades; slowed achieving the MDGs;

threatens our food security by interrupting agricultural production; and challenges climate sensitive programs in areas as water resources, agriculture, health, energy, urban planning, tourism, and risk reduction.

To deal with these challenges, my government has adopted a National Climate Change Strategy and a National Plan of Action that aims at sustainable, green development and adapting to climate change. In disaster management, we have brought a paradigm shift from relief and rehabilitation to disaster risk reduction, effective early warning dissemination, and community empowerment and resilience. Bangladesh is willing to share its experiences in these areas with the international community.

To adapt to climate change, a major step my government has taken is dredging of rivers to keep them on their natural course, prevent erosion and loss of arable land, hold more water and reduce intensity of floods, and enhance navigation. The excavated silt would build, raise and fortify embankments with the rise of water level, increase green belts, and help create elevated flat topped grounds for homes of the displaced. Already several thousand disaster-shelters have been constructed and more are on the way. Our plan is also to shift to green technologies in our bid for Digital Bangladesh by 2021. Such activities would entail huge costs, and therefore, I call upon the international community to underwrite them.

We have few days left for negotiating the final outcome of the Copenhagen Conference. It is now critical for the world leaders, with their wisdom and courage, to chalk out the right course of action. I reiterate what I have said on earlier occasions, that the Copenhagen outcome must include provisions for assured, adequate, predictable and

easily accessible funding mechanism for adaptation; transfer of green technology, particularly to LDCs, at an affordable cost; and binding specific cuts in green house gas emission. The principle of common but differentiated responsibility must be upheld. Only then shall we be able to realize a green global economy where sustainable livelihoods of all peoples of the world would remain ensured.

I thank you all.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.