A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 66TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I. Introduction:

The 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) begins on Tuesday, 13 September 2011, at a time when, according to the President of the Session Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of Qatar, “the world is facing enormous political, social, economic and environmental challenges”. These include fall of the Gaddafi Government and change of regime in Libya, people’s uprising and political changes throughout the Arab world, food and energy crises, global recession, widening gaps between the MDG targets and actual achievements, the renewed concern of the world community over nuclear safety and security; global warming, climate change and desertification, as well as recurring natural and manmade disasters.

This year the High-level segment of the general debate to be participated by the Heads of State and Heads of Government will be held between 21-23 and 26-27 September 2011. The theme for the high-level debate this year will be “the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means” as proposed by the President-elect of the session. This General Assembly Session will focus on the need of the people who are still living under occupation and oppression and are yearning for freedom and dignity. The Palestinian authority may pursue recognition of its statehood and full membership in the United Nations. This year South Sudan has become 193rd member of the United Nations and will attend the General Assembly for the first time as new member. The independence of South Sudan from Sudan through mediation and peaceful negotiation is likely to feature high in the General Debate.

The highlights of the 66th UNGA include mediation, combating international terrorism, issues of sustainable development, human rights, MDGs, financing for development, the concerns of the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island States, eradication of poverty, South-South cooperation, the culture of peace, disarmament, system-wide coherence, peacekeeping operations, and scale of assessments for the distribution of contributions to the United Nations. The issue of Culture of Peace and Non-violence, a flagship resolution was proposed by the present Government during its last tenure in 1999. This resolution has been tabled each year for last 11 years and will also come up for discussion in the forthcoming General Assembly.

Inspired by the vision of the Father of the Nation and guided by the able leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the present government remains immensely successful in its external relation in regional and international arena during the last two and a half years. Under the Grand Alliance Government, Bangladesh has achieved unparalleled confidence and mutual trust with its immediate neighbouring countries; improved its bilateral relations with the key players in international politics; and ensured a vibrant presence and proactive role in the United Nations. Hon’ble Prime Minister led the Bangladesh delegation in the 65th UNGA in 2010 during which she received the MDG Achievement Award 2010. She chaired various high level and special events particularly climate vulnerability and LDCs as well as the UN high level MDG meetings. During a bilateral meeting, the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon highly appreciated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s leadership, and praised her government’s remarkable
achievements and branded Bangladesh as a ‘Rising star’ in the empowerment of women. The Secretary-General also labelled Bangladesh as a ‘Role model’ in implementing the MDGs and maintaining the international peace and stability.

Participation of Bangladesh delegation to the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly bears a special significance for the present Government which has crossed its halfway mark this year ensuring positive changes in all aspects of governance following its election in 2008 with a huge mandate. During this period, Bangladesh has acclaimed global leadership in innovation in socio-economic development and attainment of MDGs. As recognition of Bangladesh’s extraordinary success in achieving some of the MDGs targets, the Hon’ble Prime Minister has received the UN MDG Award during the 65th UNGA, the first of its kind. The 66th session will provide an opportunity to showcase Bangladesh’s MDGs achievements and to highlight best practices in its developmental programmes.

The Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lead the Bangladesh delegation to the 66th UNGA. Bangladesh will be represented in almost all of the high level meetings by the Hon’ble Prime Minister and the Hon’ble Foreign Minister. The Hon’ble Finance Minister and the Hon’ble Health Minister are also expected to participate in the UN Private Sector Forum and high level meeting on Non-communicable Diseases. Apart from the Cabinet Ministers, Ambassador at Large, Senior Advisers and High Officials to the Hon’ble Prime Minister are included in the delegation. A delegation of eminent persons and a high level business delegation will also participate in various high level meetings at the 66th UNGA.

The Hon’ble Prime Minister will deliver Bangladesh’s country statement at the 66th UNGA General Debate in the afternoon of 24 September 2011. Her speech will focus on the theme of the 66th UNGA on the role of mediation and domestic priorities including democracy, development, good governance, anti-corruption, women empowerment, counter terrorism and the rule of law. She would also highlight the CHT Peace Accord, Digital Bangladesh and Vision 2021. Apart from the General Debate statement, the Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to make statements at the Secretary-General’s Symposium on International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation (19 September) and High-level Meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (19-20 September). The Hon’ble Prime Minister is also expected to deliver a key note address at a seminar jointly organised by UN Women and WFP in collaboration with the Governments of Bangladesh and Netherlands on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women and Food and Nutritional Security. The Prime Minister will also participate at a Dialogue of Leaders on Climate Change to be organised by Mexico and South Africa as the immediate past and upcoming Chairs of the Climate Change Summits. She is scheduled to deliver a statement at a special event on Information and Communication Technology on 19 September and deliver a statement highlighting the statement on ‘Digital Bangladesh’. She is also expected to deliver another key address at a joint event to be organised by US Chamber and Asia Society on Bangladesh-US trade and economic relations. As every year, the Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to speak at a Community Reception to be organised by the Bangladeshi expatriates residing in the United States. She is also expected to meet few Heads of States/Governments as well as the President of the General Assembly, UN
Secretary General and Commonwealth Secretary General at the sideline of the 66th UNGA, and discuss issues of bilateral and mutual interest.

Apart from these, the Hon’ble Foreign Minister is expected to participate at a Ministerial meeting on Commitment to accelerate progress on MDGs, Ministerial Breakfast meeting on increase peace through mediation, Ministerial Breakfast meeting on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and the International treaty on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, High-level meeting on Nuclear safety and security, Seventh Conference Facilitating the entry into force of the Comprehensive test Ban treaty, Annual meetings of Group of 77, OIC Foreign Ministers, Group of LDCs, group of Friends united against Human Trafficking, Commonwealth Foreign Ministers’ meeting, meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG).

Events to be sponsored by Bangladesh during the 66th UNGA:

Bangladesh is expected to sponsor two High-level Meetings at the sideline of the 66th UNGA. One is a special Event on Economic Empowerment of Rural women and Food and Nutrition Security on 22 September 2011 and the other is on Commitment to accelerate progress on the MDGs on 21 September 2011. The Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to deliver a key note speech in the first event while Hon’ble Foreign Minister will deliver a statement in the second event. These High level meetings will provide an opportunity to showcase Bangladesh’s achievements in women empowerment and attainment of MDGs and to highlight best practices in its developmental programmes as well as priorities in the remaining period.

A new resolution on “People’s empowerment and a peace-centric development model” by the Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina:

In line with the theme of the 66th UNGA, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will propose a new resolution entitled “People’s empowerment and a peace-centric development model” at the 66th UNGA. The main thrust of this resolution is to achieve sustainable development in national, regional and international levels through peace, tolerance and harmony. From signing the CHT Peace Accord to empowering women through sustainable economic, political and social interventions; and from fighting against poverty and discrimination to promoting global climate justice are all expressions of the sincere commitments of the Hon’ble Prime Minister to the liberation of mass people and peace-centric development. This UNGA will provide Bangladesh delegation to campaign for the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s signature concept of development through peace and people’s empowerment.

Priorities of the present Government:

The present government is committed to the welfare of the mass people. The Vision 2021 envisages that by the 50th anniversary of independent Bangladesh, the country will realise a trajectory of high-performing growth supported by advanced and innovative technology; with prices of commodities stabilized, income and human poverty brought to a minimum level and health; and education for all secured and food self-sufficiency.
achieved. The present government also aims at the enhancement of capacity building combined with creativity; assurance of social justice; achievement of the capacity to tackle the adverse effects of climate change; and establishment of a Digital Bangladesh. The Bangladesh delegation to the 66th UNGA will be able to share the experiences and the best practices of the world leaders in this regard and to seek support of the international community in implementing its development agenda.

The establishment of social justice and rule of law is one of the core agenda of the election manifesto of the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s political party. Her government acclaimed appreciation in national and international levels for tremendous achievements in improving the law and order situation, upholding the independence of judiciary and pioneering good governance in various stages of national and local governments. In order to uphold the provisions of the National Constitution and the norms of international law, the present government initiated and is facilitating the International War Crime Tribunal to bring the persons involved in violating the international human rights during the Liberation War of 1971. The 66th UNGA will provide the Bangladesh delegation to apprise the world community of the government’s position on the functions of this free, fair and unobstructed modus operandi of this judicial procedure.

Despite Bangladesh’s phenomenal developments under the leadership of the “Brainchild of Democracy,” Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, there are some attempts to blur the achievement in and outside the country. The recent series of ill-motivated articles published by the Economist is a prominent example of such activities. The Bangladesh delegation to the 66th UNGA is expected to play a critical role in safeguarding the image of Bangladesh through pro-active participation and deliberations at the high-profile meetings.

II. Bangladesh’s core values at the UN as guided by the Father of the Nation:

Bangladesh will step into its 38th year of UN membership on 17 September 2011. It obtained membership of the United Nations on 17 September 1974 even though it became member of almost all UN Specialised agencies right after its independence in 1971. This year she will step into her 38th year of UN membership. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman led the first delegation of the independent Bangladesh to United Nations in 1974. In his historic address to the UN General Assembly on 25 September 1974 delivered in Bengali, Bangabandhu provided a clear guideline of the foreign policy of Bangladesh and its core values at the United Nations. Those core principles continued to be the guiding principles of Bangladesh’s foreign policy and its deliberations, diplomatic initiatives and profile at the United Nations and other multilateral fora such as the Non-aligned Movement, Commonwealth and the OIC.

The Father of Nation in his maiden speech committed Bangladesh to the principles of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security as enunciated in Bangladesh’s Constitution, in ensuring socio-economic development of all peoples, in guaranteeing enjoyment of all human rights by all peoples, and in UN’s effort to establish a world free from poverty, hunger, illiteracy and war. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman strongly believed that Bangladesh’s national interests including its political,
economic and security interests could be best upheld by developing a strong multilateral input in the nation’s foreign policy.

The foreign policy of the present government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is based on the vision of the Father of the Nation to project Bangladesh in the international arena as a peace loving country that is committed to democracy, good governance, equality, tolerance, secularism, justice, and respect for human rights and the progressive values of mankind. The Father of the Nation declared at the UN that the very struggle of Bangladesh for its independence symbolized the universal struggle for peace and justice. He said, “... Bangladesh, from its very inception, should stand firmly by side of the oppressed people of the world. ...Peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world”.

The present government of the Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is determined to carry forward the mantle. Her party’s election manifesto for the last general election stipulated, “Bangladesh will take an active role in the preservation of world peace” and “An independent foreign policy will be pursued in adherence to the principles of ‘Friendship with all and malice towards none’.” These have been reflected in the external relations conducted by her government during the last two and a half years. Under her leadership, Bangladesh has been an active member of the United Nations, and has enjoyed credibility and confidence of the international community particularly for its role as a ‘consensus-builder’ among differing opinions.

III. Various Summit Level Meetings expected to be attended by the Hon’ble Prime Minister

i. High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, 19-20 September 2011

The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases will take place on 19 and 20 September 2011.

The plenary meetings will feature opening statements by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Director-General of the World Health Organization and a representative of civil society who will be chosen from non-governmental organizations with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and in consultation with Member States. There will be three thematic round tables:

- **Round table 1** (19 September 2011): The rising incidence, developmental and other challenges and the social and economic impact of non-communicable diseases and their risk factors;
- **Round table 2** (19 September 2011): Strengthening national capacities, as well as appropriate policies, to address prevention and control of non-communicable diseases;
- **Round table 3** (20 September 2011): Fostering international cooperation, as well as coordination, to address non-communicable diseases.

Participation in each round table will include Member States, observers, and representatives of entities of the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector. Each round table will be chaired by two Co-Chairs, selected by the President of the
General Assembly and taking full account of the level of representation as well as equitable geographical distribution.

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted new five year health sector programme indentifying NCDs as priority objective. National strategies such as, ‘National Cancer Control Strategy’, ‘Injury Prevention Strategy’, ‘Deafness Prevention Strategy’, ‘National Eye Care Plan’ have been adopted. National legislations related to NCDs are being amended. Bangladesh delegation may apprise the High-level meeting about these positive initiatives of the present Government.

ii. High-level meeting of the General Assembly on Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, 20 September 2011

The High-level meeting of the General Assembly on Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication will take place on Tuesday, 20 September 2011. There will be two interactive sessions, each focusing on the same theme as the high-level meeting, and will be co-chaired by Heads of State or government, one from the North and one from the South for each panel to be appointed by the President of the General Assembly, with due regard for geographical balance, in consultation with regional groups. The Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to co-chair one of the sessions.

iii. High-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, 22 September 2011

At the side line of the 66th UNGA, the General Assembly will held a High-level meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action on Thursday, 22 September 2011. The Durban Declaration, which is the international community’s blueprint for action to fight racism, was adopted by consensus at the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa. It is an innovative and action oriented agenda to combat all forms of racism and racial discrimination.

The theme of the tenth anniversary is "Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development." There will be two round tables each addressing this overall theme. The meeting expected to adopt a short and concise political declaration.

Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to co-chair one of the round tables.

The constitution of Bangladesh forbids all kind of discrimination on the ground of race, religion, caste, sex. The Father of the Nation always dreamt of a Bangladesh as a secular, democratic and pluralist society, where people from all religions and ethnic origins live peacefully and enjoy all human rights. In line with the constitutional commitments and the dream of the Father of the Nation, the present Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has focused its efforts to build an inclusive society. At the
international level, Bangladesh is concerned at the growing level of intolerance and stereotyping in certain societies. By participating at the High-level Meeting, Bangladesh delegation may reiterate their concern and call upon member states to uphold the spirit of the Durban Declaration.

iv. Symposium on International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, 19 September 2011

The Secretary-General’s Symposium on International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation to be organized by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office (CTITF) in partnership with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the constituent CTITF entities will be held on Monday, 19 September 2011 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

A keynote address of UN Secretary-General will be delivered at the opening session, followed by four thematic plenary sessions and a closing session. During the lunch break there will be a media roundtable side event, which will provide an opportunity for media to ask questions on the core sub-themes of the Symposium and implementation efforts of Member States and the UN counter-terrorism entities.

This Symposium is of great importance for Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh shows zero tolerance to any act of terrorism and is firmly committed to counter-terrorism efforts in the regional and international levels. At the national front, the government enacted the Anti Terrorism Act 2009 and Money Laundering Prevention Act 2009. These laws have been revised. At the Secretary-General’s symposium, Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to deliver a speech highlighting different policies of the GOB for fighting terrorism.

v. The High Level General Debate of the 65th UNGA

The General Debate is the universal forum of the United Nations and of the world. The whole UN membership, comprised of 192 Member States, is represented at the UN General Assembly. The annual general debate provides Member States the opportunity to express their views on major international issues. The general debate of the sixty-sixth session will be held from Wednesday, 21 September to Saturday, 24 September and from Monday, 26 September to Tuesday, 27 September 2011. While the general debate usually begins on the Tuesday after the opening of the session, pursuant to resolution 57/301; the general debate for the sixty-sixth session will begin on Wednesday, 21 September. Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to deliver Bangladesh statement on 24 September 2011.

The General Assembly has elected His Excellency Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of Qatar as President of the 66th UNGA, who pledged to try to work as a bridge between countries rich and poor to help build consensus on key issues such as hunger, poverty, terrorism and climate change. The theme of this year’s General Debate is “the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful Means,” as proposed by the president of the 66th UNGA.

The twenty-one Vice-Presidents have been elected according to the rules and practices of the UN and the African States were allocated six seats, followed by the Asian States with five seats, Eastern European State with one seat, Latin American & Caribbean States with
three seats, Western European and other States with one seat and the five Permanent Member States, e.g. China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States with one seat each.

vi. Secretary-General’s special event on “Every Woman, Every Child,” 20 September 2011

At the special initiative of the UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki Moon, during the MDG Summit 2010, a flagship event Every Woman, Every Child was held on MDG 4 and 5 relating to maternal and child health. The meeting launched a “Global Strategy for Women and Children’s Health” prioritizing key areas for enhanced financing, strengthened policy and improved service delivery. These include:

- Support to country-led health plans, supported by increased, predictable and sustainable investment.
- Integrated delivery of health services and life-saving interventions – so women and their children can access prevention, treatment and care when and where they need it.
- Stronger health systems, with sufficient skilled health workers at their core.
- Innovative approaches to financing, product development and the efficient delivery of health services.
- Improved monitoring and evaluation to ensure the accountability of all actors for results.

Last year the event garnered financial commitments for US$40 billion from donors, while recipient countries made policy commitments.

Following the launch of the Every Woman, Every Child effort in September 2010, the UN Secretary-General will host, on the margins of the General Assembly, a high-level special event to further the remarkable momentum of the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health one year on. The event will take place on 20 September 2011.

The objectives of the event are:

a) To showcase the implementation of existing commitments and their results on the ground, including game changing innovations;

b) To present the recommendations from the recently published report by the Commission on Information and Accountability and the launch of an independent Expert Review Group that will oversee their implementation across the globe; and

c) To announce new commitments to the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health by stakeholders from government, academic, private sector leaders as well as foundations, multilateral and civil society organizations.
The event will feature the participation of global leaders from all of the stakeholder groups. It will be divided into three thematic sections that will focus on key interventions and programs that are proving successful in saving women’s and children’s lives.

The event has special significance for Bangladesh as the country has already achieved two of the three health related MDGs, MDG-4 (Child health) and MDG-5 (Maternal Health). Last year, Hon’ble Prime Minister received UN MDG Award 2010, the first of its kind for success in reducing child mortality i.e. MDG-4.

The Hon’ble Prime Minister participated in the last year’s event on Every Woman every child and made the following pledges:

- **Doubling the Percentage Of Births Attended By A Skilled health worker by 2015** (from the current level of 24.4%) through training an additional 3000 midwives, staffing all 427 sub-district health centres to provide round-the-clock midwifery services, and upgrading all 59 district hospitals and 70 Mother and Child Welfare Centres as centres of excellence for emergency obstetric care services.

- **Reduction of the rate of adolescent pregnancies through social mobilization, implementation of the minimum legal age for marriage, and upgrading one third of MNCH centres to provide adolescent friendly sexual and reproductive health services.**

- **Halve unmet need for family planning (from the current level of 18%) by 2015; and ensure universal implementation of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness Programme.**

This year the Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to apprise the implementation status of the pledges made last year and will announce new commitments.

**vii. Economic Empowerment of Rural Women and food and Nutrition Security** to be co-hosted by the UN women and the WFP, in collaboration with the Netherlands ministry of Foreign affairs, 22 September 2011:

The UN Women and the World Food Programme, in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be co-hosting a high-level side event on 22 September 2011 on *Economic Empowerment of Rural Women and food and Nutrition Security*. The event will highlight the critical importance of empowering women, especially rural women in achieving household and national food and nutrition security and of improving rural women’s nutritional status to enable their empowerment; illustrate why investments in women yield big food security dividends and how concrete achievement can be made through coherent state policies and programmes.

The event would be an interactive debate moderated by media personality such as Christiane Amanpour, Ann Curry, Zainab Badawi or Juju Chang. Given that Bangladesh has made significant achievements in empowering women special empowering rural women, the organizers has invited the Hon’ble Prime minister to deliver the key note speech.
viii. Event to be organized jointly by the Asia Society and the US Chamber of Commerce, 20 September 2011

The US Chamber of Commerce and the Asia Society will organize an event in honour of the Hon’ble Prime Minister at the Asia Society Headquarters in New York. It will be a luncheon roundtable followed by a public speech on US-Bangladesh political and commercial relations. Senior members of the US business community and corporate sponsors will participate in the event.

ix. Public Meeting with the Community:

Apart from the above mentioned meetings, the Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to attend a Public Meeting with the Bangladesh community in the United States. The members of the community, NRBs, professionals etc. are expected to participate in the event.

IV. Other High-level meetings where Bangladesh will actively participate at Foreign Ministerial level:

Besides the general debate and high level and other events described above, there will be several sideline events during the 66th UNGA. Some of the events Bangladesh will participate are mentioned below:

(i) Ministerial meeting on Commitment to accelerate progress on MDGs, 21 September 2011:

At the sidelines of the 66th UNGA, Bangladesh along with Japan, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Viet Nam and Zambia is co-sponsoring a Ministerial Meeting on Commitment to accelerate progress on MDGs. The event will be held on 21 September 2011 at 1.15 pm-2.30 pm. Mr. Koichiro Gemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN and Mr. Anthony Lake, Executive Director of the UNICEF will be present at the event.

The aim of the Event is to strengthen political momentum for achievement of the MDGs and share good practices.

Bangladesh has made significant achievement in attainment of the MDGs. We have already achieved two of the three Health related MDGs (MDG-4 and MDG-5) and is well on track on achieving the other goals. In line with Bangladesh’s commitment in accelerating progress on the MDGs, Hon’ble Foreign Minister is expected to attend the Ministerial meeting.

(ii) High-level Meeting on “Nuclear Safety and Security,” 22 September 2011

Following the Fukushima devastation, nuclear safety has become a highly important and sensitive issue. The Fukushima plant which damaged by the March 11 earthquake and ensuing tsunami, resulted in leakage of radioactive substances into the atmosphere, triggering a crisis. Against this backdrop, the UN Secretary-General has announced a
high-level meeting on nuclear safety on September 22. During this Meeting, a UN system-wide study will be presented that will deal with the implications of the Fukushima accident as well as the possibilities of how nuclear disaster risk preparedness can be made better.

(iii) The seventh Conference Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Friday, 23 September 2011

The seventh conference to promote the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will take place on 23 September 2011 in New York. The aim of the conference is to examine how hold-out States can be brought in to sign and ratify the Treaty for it to come into effect. It will bring together representatives of ratifying States, States Signatories, and States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty.

Since the last conference the Treaty was signed by one more State – Trinidad and Tobago – and ratified by four – the Central African Republic, Ghana, the Marshall Islands and Trinidad and Tobago. Thirty five of the 44 Annex 2 States, whose ratification is needed for the Treaty’s entry into force, have ratified the Treaty, including three of the nuclear weapon States: France, Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. The nine remaining States are: China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States.

General and complete disarmament is a constitutional obligation for Bangladesh. Pursuant this obligation, Bangladesh is seen at the forefront of all disarmament related initiatives. Bangladesh, as the first South Asian country, signed and ratified the CTBT. The decision to ratify the CTBT received highest commendations of leading world leaders and government.

(iv) UN Private Sector Forum, 20 September 2011

As a result of the success of the 2008 UN Private Sector Forum on the Millennium Development Goals and Food Sustainability, the Secretary-General has decided to hold the Forum on an annual basis during the General Assembly debate so that the voice of the private sector can contribute to inter-governmental negotiations. Since 2008, the UN Private Sector Forum is held annually.

During the 66th UNGA the Private Sector Forum will be held on 20 September 2011, focusing on the role of the private sector in supporting the Secretary-General’s strategy on Sustainable Energy for All. This strategy will engage Governments, the private sector, and civil society partners to achieve three major goals by 2030:

1. Ensure universal access to modern energy services.
2. Reduce global energy intensity by 40 per cent.
3. Increase renewable energy use globally to 30 per cent.

Hosted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Private Sector Forum will feature high-level roundtable discussions among business, Government, civil society and UN
leaders. It is designed to maximize interaction, increase understanding of efforts underway and generate a range of commitments to action around the Sustainable Energy for All goals.

Following are objectives for the Private Sector Forum:

- Galvanize support for the Secretary-General’s strategy on Sustainable Energy for All – through contributing to the development and execution of the strategy in the lead-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20;
- Create a shared understanding of the role of the private sector and the business opportunity in achieving sustainable energy for all;
- Provide a platform for companies, investors, Governments, foundations and civil society organizations to share the efforts they are undertaking and to publicize new commitments to action – individually and in partnership; and
- Inspire new forms of public-private partnerships and public policy measures to overcome systemic challenges at the country level.

Following an opening address by UNSG and brief keynote remarks over lunch, participants will engage in small round table discussions on a particular theme. Participants will be seated at tables of 10 with leaders from business, civil society, governments and UN. Discussions will be held on five themes: (i) Access to electricity, (ii) Access to cleaner Modern Fuels, (iii) Renewables, (iv) Energy Efficiency, (v) Water, Food and Energy Security.

Participants will be allowed to pre-select the theme and given briefing materials. Discussion on each topic will include cross-cutting issues, including financing, technology, capacity building and skill formation.

A maximum of 350 participants may attend with approximately half from the public sector and half from the private sector. Participants will include the following: HOSs/HOGs, CEOs, Heads of UN Agencies, Funds and Programs, Heads of Civil Society Organizations, Heads of Business Associations and Foundations, Heads of Investors or Groups, CEOs or C-Suite Officials from Companies.

(v) 35th Annual Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China:

The Thirty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 will be held at UN Headquarters in New York on Friday, 23 September 2011, in Conference Room 2 (NLB) from 10:00 a.m. to 01:00 p.m. in the morning and from 03:00 p.m. to 06:00 p.m. in the afternoon. The Ministerial Meeting will be preceded by the Twenty-third Annual Meeting of Senior Officials of the Group of 77 on Thursday, 22 September 2011 from 03:00 p.m. to 06:00 p.m. in Conference Room 2 (NLB).

In accordance with the decision taken by the Special Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 held on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary (Caracas, 1989), the deliberations of the Thirty-fifth Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 will
take place in the format of an exchange of views and interactive dialogue among Ministers focused on priority issues. Accordingly, there will be no formal list of speakers for the Ministerial Meeting.

(vi) Ministerial Meeting to follow up on the implementation of the Paris commitments related to children associated with armed forces and armed groups:

This Meeting is co-hosted by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alain Juppe, the Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. Anthony Lake and the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflicts, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy. The Meeting is scheduled to be held on Friday, 23 September 2011 at 03:00 p.m. The Meeting will be an opportunity to Assess the implementation of the “Paris Principles” launched at the International Conference “Free Children from War” (Paris, February 2007), Draw attention to the need for additional funds for successful prevention and reintegration programmes and monitoring and reporting on compliance by parties to armed conflict, Exchange information between affected countries and donors on the lessons learned and next steps, For more Member States to endorse the Paris Commitments in order to contribute to the protection of children from recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups.

(vii) OIC Annual Coordination Meeting of Foreign Ministers:

This regular Ministerial event has a special significance this year as it will offer the OIC states to take a strong position against Israeli unilateral attacks on Palestine. While attending the event, the Hon’ble Foreign Minister will express Bangladesh’s strong commitment for the realization of an independent, sovereign and viable State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, living side-by-side and in peace with all its neighbours. Bangladesh supports the Middle East Quartet’s call of 20 August 2010 to the Israelis and the Palestinians to launch direct negotiations on 02 September 2010 in Washington “to resolve all final status issues and fulfil the aspirations of both parties” with the aim of reaching a wide-ranging agreement within the next 12 months to end the region’s long-running conflict.

(viii) Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs):

This annual meeting will enable the countries to learn lessons from the Brussels Program of Action (BPoA) by analyzing what were the bottlenecks in the implementation, how far the individual LDCs could take benefit of it, what should have been in the policy framework absence of which made it difficult for LDCs, how far the development partners were generous in coming forward to assist under the framework of Brussels Program of Action. Following this meeting, the countries would start negotiating on what needs to be incorporated into the next plan of action.

Hon’ble Foreign Minister would make a statement for Bangladesh in which among other things, some specific demands keeping in mind the upcoming UN Conference on LDCs next year including expansion of resource flows into LDCs as per undertakings by developed countries, immediate commitment to write off all outstanding debts of all LDCs freeing their funds for development, allowing for immediate, bound duty free;
quota free market access to all products from all LDCs, elimination of all kinds of protectionism against LDC products, making rules of origin criteria realistic etc.

(ix) Working breakfast to discuss the matter related to the Asia cooperation dialogue (ACD)

The Working breakfast to discuss the matter related to the cooperation between the member countries of the Asia cooperation dialogue (ACD) will take place at 0800-0900 hrs on 20 September 2011 at Millennium Plaza Hotel in New York. Hon’ble Foreign Minister is expected to attend the breakfast. The meeting is expected focus on the upcoming 10th Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue to be held on 10-12 October 2011 in the State of Kuwait. The working breakfast will start with the welcome remark by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. This will be followed by the statement of the Foreign Minister of Iran transferring the Chairmanship of ACD to Kuwait.

The event will focus on the future of the ACD in light of the aspiration of its member states. The ACD coordinator will report of the activities under the Chairmanship of Iran. The new Chair will introduce a concept paper on the theme of the upcoming 10th Ministerial Meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue.

(x) Second Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking:

This is an informal meeting of the ‘Group of Friends’ united against Human Trafficking’ - Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Libya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Venezuela. The ‘Group of Friends’ has been actively involved in the process of implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, a comprehensive UN document, designed to harmlessly stakeholders in fighting the scourge of human trafficking and strengthen coordination among them.

The forthcoming 2nd Ministerial Meeting will provide a good opportunity to take stock of our common achievements in New York, Vienna and Geneva to discuss and explore with the participation of key United Nations agencies and other stakeholders possible further steps to ensure sufficient implementation of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

During the meeting, Bangladesh would underline the need of public awareness raising events with victims and other relevant stakeholders. We would also stress upon global partnership in tackling this heinous crime, which is also putting a heavy toll on us as each year as a significant number of our women and children are being trafficked through porous Bangladesh-India border and also to middle-eastern countries. Bangladesh will also urge the ‘Group of Friends’ will continue to work as a pressure group in addressing the issue.
(xi) Ministerial Breakfast Meeting on Increase Peace through Mediation:

The event will be co-hosted by H.E. Mr. Ahmed Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and H.E. Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland. The objective of the meeting is to reflect on recent mediation experiences and plan the way forward as follow up to the General Assembly resolution “Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict prevention and resolution”. Finland and Turkey are the initiators of the event. Other members of the friends of mediation are- Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Qatar, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania. The observers of the friends of mediation are – African Union, Arab League, ASEAN, European Union, OAS, OIC, OSCE and United Nations.

(xii) Ministerial Breakfast Meeting on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit sharing and the International treaty on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture:

The event will be organized by Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). Japan is the President of the tenth meeting of the conference of the parties to the CBD and Indonesia is the host of the fourth session of the governing body of the ITPGRFA. The Ministerial breakfast briefing on the event will be held on 22 September 2011 from 0800 to 0930 hrs. Opening remarks will be delivered by Japan as the President of the CBD and Indonesia as the chair of the ITPGRFA. The Executive Director of UNEP and Director General of FAO will also deliver their speeches. There will be two presentations on Nagoya Protocol and International treaty on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The event will concluded with questions and answers session.

(xiii) Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers’ Meeting (CFAMM) and Meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG):

The Annual Commonwealth Ministerial Level Meeting will take place in the sideline of the 66th UNGA on 22 September 2011. The meeting is expected to focus on upcoming 2011 CHOGM mandates, including the review of the role of the CMAG; progress with the Eminent Persons’ Group; the Network of Election Management Bodies; the ongoing mandate on Environment and Climate Change; the Small States Office in Geneva; and the Commonwealth Partnership Platform Portal. The meeting is also expected to discuss the global interface of the Commonwealth, and how the diversity and influence of the association can be best leveraged for the global good. Small states concerns, including the Mauritius+ 5 Strategy Review, will be discussed in the meeting. A brief discussion on the Commonwealth and its role in taking forward the implementation of the MDGs, as well as interface with the G 20 and preparation for the Rio + 20 Conference, LDC IV and 2011 CHOGM will be held.

A meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) will take place on 22 September 2011 in the sideline of the 66th UNGA. Bangladesh is one of the nine members
of this body. In the Meeting, the Ministers will have the opportunity to finalize the Group’s Report on strengthening the role of CMAG for CHOGM as well as the presentation to be made by the Chair of CMAG to the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, which will take place later that same day in New York. There will be a discussion on review of developments in Fiji.

(xiv) Luncheon Program organized by the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU)

The Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU) will arrange a luncheon program at the sideline of the 66th UNGA at 1200-1300 hrs of 19 September 2011. The BCIU is an organization of 125 multi-national corporations founded in 1955 by former US President Dwight D. Eisenhower. It promotes global dialogue on issues of common concern by bringing together business leaders with heads of state/government, key policymakers and senior officials of multilateral organizations.

The purpose of the luncheon program is to focus on the possibilities of expanding investment ties between Bangladesh and the United States. The invitees of the program include the CEOs and senior executives from leading companies in a variety of sectors including clean technology, e-governance, information technology, healthcare, energy, financial services and customer products. Hon’ble Foreign Minister is expected to join this luncheon hosted by Ellicott Dredges LLC, one of the members of BCIU and one of the largest and oldest manufacturers of industrial equipments.

V. An Overview of the current global scenario:

Given the current world scenario, it is necessary to assess during the 66th Session, how far the international community is from reaching the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular what can be done to overcome the dual challenges of economic down-turn and climate change. These challenges are interrelated, and therefore require a global response, through global partnerships. The perennial challenges of climate change have been worsened by the financial and economic crises. This is having disproportionate impact on developing countries, particularly the LDCs. Meeting these challenges successfully demands the sustained attention of governments, development partners, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. If not addressed adequately, it may generate or aggravate social and political instability in the affected countries.

As the world approaches 2015, the target date for meeting MDGs, there is a need to make an assessment as to the progress made so far, and to consolidate both international and national efforts to move forward towards achieving the goals. Bangladesh faces some challenges that may undermine the progress it has made so far in achieving the MDGs. Uncertainty in the RMG sector, which has been a major tool for reducing poverty and empowering women in Bangladesh, also negatively influences our national efforts to achieve the MDGs.
The global economy is experiencing a severe crisis, and is inflicting disproportionate negative impact on LDCs. Their exports, remittances, migration, investment, etc. have been seriously affected. Like other developing countries, Bangladesh economy is also not insulated from the crisis. The Global Recession has impacted our economy, primarily in three fronts: export, migration and foreign capital flows. Bangladesh’s main export item, Ready-made Garments, is facing dwindling demand, price and wage pressure. The outflow of our migrant workers is showing discouraging trend. These sectors are not only our key sources for foreign exchange earning but also the means of livelihoods of millions. The flows of FDI and ODA have also become uncertain.

The genesis of the crises, the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, has been in the undue confidence in the self-correcting strengths of market, lax regulation, unbridled greed of the executives of financial institutions and poor asset qualities. Higher degree of connectivity and integration of the international financial market have been the immediate reasons for its spread across the world. It is also discomforting to see that the crisis is turning out to be more prolonged and deeper than was initially anticipated. The recovery seems to become sluggish and costly.

The crisis is affecting global trading system, global finance, and most importantly development aspirations of the developing countries particularly with regard to their achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Such a prospect brings anxiety to the LDCs like Bangladesh, which do not poses the wherewithal to withstand such long and deep recessions.

Sharp contraction in exports, falling prices for primary commodities, declining remittances, severe credit crunch, and a massive withdrawal of private capital flows have led to contraction in the economic growth of the LDCs as well as rising unemployment and poverty. World Bank estimates shows that the current crisis trapped additional 44 million people in poverty between June and December 2010 because of the soaring food and fuel prices. Latest statistics from Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) puts the number of hungry people now at unprecedented 1.02 billion, which is one-sixth of the humanity.

There are reasons also to be worried at the prognosis of the world economy. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF), major economies have shrunk to the extent that global GDP growth as low as 1.9% in 2010. This would have definite negative impact on the LDC economies as falls in aggregate demands in the developed economies will contract our export prospects. Overall, the IMF expects reasonable global growth in the near-term—about 4-4½ percent through 2012. But the recovery remains unbalanced, and risks are clearly to the downside. Despite a sharp rebound in economic growth for many countries, the job-loss scenario is horrifying. The ILO predicted global unemployment stood at 205 million in 2010, essentially unchanged from 2009, and 27.6 million more than on the eve of the global economic crisis in 2007. The ILO also projects a global unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent, equivalent to 203.3 million unemployed, through 2011.

This is not merely an economic crisis for the LDCs, but one that threatens to have far-reaching ramifications in their social and human domains. It has pushed millions of their
people below the poverty line and into hunger through loss of employment both at home and abroad, exports, incomes, savings, remittances, social welfare, and so on and so forth. The crisis compels the LDCs to divert their scarce resources from development to programmes adopted to cope with the immediate adverse impacts of the crisis.

Such a bleak outlook necessitates immediate, collective and forceful actions at all levels. Delay in tackling the underlying problem means a more protracted economic downturn and even greater costs. The LDCs will need urgent support from the international community on a sustained basis commensurate with the impact of the crisis. Restoration of global economic health and recovery from the current recession is in the interest of all. The LDCs would need assistance particularly in the areas of maintaining a robust growth rate, stable employment, investments in physical and social infrastructure, as well as expansion of the social safety nets for the poor and the vulnerable.

The measures that need to be adopted for immediate recovery should include

I. Restoration of the three critical global public goods essential to economic growth: market confidence and economic stability, a well-functioning financial system, and an open trade regime.

II. Maintaining critical investments in infrastructure, education and health

III. Adoption of countercyclical policies and programme to compensate for the fall in private demand.

IV. Protection of the poor and the vulnerable through expansion of the social safety nets.

There is also a growing demand to undertake a comprehensive reform process to redress the lack of legitimacy and democratic deficits in the Breton Woods Institutions (BWIs) that have significantly lost their effectiveness and public support. Developing countries in particular the LDCs are seriously under-represented in the BWIs. The governance regime of the BWIs needs to be overhauled. There must be fundamental reform of the institution's voting system and accountability structure. Significant redistribution of voting power in favour of the developing countries, in particular the LDCs, should be the overarching objective of such a reform.

On the political front, the situation is no less complicated than it was a year ago. The Arab Spring is a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests – visible widely in the Arab world. Since 18 December 2010, there have been revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt; a civil war in Libya; civil uprisings in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen; major protests in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, and Oman, and minor protests in Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. The protests have shared techniques of civil resistance in sustained campaigns involving strikes, demonstrations, marches and rallies, as well as the use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Skype, to organize, communicate, and raise awareness. Many demonstrations have also met violent responses from authorities, as well as counter-demonstrators. A key slogan of the demonstrators in the Arab world has been "The people want to bring down the regime".
Many of these political developments are threatening to jeopardize international peace and security. Palestine question remains unresolved, and suffering of the Palestinian people continues unabated. Despite some initiatives by Obama administration, Palestinian statehood with Jerusalem as its capital still remains an illusion. The indictment of Sudanese President by ICJ in 2008 has added fuel to an old problem making job of our peacekeepers on ground even more difficult. An expected democratic transitions, as well as improvement of human rights situation in Myanmar seem to be as distant as ever. All these issues will be debated in the upcoming UNGA with renewed intensity. The recent ICJ verdict on Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of Independence will remain as a contentious issue this year. Bangladesh delegation will have to maintain a delicate balance in these discussions as one or another big power is involved directly with these sensitive issues.

The United Nations Wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in New York and in Geneva were extensively involved in the work of the United Nations during the 65th UNGA, including in the six main Committees of the General Assembly, both as a country delegation as well as through our membership in the NAM, Group of 77 and China, OIC, and LDC. Our main focus was on issues related to economic and social development, environment, humanitarian affairs, human rights, and peacekeeping. Like in previous years, Bangladesh voted affirmatively in most of the resolutions that were voted upon. Thereby, it imprinted a positive image of Bangladesh among the UN member states. In addition to making country statements on various issues, Bangladesh delegation contributed to the informal consultations throughout the session in line with our principled positions. Our delegation was thus able to maintain its traditional high visibility in the deliberations during the 65th UNGA and would do its best to maintain the same during the 66th UNGA.
ISSUES OF INTEREST TO
BANGLADESH

AT THE 66TH UNGA
Following are some key issues of interest for the Bangladesh delegation during the 66th session of UNGA:

(a) People’s uprising in the Arab World and its impact on Bangladesh

In the recent time, the Arab world is experiencing a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests. The key slogan of these demonstrators has been "The people want to bring down the regime". Since 18 December 2010, there have been revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt; a civil war in Libya; civil uprisings in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen; major protests in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, and Oman, and minor protests in Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. The protests have shared techniques of civil resistance in sustained campaigns involving strikes, demonstrations, marches and rallies, as well as the use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Skype, to organize, communicate, and raise awareness. Many demonstrations have also met violent responses from authorities, as well as counter-demonstrators.

Political unrest sweeping through parts of the Arab world is set to hurt Bangladesh's labour market and remittance earnings posing challenges to the economy of Bangladesh. The restive region hosts around 75 percent of the country's migrant workers. In 2009-10 fiscal year, Bangladesh earned a remittance of $10.99 billion, of which $7.22 billion was sent by workers in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Libya and Iran. Bangladesh had more than 60,000 nationals working in Libya before violence erupted in the oil-rich North African nation and received remittance of $1.46 million in the fiscal year of 2009-10. Of the 60,000 Bangladeshi workers in Libya, 22,047 were brought back from February 28 to March 15, 2011 following the fighting between rebel and government forces. The future of other workers is uncertain as most of the construction works where Bangladeshi workers were involved remain stopped due to fighting and the number of workers that has been brought back is rising with the time.

Rehabilitation of the affected Bangladeshi workers from this social and political turmoil, widely in the Arab world is one of the challenging tasks for the present government. Bangladesh government and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed an agreement to provide Tk. 50,000 (USD 680) reintegration grants to 36,500 Bangladeshi migrant workers forced to return home from Libya. Again, the agreement, financed by a USD 40 million World Bank loan to Bangladesh signed in May, will also reimburse to International Organization for Migration. Nearly 31,000 Bangladeshi workers flew home during the early days of the crisis, mainly from Tunisia and Egypt that was organized by the IOM and the government of Bangladesh which demonstrates the government’s commitment to support the expatriate workers through rehabilitation followed by the political turmoil in the Arab World.
Libya

The 2011 Libyan civil war has been an ongoing armed conflict in the North African state of Libya being fought between forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi and his regime and those seeking to depose him. The extraordinary event leading to armed struggle began on 15 February 2011 as a series of peaceful protests were met with military force by the Gaddafi regime. The protests escalated into an uprising that spread across the country, with the forces opposing Gaddafi establishing a coordinating body based in Benghazi named the National Transitional Council (NTC) on 27 February whose goal was to overthrow the Gaddafi-led government and hold democratic elections.

Subsequently, the International Criminal Court warned Gaddafi that he and members of his government may have committed crimes against humanity. The United Nations Security Council passed an initial resolution (1970) freezing the assets of Gaddafi and ten members of his inner circle, and restricting their travel. The resolution also referred the actions of the government to the International Criminal Court for investigation. In early March, Gaddafi's forces rallied, pushed eastwards and re-took several coastal cities before attacking Benghazi. On 17 March 2011, a further U.N. resolution (1973) authorised member states to establish and enforce a ‘No-fly Zone’ over Libya. The Gaddafi government then announced a ceasefire, but failed to uphold it. On 30 April 2011, Libyan government spokesperson Musa Ibrahim claimed that Saif al-Arab Gaddafi, a son of Muammar Gaddafi, was killed in an air-strike in Tripoli as well as 3 of Saif al-Arab’s nephews and nieces.

So far the Western backing of the NTC headed by Chairman Mustafa Abdul Jalil included aiding the Council financially, politically and morally; enforcement of ‘No-fly Zone’ through a series of air strikes by French, British, Norwegian (Norway withdrew its troops in August 2011), Italian and the US air forces; infiltration of CIA and M16 operatives to organise and coordinate rebel activities. Up until now, some 30 countries including the USA, the UK, Canada, France and Italy have extended recognition to NTC as the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people. Meanwhile, Russian Federation issued a decree on 12 August 2011 endorsing its support of the UNSC Resolution 1973, which authorises establishment of a ‘No-fly Zone’ over Libya and use of all necessary measure to protect the Libyan civilians. Russian decision may be seen as a major blow against the regime.

Libya has been suspended from the United Nations Human Rights Council for “gross and systematic” human rights violations. The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/65/L.60), entitled “Suspension of the rights of membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Human Rights Council”, with consensus, without a vote (03 March 2011). A total of 73 Member States co-sponsored the resolution.

Bangladesh joined the consensus and made the following statement:

“Bangladesh has been following recent developments in Libyan Arab Jamahiriya with concern. We are profoundly shocked as well as concerned at the onset of violence and human rights violations which have generated a sense of insecurity in the region. We hope for a peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis and an early return to normalcy. Bangladesh is also concerned at the safety of all
expatriates living in Libya. Safety and security of everyone within the Libyan territory, including around 60,000 Bangladeshi expatriates is threatened in a big way. Bangladesh, therefore, calls upon all concerned to exercise maximum restraint in dealing with the humanitarian catastrophe in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.”

The rebel fighters have made dramatic advances on Tripoli from the East-West and South of Tripoli, particularly in the second week of August 2011. They are in control of greater part of Brega and Al-Zawiyah and plan to lay seize around Tripoli bringing it to collapse. Recently, the world media portraying that the rebel fighters have apparent control over Tripoli. However, now, the greatest challenge for the NTC would be stabilize the country, particularly in the political, economic and social dimensions.

Members of the Libya Contact Group – the UN, European Union, NATO, the League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, Gulf Cooperation Council, and, by invitation, the African Union in their final communiqué after a meeting in Istanbul urged the UN Security Council to pass the proposed resolution to release assets frozen under United Nations sanctions to the country’s transitional authorities to help them set up a government in the North African nation. Significantly, the United States has introduced a resolution at the U.N. Security Council to unfreeze $1.5 billion in Libyan assets for urgent humanitarian needs. The draft resolution proposes releasing up to $500 million for international humanitarian organizations and to help fund a U.N. humanitarian appeal. It further proposes unfreezing up to $500 million for the purchase of fuel for electricity, water plants and hospitals, as well as other goods; and a final slice of up to $500 million for expenses related to the Transitional National Council for the provision of social services, including education, healthcare, food subsidies and other humanitarian needs. The Libya Contact group also agreed that the UN should lead all international efforts aimed at helping Libya in the post-conflict period and emphasized that currently, the NTC is the sole representative of the Libyan people. Media reports indicate that forces supporting the National Transitional Council (NTC) have taken control of most of the country.

Arab League has already recognised the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC), the rebels' political leadership. At the same time, through a Resolution 7370, the Council of the League of Arab states, at its Extraordinary Session held at the Ministerial Level on 27 August 2011 in Cairo, also called on the UN "to permit the National Transitional Council to occupy the seat of Libya in the United Nations and its various organizations." Significantly, an OIC delegation participated in the Libya Contact Group Meeting at the level of political directors held in Istanbul under the Co-Chairmanship of Turkey and Norway on 25 August 2011 declaring that the NTC is the sole representative of the Libyan people. Again, the OIC Secretary General reiterated OIC’s full support to the NTC in the coming stage which requires the multiplication of efforts for reconstruction, reinforcement of the foundations of good governance, promotion of human rights, expansion of political participation and comprehensive development in order to be able to face the growing political, social and economic challenges. However, it is not yet clear whether the statement of the OIC Secretary General conforms to the group position since member states' official position is not known. However, some OIC members, like Kuwait's has recognized the NTC. Significantly, India, being a non-permanent member of
the UN Security Council, has not yet recognized the NTC. Similarly, the views of like-minded countries, like Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia are not known.

The African Union (AU) is reportedly divided on the question of recognizing the NATO backed NTC. While South Africa and Zimbabwe condemned NATO’s role and said the International Criminal Court (ICC) should probe possible human rights violations committed by NATO forces in Libya. However, its recent action suggests that South Africa is also engaged with the NTC. A total of twenty African states of AU, such as Rwanda, Cote d’Ivoire, Chad, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Ethiopia recognized the TNC.

The UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon during a conference in Paris on 1 September 2011, underscored the need for continued assistance of the United Nations to support Libya to face the humanitarian challenges, as well as to ensure a democratic and stable nation. He also focused that some 860,000 people has left Libya since February 2011. The Secretary General also added that he would convene a high-level meeting on Libya on 20 September in New York on the margins of the 66th Session of the UNGA.

**Bangladesh Position**

Bangladesh has been closely observing the current developments in Libya and following the UN Security Council’s actions and deliberations. Bangladesh had 60,000 migrant workers in the Libya. The safety and security, as well as reinstatement of Bangladeshi workers are of prime concern to the government of Bangladesh at this challenging hour of mass uprising and instability in the county.

The Chairman of the NTC Executive Office, Dr. Mahmoud Jibreel, has requested the Hon’ble Foreign Minister of Bangladesh to support the NTC to reoccupy the seat of Libya at the United Nations, particularly when it will be placed before the upcoming UN General Assembly. Following the NTC-backed rebels entry into Tripoli, most of the UN Security Council members felt that it would be rather premature to react to various unpredictable developments of Libya before the final outcome had become apparent. Nevertheless, in this rapidly changing situation in Libya the NTC has been increasingly seen as the sole representative of the Libyan people and most of the powerful and developed countries have recognized NTC or have been engaging with the NTC. Against the scenario and considering the interests of the Libya based Bangladeshi expatriate workers, and most importantly our continued support for democracy and peace, Bangladesh may closely observe the ongoing situations of Libya and the role of NTC before taking any specific position, particularly on the issue of full and formal recognition of the NTC as the sole legitimate Governmental authority of Libya. Bangladesh may need to be ready to recognize, or to engage with the NTC provided that it is inclusive of all major political groups of Libya.

**Syria**

The 2011 Syrian uprising is an ongoing internal conflict in Syria. Protests started in 26 January 2011, and escalated to an uprising by 15 March 2011. The uprising is influenced by concurrent protests in the region, and has been described as "unprecedented". The demands of protesters include for President Bashar al-Assad to step
down, for the ruling Baath Party to allow other political parties, to end extrajudicial killings and torture, equal rights for Syria's ethnic and religious groups, and broad political freedoms, such as freedom of press, speech and assembly.

The violence escalated as the crisis wore on, with the killing reaching its highest level in this early August. Activists, fleeing civilians, and soldiers who defected claimed that soldiers who refuse to fire on civilians are executed by the Syrian Army. The Syrian government has denied the reports of defections and blames "armed gangs" for causing trouble.

Media reports indicate that allegedly more than 2,000 protesters have been killed, many more injured, and thousands detained, while the Syrian government says armed Islamist elements in the country are responsible for the civilian casualties and the killing of more than 340 members of the security forces. However, the use of deadly force has been condemned by the United Nations, the Arab League, and several countries.

The Human Rights Council in Geneva on 23 August 2011 has adopted a resolution on the "human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic", and decided to dispatch an "Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI)". The passage of the resolution comes at the end of a Special Session held at the request of the delegations of Poland and the European Union and backed by 24 Member States and 32 Observer States. This is the second Special Session held on Syria this year; the first was convened on 29 April 2011. Together with China, Russia requested that the draft resolution be put to a vote, and eventually it was adopted by 33 votes in favour, 4 votes against and 9 abstentions.

In response, Syria regretted the fact that this resolution remained political and unbalanced. It also argued that the resolution sent a mistaken message which poorly described the situation. The authors of the draft refused to respond to the attempts to change the resolution in order to make it more balanced, and this reflected the clear will to intervene politically in an independent and sovereign country. Finally, Syria had declared on 22 August 2011 that it was prepared to receive a mission of inquiry from the Office of the High Commissioner. This statement, however, had not been favourably welcomed by the States who prepared the draft resolution and this confirmed their determination to politically condemn Syria and to pass over any proposals for reform that existed in Syria.

**Bangladesh Position**

Bangladesh does not support any country specific resolution in the Human Rights Council or in the Third Committee. Following this principled position, Bangladesh abstained during the voting on resolution on Syria in the Special Session. Bangladesh believes that the engagement and dialogue with the country concerned are very crucial to improving the human rights situation. The country should not be isolated by naming and shaming which is proved to be counterproductive, and further deteriorates the situation.

Bangladesh did not make any statement at this Session. However, at the First Session in April Bangladesh made a statement in the following line:
“Bangladesh believes that as the Human Rights Council is mandated to address promotion and protection of human rights, the Council should also look for objectivity and impartiality in responding to a human rights situation. Human rights should be kept over political maneuvering. Bangladesh also believes in the promotion and protection of human rights through peaceful dialogue and engagement with the country concerned. Appreciating the cooperation extended by the Syrian Government to the Council, Bangladesh underscored the institutional changes adopted so far by the Syrian Government were positive steps”.

In this particular case, Syria’s willingness to cooperate and preparedness to receive a mission of inquiry from the Office of the High Commissioner should have been taken into consideration, and actions could be taken towards positive directions. However, with the adoption of this resolution the international community perhaps has missed an opportunity to bridge the gap with Syria. Bangladesh does not believe in interfering in a sovereign country’s domestic issues and their right to choose. At the same time, Bangladesh remains optimistic that the situation would be addressed with the dialogue and engagement with Syria. Hence, as a Member State of the UN, Syria will be able to exercise their sovereign rights in order to improve their domestic situation.

The Republic of South Sudan

A referendum took place in Southern Sudan from 9 January to 15 January 2011, on whether the region should remain a part of Sudan or become independent. The referendum was one of the consequences of the 2005 Naivasha Agreement between the Khartoum central government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M). A simultaneous referendum was supposed to be held in Abyei on whether to become part of Southern Sudan but it has been postponed due to conflict over demarcation and residency rights.

On 7 February 2011, the referendum commission published the final results, with 98.83% voting in favour of independence. While the ballots are going to be suspended in 10 of the 79 counties for exceeding 100% of the voter turnout, the numbers of votes are still well over the requirement of 60% turnout, and the majority vote for secession is not in question. The predetermined date for the creation of an independent state was set 9 July 2011. The independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011 is widely seen as the manifestation of the long-cherished aspirations of the people of South Sudan for self-determination.

A new transitional government will preside over a fixed term from 9 July 2011, during which a broadly consultative review process should yield a permanent constitution. Two factors will shape the coming transition more than any others: the degree to which the ruling SPLM will allow a genuinely multi-party system to take hold, and how much internal democratic reform will be allowed within the SPLM. The international community must recalibrate its relationship with the SPLM, and position itself as a supportive, but impartial, partner to the people of South Sudan and its new government. This includes continued support in development of infrastructure, professionalizing the security services, and diversification of the economy.
Sudan after the South's Independence

On 9 July 2011, Africa’s largest country split in two, formalising the long-awaited independence of South Sudan following decades of war and acrimony between North and South. While the January 2011 referendum on Southern self-determination passed relatively peacefully, under close international scrutiny, tensions mounted in months leading up to the South’s independence. Khartoum’s army recently invaded the long-disputed Abyei area and triggered conflict in South Kordofan – both regions could remain contentious for the foreseeable future.


The dispute over Abyei -- a territory geographically, ethnically and politically caught between North and South -- is one of the most intractable in Sudan. The region was given special status in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Following months of recurring incidents, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in May 2011 took control of Abyei, citing an alleged attack by Southern Sudanese police forces on a UN convoy carrying SAF troops. Tens of thousands have since been displaced, and the UN has reported at least 100 civilian casualties. The Government of South Sudan (GoSS) declared the invasion an “act of war”, but has showed significant restraint and vowed to not retaliate. Bashir and South Sudan President Salva Kiir reached an agreement on 12 June that all Sudanese Armed Forces troops will be withdrawn by 9 July and replaced by the Ethiopian-led UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), approved by the UN Security Council in late June.


Both Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile were heavily contested during civil war between North and South, and will likely be areas of continued instability and insecurity well beyond the South’s independence. Violence in South Kordofan intensified ahead of the gubernatorial and state assembly elections, held on 2 May. After weeks of fighting and negotiation, the two sides finally came to an agreement on political and security issues in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. The Two Areas Framework Agreement, signed on 28 June, was a promising development, which recognizes the concerns of the northern SPLM leaders and the SPLA units they control. However, it was a basic agreement on which to build, and commitment from Khartoum was soon withdrawn. Sections of the 2,100 km border remain hotly contested. Mounting militarization on both sides makes it highly unstable. The two parties have tentatively resolved to create a 10km demilitarized zone along the border. This arrangement may indeed be necessary to help avoid renewed North-South hostilities, but a predominantly military operation will struggle to cultivate an environment of mutual trust and confidence in border localities. A complement of civilian monitors is necessary to support cross-border initiatives, dispute resolution, and local border management. http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/key-issues/preventing-implosion-in-sudan.aspx - #

The North’s problems will change little with Southern independence. Bashir’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP) is yet to address the root causes of Sudan’s chronic conflicts, and is facing security, political and economic challenges. The party’s hardliners are determined to solve these issues militarily and has effectively ended debate on Sudan’s diversity, remaining committed to an Arab-Islamic identity for all Sudanese and is ready to sub-divide key states to accommodate political barons. At the same time, NCP rank and file is increasingly discontent with its leadership and its approach to dealing
with the current situation. Despite austerity measures, the government is facing a serious budget deficit and spiralling inflation. Government revenue is low and it is not able to pay salaries. Food, fuel and other commodity prices are on the rise, and development projects and activities in periphery states are almost stopped. The opposition parties are trying to position themselves for post July 2011, but are weakened by the decision of some of the traditional parties to enter into unilateral negotiations with the NCP. Unless the opposition parties present a more unified front, it is quite likely that the NCP will continue to stymie attempts to reform the government.

On 2 September 2011, the UN Secretary General called for an immediate end to the fighting in Sudan’s Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states and for access for humanitarian agencies to the affected areas. Mr. Ban added that he was deeply concerned about the deterioration of the security situation in Southern Kordofan, which had been the scene of fighting between Government forces and members of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), as well as the eruption of fighting in Blue Nile state. Mr. Ban also welcomed the recent efforts led by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, to help the parties resolve their differences through peaceful political means.

Recently, the UN called for a thorough investigation into violations of international law committed in Southern Kordofan which it said could, if substantiated, amount to crimes against humanity or war crimes. A preliminary report, produced jointly by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the former UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), described a wide range of alleged violations of international law in the town of Kadugli, as well as in the surrounding Nuba mountains, during the month of June. Reported violations included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and illegal detention, enforced disappearances, attacks against civilians, looting of civilian homes and destruction of property, as well as massive displacement.

Bangladesh Position

Bangladesh accorded its formal recognition to the Republic of South Sudan on 20 July 2011. In the statement issued on the occasion, Bangladesh wished the Government and the people of the new Republic a peaceful and prosperous future. Bangladesh pledged its full commitment to support the Republic in its journey towards consolidation of democracy, sustainable development and equitable social justice. Significantly, in the 65th General Assembly, Bangladesh was among the co-sponsors of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution “Admission of the Republic of South Sudan to membership in the United Nations (A/RES/65/ 398)” that admitted the Republic of South Sudan into the United Nations as its newest member on 14 July 2011. The Bangladesh Contingent of Peacekeepers comprising of more than 1500 troops played an important and constructive role under the United Nations Missions in Sudan (UNMIS) in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January 2005 that led to the full independence of the Republic of South Sudan.

Tunisia
The Tunisian mass uprising was an intensive campaign of civil resistance. The events began in December 2010 and led to the ousting of longtime President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011. The demonstrations were precipitated by high unemployment, food inflation, corruption, lack of freedom of speech, and other political freedoms and poor living conditions. It was apparently a peaceful revolution.

The confused hubbub of political voices in Tunisia has already led the country’s election commission to reschedule a ballot on October 23, which was originally scheduled for last 24 July to elect a constituent assembly. This delay is aimed at giving time for the seething political waters to calm down so that orderly and transparent elections can be held. The electoral commission demanded more time to also register the country’s three million voters into the electoral database. The October poll is expected to create a constituent Assembly which would write a new constitution for the country and decide on the character of the government of the future — Presidential or, Parliamentary. A plethora of new parities have sprung — the total number being 81.

Egypt

The 2011 Egyptian revolution took place following a popular uprising that began on 25 January 2011. The uprising was mainly a campaign of non-violent civil resistance, which featured a series of demonstrations, marches, acts of civil disobedience, and labour strikes. The uprising took place in Cairo, Alexandria, and in other cities in Egypt, following the Tunisian Revolution that saw the overthrow of the long-time Tunisian President Ben Ali. On 11 February, following weeks of determined popular protest and pressure, Egyptian President Mubarak buckled and resigned from office.

On 11 February, Vice President Omar Suleiman announced that Mubarak would be stepping down as president and turning power over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. The junta, headed by effective head of state Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, announced on 13 February that the constitution would be suspended, both houses of parliament dissolved, and that the military would rule for six months until elections could be held. A constitutional referendum was held in Egypt on 19 March 2011. A parliamentary election was planned by September 2011, with groups already working to create new political parties, promote candidates and increase turnout among their supporters. However, elections to the Parliament have been deferred until November 2011 by a decree of the ruling military council. Accordingly, election of a new President would be put off until next year, effectively leaving the Supreme Council in control. The declaration came amidst strong protest by the youth groups who spearheaded the mass movement earlier. Meanwhile, trial of the ousted President Hosni Mubarak has begun in August 2011.

(b) Palestine

The 66th UN General Assembly is expected to consider the issue of welcoming the Palestinian Authority as a new UN member state. Bangladesh is one of the first few countries to accord recognition to the State of Palestine. It is important that the international community respects the will of the Palestinian people and hopes that all
parties involved will take a pragmatic path that will contribute positively to the successful implementation of the Road Map for Peace in the Middle East. Bangladesh is committed to the Palestine cause and its solidarity with the Palestinian people in their just struggle for self-determination and statehood. We also hold that a comprehensive settlement is the key to a lasting peace in the region, with wide ramifications for the rest of the world. The relevant UN resolutions, the Arab Peace Plan and the Middle-East Road Map could be the basis of such negotiations.

Bangladesh and Palestine hold identical views on many international issues and work closely in multilateral forums and committed to the United Nations, OIC, NAM, and other regional and international bodies to promoting international peace, cooperation and security on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the non-interference in the internal affairs and peaceful resolution of all disputes.

The issue of Palestinian prisoners has a major impact on both, the Palestinian society and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In that context, the release of a substantial number of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons and other detention facilities, as well as the immediate release of the imprisoned members of the Palestinian Legislative Council would constitute a positive step towards establishing a climate of mutual trust needed to resume the permanent status negotiations.

The rival Palestinian groups, Fatah and Hamas have signed a landmark reconciliation pact aimed at ending their bitter four-year rift. The Elders’ Foundation welcomed the reconciliation agreement, and urged the world leaders to support the Palestinian unity. The Elders’ Foundation, in a letter, addressed to the Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh underscored the need to demonstrate a fresh approach to its pursuit of a visible two-state solution of the issue of Palestine and Israel based on international law and respect for the fundamental human rights.

According to the recent Palestinian statistics, there are currently around 6000 Palestinians held in 22 prisons and detention camps in Israel and in the West Bank, of these 300 prisoners are under the age of 18. Among the prisoners are also 37 women and some 10 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

**Bangladesh Position**

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides that “The state shall uphold the right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social, economic and political system by ways and means

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1 The Palestinian political organisation, has reached an agreement with its rival Hamas on forming an interim government and fixing a date for a general election. A ceremony marking the deal, which was mediated by Egypt, took place on 3 May 2011 at the Egyptian intelligence headquarters in Cairo. Speaking at the ceremony, the Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal said his faction was "ready to pay any price" for reconciliation among Palestinians.

2 The Elders are an independent group of eminent global leaders, brought together by Nelson Mandela, who offer their collective influence and experience to support peace building, help address major causes of human suffering and promote the shared interests of humanity.
of its own free choice; and support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism.” In line with the constitutional commitment Bangladesh has consistently supported the right cause of self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Bangladesh wants to see an immediate freeze on the expansion of Jewish settlement as well as dismantling of existing ones in the occupied territories. Bangladesh is also concerned about the unilateral blockade imposed by Israeli authorities. Such and other repressive measures affect the lives and livelihoods of the Palestinian people. Their economy stands crippled and in the process, social, political and economic institutions building are held back.

Bangladesh condemns in its strongest terms the attacks on the Palestinian people in Gaza and West Bank and the deaths of innocent Palestinians, including women and children. Bangladesh also considers that there is no pretext that can justify killings of innocent civilians; no argument can justify the breach of international humanitarian laws and human rights standards. Bangladesh condemned the recent Israeli attacks on the Freedom Flotilla carrying humanitarian aides to the besieged people in Gaza.

Bangladesh welcomes the initiatives taken on Palestine particularly the relevant UNSC Resolutions, Arab Peace Plan and the efforts made by the Quartet (UN, USA, EU and Russia). Bangladesh made forceful intervention on 13 July 2009 at the NAM Committee on Palestine³, of which it is a member. At this meeting, Bangladesh underscored that its solidarity with the Palestinian cause has been consistent and unwavering and its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people constitutes a cornerstone of Bangladesh’s Foreign Policy priorities.

Recently, through a note Note Verbale, the Government of Palestine conveyed that it would pursue the full and formal membership of the state of Palestine at the United Nations in the upcoming UNGA. At the same time, the Government of Palestine would also pursue the observer status of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Presently, Palestine is enjoying observer status of the UN by General Assembly Resolution 52/250 since 1998. They have the right to participate in the general debate, but cannot vote or put forward candidates. Bangladesh has formal diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine, and hosting an Embassy of the State of Palestine in Dhaka. Bangladesh votes in favor of all the resolutions in the UN and other international fora in support of Palestine. During the 66th UNGA, on the issue of the full and formal membership of the State of Palestine at the United Nations, Bangladesh may not only support the rightful claims of

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³ The NAM Committee on Palestine was established during the 7th NAM Summit (New Delhi, 1983) with an aim to support the right of the Palestinian people in accordance with international law. The mandate given to the Committee at the VIIth Summit was to work with the various forces influential in the Middle East conflict for the achievement of a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East which will enable the Palestinian people to exercise their rights in freedom and sovereignty in their independent homeland. The Committee is composed of the following twelve members: Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Egypt (Chair), Palestine, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
the State of Palestine but also co-sponsor any possible resolution in order to accord UN’s full membership to Palestine.

(c) Bangladesh Position on UN Reform and Related Issues:

- Bangladesh attaches great importance to multilateralism and the central role of United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of international cooperation.

- We believe that effective reform of the United Nations can truly help reenergize the system, and enable the organization to reflect the realities of the contemporary world. However, for any meaningful and justifiable reform, there must be a convergence of positions of all member-states.

- The issues involved in the UN reforms are very complex and decisions on these should be taken by broadest possible consensus.

- Bangladesh has been playing an active role in New York in the reform exercise. Bangladesh Permanent Representative was appointed as a facilitator from Asia to assist the President of UNGA in facilitating negotiation on the issue.

Development issues:

- Bangladesh believes that the reforms of the UN must be centered around development, the greatest challenge of our times. The UN Summits and Conferences including the Millennium Summit reaffirmed the centrality of development in global efforts.

- Bangladesh is committed to achieving the MDGs by 2015. However, there is a need for an enabling international environment conducive to development, market access for our products, capacity building to take advantage of these opportunities, a transparent and participatory financial system, and a long-term predictable flow of financial resources to developing countries to achieve it.

- We recall that the Millennium Declaration in 2000 placed poverty reduction at the heart of global co-operation. The countries that have recorded good progress should be rewarded with sufficient resources to accomplish the goals by 2015.

- Bangladesh welcomes the recent commitments made by some developed countries, including the European Union, by setting definitive timetables for achieving the target achieving the ODA target of 0.7% of GNP. We also urge our development partners to achieve the ODA target of 0.20% of their GNP for the LDCs.

- Bangladesh supports all innovative financing mechanisms to finance development including the International Finance Facility that supports an immediate front-loading of ODA commitments.

- We would call for immediate cancellation of all debts of the LDCs freeing up the much-needed funds for these cash-strapped countries.
Products of all the LDCs must have **duty-free market access** to their destinations, NTBs should be eliminated right away, and assistance should be rendered to overcome supply-side constraints.

**Peace and Collective Security issues:**

- We believe that development and security are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing, and that this linkage should be fully reflected in UN policy framework and actions.
- Bangladesh attaches particular importance to the principle of **non-use of force** and **peaceful settlement of disputes** as a means of achieving the new collective security system.
- We need to strengthen a "**culture of peace**" among the nations and promote prevention as a means of achieving a new vision of collective security.
- Bangladesh, which tables a resolution on "culture of peace" every year in the General Assembly, calls upon the Member States to further the idea through promoting dialogue and co-operation among civilizations.
- Bangladesh’s commitment to **UN peacekeeping** is unflinching. We remain fully engaged, in our modest way, in the international community’s effort to maintain international peace and security.
- We supported creation of the intergovernmental **Peace building Commission** which we hope would help prevent post-conflict societies from sliding back into violence. All stakeholders, including the troop-contributing countries, should be involved in its functioning.
- Bangladesh unequivocally condemns **terrorism** in all its forms and manifestations. We believe that the international efforts to combat terrorism would be more effective and reinforced if the root causes of terrorism could be addressed more effectively.
- We have already ratified 13 of the 14 **UN anti-terrorism conventions** and the question of signature/accession of the remaining one is under active consideration.
- We need to accelerate our efforts in the General Assembly to conclude a **comprehensive convention on terrorism** that would include a widely accepted definition of terrorism.
- Bangladesh’s **disarmament** records are impeccable. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. We are committed to the NPT and the CTBT. We are also party to other disarmament and non-proliferation treaties including the CWC, the CCW, the APMT and the BWC.
- Bangladesh believes that non-proliferation is only an issue in the larger debt of total disarmament. Non-proliferation, both vertical and horizontal needs to be pursued at tandem.
Human Rights issues:

- Bangladesh believes that **development**, **security** and **human rights** form a conceptual triad that the UN's activities should be based upon. We have faith in an international society based on rule of law at the national as well as at global level.

- We emphasize on the **universalisation of human rights** standards and non-selectivity of its application.

- We wish to see **strengthened UN human rights machinery** that would ensure effective enjoyment by all of all human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well as right to development.

- We have taken note of the proposal to establish the **UN Democracy Fund** which may contribute in capacity-building programmes of Member States, who specifically asks for such assistance, in establishing and strengthening their democratic governance structure.

Strengthening the United Nations:

- We reaffirm the central role of the **General Assembly** in the UN system as its chief deliberative, policy-making, decision-making and representative organ.

- We welcome all efforts directed towards revitalization of the General Assembly including the achievements already made in rationalizing its agenda.

- We welcome revitalization of the **ECOSOC** and its proposed role as a high-level policy-making organ on issues related to economic and social development.

- Bangladesh favours reform of the **Security Council**, which would provide opportunity to the entire UN membership to be represented in the Council and to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. We should strive for a formula that would serve all States, big, medium and small.

- Expansion of the Security Council should be guided by certain principles, which ultimately aim at enhancing the Council's credibility and democratic profile through its working methods and its decision-making processes.

- Bangladesh believes that any increase in the membership of the Council should be based on certain criteria which includes,
  
  a) The respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the aspirant's contribution to international peace and security;
  
  b) Its proven track-records in democracy;
  
  c) Its compliance with the UN resolutions;
  
  d) Its avowed commitment to nuclear disarmament and its profile as a major partner in development;
  
  e) Its contribution as voice of the economically disadvantaged countries.
Collective efforts would be needed for reaching a consensus on the basis of a truly democratic and transparent negotiation process. Consultations on this important issue should be broad-based.

We welcome all efforts in improving the working methods of the Security Council making its decision-making process transparent, inclusive, democratic and fair.

**UN Security Council Reform and Bangladesh Position**

**Main Issues of UNSC Reform:**

Reform of the United Nations Security Council encompasses the following five key issues:

(i) **Categories of Membership:** There are several proposals regarding increase of membership of the UNSC. Such as-

a. Enlargement in both permanent and non-permanent 2-year seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of current permanent members,

b. enlargement in both permanent and non-permanent 2-year seats but not with the prerogatives and privileges of current permanent members,

c. enlargement in non-permanent 2-year category only, abolishment of the permanent category etc.

(ii) **The question of the Veto:** Right of veto given/not given to new permanent members, elimination of the right to veto, requirement of two vetoes, veto not permitted on matters relating to UNSG election, R2P, crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, rules to overturn/overrule a veto, formalize explanation for use of veto etc.

(iii) **Regional Representation:** selection criteria for new members according to equitable geographic distribution, development status, civilization or religion, demography, contribution to international peace and security, etc.

(iv) **Size of an enlarged Security Council and Working Methods:** Size of an expanded Council (modest, low/mid-twenties, 25,26,31), Working methods – increase number of public meetings, consultations with/participation of Troop Contributing Countries (TCC), availability of information, documentation, timeliness, formalize rules of procedure, use Chapter VII only as last resort/after chapter VI, etc.

(v) **Relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly:** relationship between UNGA and UNSC, role of GA on matters related to peace and security (articles
A total of three hundred and forty three (343) ideas were generated focusing on these five key issues. All are on the table.

Bangladesh General Position:

- Bangladesh has been actively involved in the process of the Security Council Reform. As a Member of the Task Force on Security Council, Bangladesh assisted the President of the 64th UNGA to reach an agreement.

- On the issue of Security Council reform, Bangladesh maintains a principled policy stance, conforming to the views of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) that the reform of the Security Council should reflect the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries, in an objective, rational, non-selective and non-arbitrary manner; closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum; council must comply with the provisions of article 31 of the Charter and rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure; objective of sanctions are not to punish or otherwise exact retribution on the populace; in stead of excessive and quick use of Chapter VII, efforts should be made to fully utilize the provisions of Chapters VI and VIII for the pacific settlement of disputes; chapter VII should be invoked, as intended, as a measure of last resort.

Bangladesh position on specific issues:

i. Enlargement: Bangladesh believes that decision to grant permanent membership to a country should be judged by its commitment to the UN and its contribution to international peace and security, and not by the benchmark of national wealth or military power. It should also entail taking over greater responsibility, both in terms of financial resources and political support for efforts undertaken by the UN in the areas of peace, security and sustainable development.

Bangladesh maintains that a decision to expand the permanent membership of the Council should also take into account a country's records in democracy and its compliance with the UN resolutions.

ii. Veto: Bangladesh stresses the need for developing some mechanism to restrict the right of veto. Bangladesh maintains that increasing number of countries with veto power would not necessarily make it more representative but would rather undermine its
effectiveness. For any meaningful and justifiable reform, there would have to be a convergence of positions of all member states. Collective efforts would be needed for reaching a consensus on the basis of a truly democratic transparent negotiation process.

iii. Regional Representation: Bangladesh supports expansion of membership on the basis of principles of equitable geographical distribution and sovereign equality of states. However, at the same time, Bangladesh holds that "equitable regional representation" in the Security Council may not automatically ensure justice and fair play. It is often possible that a Security Council member, more specifically one with veto power, may not always "represent" the interests of the countries of the region to which it belongs. In such cases, the particular UNSC member state could possibly be guided by its own perceived or real national interests" and not by the interest of the group it may geographically represent.

Bangladesh also believes that any reform in the UNSC should take into account the population of a country. Thus Asia should have greater representation in the expanded Security Council. Similarly, Africa given its large membership in the UN also deserves adequate representation in the larger Council.

Any reform of the Council should adequately reflect the interests of the smaller developing countries, which constitute a strong numerical block in the UN and therefore, have vital stakes in an effective Council.

iv. Size of an enlarged Council and working method: Bangladesh endorses the NAM position that increase in membership should not be less than 11, based on principles of equitable geographical distribution and sovereign equality of states. The focus of reform programme should be on addressing the decision-making processes of the body rather than expanding privileged membership. The reform exercise should fundamentally address the imperatives of ensuring legitimacy, credibility, objectivity, accountability, representative participation and enhancing transparency of the Council. For any meaningful and justifiable reform, there would have to be a convergence of positions of all member-states. Collective efforts would be needed for reaching a consensus on the basis of a truly democratic and transparent negotiation process. Bangladesh further feels that the efforts for reform should not be bound by any imposed deadline.

v. Relationship between the Council and General Members: nil

Current Structure of the Security Council:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Permanent Seats</th>
<th>Non-Permanent Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia (54 countries)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa (53 countries)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRULAC (33 countries)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEOG (29 countries)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>Size of the Expanded Council</td>
<td>Breakdown of Seats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-4 (6 July 2005)</td>
<td>25 member</td>
<td>Permanent Seats -6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-permanent Seats - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New permanent member would not exercise veto power for 15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Union (14 July 2005)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Permanent Seats -6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-permanent Seats - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-3 -Brazil, India and Germany (7 January 2006)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Same as G-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Candidates</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (March 2006 - not formally placed)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Permanent Membership without veto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Candidate countries, which would muster the support of 2/3 (128) member states, would gain permanent membership. Other candidates would become semi-permanent members with terms longer than the two years for current non-permanent members. Current nonpermanent members cannot serve more than one term consecutively but the semi-permanent members would be allowed to do so.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*United for Consensus: Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Kenya, Algeria, Italy, Spain, Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. Their draft resolution proposes adding 10 nonpermanent members immediately eligible for re-election to the Security Council, leaving formalities of re-election and rotation to regional groups.

**(d) The Fight against Drought, Land Degradation and Desertification**

The fight against drought, land degradation and desertification are one of the most discussed global issues. It is a result of complex interactions among physical, chemical, biological, and also socioeconomic and political problems. The international community has recognized the phenomenon as a major economic, social and environmental problem that is local, national, regional and global in nature. It is estimated that currently more than 250 million people are affected directly owing to land degradation and over one billion people are at risk.

Bangladesh has a total land surface of 12.31 million hectares. The per capita availability of land for agricultural production is about 0.07 hectares. On an average Bangladesh is losing about 82,000 hectares of cultivable land annually due to increase in population and conversion of agricultural land to urbanization, industrial estate, brickfields, roads and highway and other physical infrastructures. Land degradation is affecting about 6.0 million hectares or about 43 percent of the total land area of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh would be the worst victim of climate change and will loose 17% land in the southern part if sea level rises about one meter. Salinity intrusion in the southern region cause physiological dryness and reducing crop productivity at a large scale. On the other hand northern region of Bangladesh is facing drought condition due to low rainfall, intensive flood, low vegetation cover, high temperature and wind speed. The droughts of 1994-1995 in the northwestern districts of Bangladesh led to a shortfall of 3.5 million tons of rice production. As a result our food security is at risk. So, Bangladesh there is facing continuous challenges with regard to the country’s development and people’s advancement.

Having background of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) with main objective to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in the affected countries through effective action at all levels with international support and cooperation the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) signed UNCCD in 1994 and ratified it in 1996. As per obligation of the convention Bangladesh has prepared National Action Plan (NAP) for combating desertification in August 2005. The NAP has identified eight thematic areas: 1. Understanding the desertification scenario, 2. Promotion of awareness and capacity building, 3. Institutional arrangements, 4. Reclamation and rehabilitation of degraded land to promote sustainable utilizations of land resources, 5. Land degradation/desertification mitigation and poverty alleviation strategies, 6. Promotion of active participation of communities in land management programmes, 7. Proper location of construction sites and physical infrastructures, 8. Research and technology development.

The Government of Bangladesh has promulgated the National Forest Policy, 1994 and approved the Forestry Sector Master plan (1995-2015). Both the documents have emphasized the afforestation program in the country to bring forest with 20% coverage and increase the protected areas by 10% of the reserve forest land by 2015 through the coordinated efforts of GO-NGOs and active participation of the people.

To combat desertification, land degradation and drought in the northwestern part of Bangladesh, Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) has been established in 1992 under the Ministry of Agriculture. The authority has so far implemented 18(eighteen) development projects and another 12 development projects (e.g. Barind Environmental Balance Restoration through Afforestation Project, Command Area Development and Training Project, Phase-II, Barind Rainwater Conservation and Irrigation Project ) are being implemented to combat desertification in the region.

Government of Bangladesh has already taken several other projects like Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP), Afforestation in the Northern Region, Plantation Programme in the Coastal belt and its adjacent Char areas, Development of a “National Drought Monitoring System (NDMS)” based on remote sensing techniques, Community based conservation of forest, Reduction of Carbon Emission through Establishment of Sonaichari Botanical Garden, Bhatiary, Chittagong, Livelihood Adaptation to Climate Change (LACC-II) Project to combat Desertification, land degradation and drought. Government has taken initiatives to upgrade NAP and aligned it to the UNCCD 10-years Strategic Plan and Framework.
Bangladesh has already completed its 4\textsuperscript{th} National report on the implementation of United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Over the last few years increased awareness among common people, increased participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Science and Technology Institutions (STCs) to address the Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) related issues. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2005, National Adaptation Programme of Action, 2009, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, 2009 (in which food security is given top most priority) have already been prepared. Bangladesh has established a Climate Change Trust Fund to minimize the negative impact of climate change.

Different projects under social forestry and agro-forestry is already been completed. During 1999-2010 nearly 19,790 hectare Woodlot, agro-forestry, Charland plantations & 8,566 Km Strip plantations have been harvested and replanted under Forestry Sector Project (FSP) with the total sale proceeds of 296.70 crore Taka. In total 85,900 participants received Taka 132.39 crore as their shares as per the agreed participatory Benefit Sharing Agreement (PBSA) during this period. More over, at present 4.65 million hectare land available for social forestry.

A considerable progress so far has been made in the thematic areas identified in the NAP. The main constraints are: 1. Poor information on the causes of and extent of the desertification problem, 2. Lack of information management system and weak early warning system, 3. Lack of trained experts and field level workers, 4. Weak programme planning owing to inadequate information, coordination at all levels and sustained financing for implementation, 5. Lack of sustained and higher longer-term commitments for aid from the development partners and technology transfer as well. However, we need to work hard to cope with the adverse impacts of drought and land degradation.

Bangladesh needs to establish a “Rehabilitation Fund for Climate Refugees (RFCR) for the purpose of rehabilitation. As a result of the sea level rise as well as desertification, drought and land degradation, a huge number of people will loss their habitat and their livelihood. In this regard, Bangladesh needs adequate technical and financial support from the international community. Bangladesh is requested to host the TPN 7 with the assistance of international community by means of technical and financial support. As because all the climatic catastrophes seriously affecting the development of Bangladesh especially to the costal region of the country. Here it is notable that the issue of coastal land degradation has been recognized under TPN 7 (Thematic Point Network) with the consent of the secretariat of UNCCD. International assistance is also needed for the Implementation of UNCCD 10-years Strategic Plan and Framework and to address DLDD related issues.

Bangladesh welcomes setting up a Regional Cooperation Unit (RCU) as decided in decision 6/COP5, decision 11/COP6 and COP-7, The unit could play a vital role in understanding desertification scenario as well as ways and means for combating desertification at country level as well as at regional level. In order to implement the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) effectively, promotion of regional and
international cooperation is essential. Bangladesh would like to work with the international community to combat desertification both at regional and global level.

(e) Oceans and the law of the sea and Bangladesh’s maritime delimitation issues

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international Convention that creates and codifies a new and comprehensive package of international legal norms and standards for the law of the sea with a view to achieving a "just and equitable international order" governing ocean space. Comprising 320 articles and nine annexes the Convention is often considered to be a 'package' governing a large number of interrelated issues of common or conflicting interest relating to the law of the sea including issues of national jurisdiction and sovereignty such as delimitation of territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf, transit passage etc. as well as issues of international jurisdiction and cooperation such as the high seas and the common heritage of mankind, economic and commercial activities such as deep sea mining, environmental pollution control, scientific research, transfer of technology and the settlement of disputes between States relating to delimitation matters which entered into force on 16 November 1994.

The Convention was the culmination of 16 years of multilateral negotiations based on consensus under the auspices of the UNGA and was adopted by a vote of 130 in favour, 4 against and 17 abstentions on 23 April 1982. The Final Act of the Conference was signed in Montego Bay in Jamaica on 10 December 1982 where 119 Sates (including Cook Islands and the UN Council for Namibia) signed the Convention on the first day. Bangladesh ratified the Convention on 27 July 2001.

The Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention entered into force on 28 July 1996. The Agreement is to be interpreted and applied together with the Convention as a single instrument. As of 15 November 2010, there were 160 States Parties, including Bangladesh.

The implementation of its various provisions has major bearing on the national interest of Bangladesh. Ratification of UNCLOS 1982 enables Bangladesh to claim areas of the Continental Shelf (CS) beyond the normal limit of 200 nautical miles and up to 350 nautical miles in the Bay of Bengal. International experts consider this additional area as potentially the richest in terms of oil and gas deposits in the seabed.

One of the key political initiatives of the present Government to attain a time bound solution to the long-standing maritime delimitation issue is the initiation of arbitral proceedings on 8 October 2009, in accordance with the provisions of UNCLOS-1982. It is a welcome development that both the neighboring states have responded positively to Bangladesh’s proposal. It is expected that the matter would be resolved within the next 4-5 years, and it would be an important breakthrough for the optimum utilization of Bangladesh’s ocean resources towards national development. Maritime delimitation would facilitate the path of off-shore activities and extrication of valuable oil and gas resources from Bangladesh’s maritime zones.
Bangladesh has completed necessary studies including hydrographic survey of the coastal and near waters of Bangladesh, for the construction of a baseline from which areas of national jurisdiction such as the Territorial sea, EEZ and continental shelf of Bangladesh will be measured. In addition, a geophysical and geological survey over the extended continental shelf of Bangladesh has also been done, based on which our claims to a shelf extending to 350 nautical miles would be established.

Bangladesh reaffirms its commitment to the principle that the “rights of the coastal State over the continental shelf do not depend on occupation, effective or notional, or any express proclamation”. It strongly endorsed the inclusion in the resolution of this fundamental doctrine of the continental shelf, as a means of clearing ambiguities that might exist concerning coastal States’ entitlements beyond 200 nautical miles based on natural prolongation. Bangladesh further noted that with individual States defining their entitlements, overlaps were expected, such as the claims in the Bay of Bengal by Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar to overlapping shelf areas.

Bangladesh believes in the equitable solution of the maritime spaces as enshrined in the article 74 and 83 of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea. Bangladesh may take the position that she believes in peaceful settlement of disputes and having failed to achieve a negotiated boundary for more than 35 years, it initiated proceedings before the tribunal in relation to the delimitation of the maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal between Bangladesh and Myanmar as part of the peaceful settlement of disputes as allowed under Part XV of the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The case has been listed as the case no 16 of the list of cases. We are also grateful to the President of the ITLOS for fixing the time limit of submissions, memorial and counter memorial, reply and thus we are hopeful that Bangladesh should be receiving a judgment by early 2012, which might be shortest time limit in the history of maritime boundary jurisprudence.

Recently, Bangladesh has began submission of its case concerning delimitation of the maritime boundary with Myanmar at the International Tribunal for Law of the Sea (ITLOS) for equitable solution of the long running dispute (8 September 2011). The Hon’ble Foreign Minister, Dr. Dipu Moni, MP has strongly presented Bangladesh's views on equitable sharing of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf in the Bay of Bengal against Myanmar's method of equidistance. Referring to the concavity of the Bay of Bengal's north coast, the Hon’ble Foreign Minister stated "despite a coast of several hundred kilometers, equidistance would leave us with just a small, wedge-shaped area of maritime space, all of it less than 200 nautical miles from our coast. It would deprive us of any access to the outer continental shelf". During the submission, she has underscored that the concavity combined with the location of the country's land boundaries with Myanmar to the east, and India to the west, makes the equidistance method wholly unsuited to produce an equitable solution.

During the 66th UNGA, we may highlight that the above arrangement would allow Bangladesh for exploration and exploitation of sea resources which is so essential for our economic emancipation. As far as delimitation of maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh is concerned, we think that the selection of arbitrators in the case between
Bangladesh and India, which is continuing in the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in the Hague, is a right step. We are hopeful that a peaceful solution of the maritime boundary issues in the Bay of Bengal will be seen as landmark decision in the jurisprudence of the maritime boundary delimitation.

Bangladesh, during the general debate, may strongly emphasize on the need for cooperation, including capacity-building and transfer of marine technology, to ensure that all states, least developed countries in particular, were able to benefit from the sustainable development of the oceans and seas. Noting that some estimates of climate change-induced sea level rise would inundate 15 to 17 per cent of the low-lying coastal area of Bangladesh, we may also underscore the urgency of addressing the climate change issue under the Assembly’s agenda item on oceans and Law of the Sea.

(f) An Overview of the Progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Bangladesh

In the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, which was attended by all 191 member states (as at 2000) of the United Nations, it was agreed on a farsighted declaration to meet the emerging needs of the world’s poorest population. That declaration gave birth to eight goals to be achieved by 2015.

The Millennium Development Goals are:

1. MDG-1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. MDG-2: Achieve universal primary education
3. MDG-3: Promote equality between men and women and empower women.
4. MDG-4: Reduce child mortality.
5. MDG-5: Improve maternal health
6. MDG-6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. MDG-7: Ensure environmental sustainability
8. MDG-8: Develop a global partnership for development.

Apart from these, the MDGs have also set 21 targets and 60 indicators.

Bangladesh Progress in MDGs

As a proactive member of the United Nations, a thought leader in promoting the agenda for development and poverty reduction through innovative social enterprises, Bangladesh as a signatory to the United Nations Millennium Declaration is deeply committed to achieve the MDGs by 2015. As per UN MDG monitoring guidelines, the bench mark for the MDG achievement period has been set between 1991 and 1995. Accordingly as per these criteria, Bangladesh is on track in case of most of the indicators measuring progress in attaining MDGs by. But in case of some of the indicators Bangladesh is yet to achieve the expected level of progress and is lagging behind in some of the targets.

Goal-1: Bangladesh’s performance to achieve MDG-1 on reduction of poverty level by 50% by 2015 is on track. In 1991 poverty headcount ratio in Bangladesh was 58.8% which reduced to 49.6% in 2000 and 31.5% in 2010. The other poverty
indicators such as poverty gap ratio, proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption, prevalence underweight of children under 5 year of age also reduced. The poverty gap ratio was 17.0 percent in 1991 which reduced to 6.5 currently. If this trend continues, the MDG target of halving the population living under the poverty line (from 58.8% to 29%) would be achieved well before 2015.

Goal-2: Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary enrollment. Initiatives have been taken to introduce preschool education to prepare children for formal schooling. Proportion of students starting grade one to the students reached grade five was 40.7 percent in 1991-92 which increased to 79.8 percent in 2009. The current Government plans to enroll all primary education age children by 2011 and is in the process of implementing a comprehensive National Education Policy to achieve its objectives. The National Plan of Action for EFA 2003-2015 and the government’s medium plan reflect the MDG targets.

Goal-3: Bangladesh’s achievement in gender equality and empowerment is praiseworthy and internationally acclaimed. The ratio of girls and boys in primary and secondary education stands at 51:49 and 53:47, thus the MDG target is achieved. However, the ratio of women to men in tertiary education is 36:64 which needs attention. The ratio of literate women to men aged 20-24 years stands at 46:64 which also needs attention.

Goal-4: To reduce child mortality is the 4th MDG where the progress of Bangladesh is on track. The Millennium Countdown Report– Countdown to 2015 (UNICEF, 2008) places Bangladesh among only 16 countries in the world that are on track to achieve MDG 4 on child mortality. The successful programs for Immunization, the Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases and Vitamin-A supplementation are considered to be the most significant contributors to the decline in child and infant deaths along with potential effect of overall economical and social development.

Goal-5: Bangladesh is also on track in the improvement in maternal health where Maternal Mortality Rate per 100,000 live births reduced from 574 in 1990 to 320 at present. However, the proportion of birth attended by skilled health personnel is still 24.4% which needs attention.

Goal-6: Bangladesh has increased its campaign in creating awareness regarding HIV/AIDS. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh currently is less than 0.1% and thus is still below an epidemic level. The spread of other deadly diseases like malaria, tuberculosis are also under control. There was a significant improvement in the reduction of malarial deaths in the country over the last few years.

Goal-7: Bangladesh is perusing programmes and policies for sustainable environment. The department of forest is working for increasing the aorestation programme. Government is trying to popularise environment friendly devices in transportation and other mechanical devises. At present there is only 19.2% of land in Bangladesh having tree cover with density of 10 percent and above. Based on the spatial dimension, the area having tree cover is much closer to the target (20%) set by the government but the density is much less than the target (>70%). Arsenic contamination in ground water is a great challenge for safe drinking water. Access to safe drinking water increased to 97.8 percent in 2009 from 89.0

Goal-8: Bangladesh is trying with utmost sincerity for global partnership for regional and global development. But, between FY1990-91 and FY2008-09, the share of disbursed ODA in Bangladesh’s GDP has more than halved (5.6% in FY1990-91 to 1.93% in FY2008-09). During this period, per capita ODA disbursement declined from $15.75 to $12.01 with an average of $12.29 and the relative share of grants declined from about half of ODA to less than one third. It is the responsibility of the global community to support Bangladesh to combat the challenge of global warming and climate change, poverty and vulnerability and food insecurity.

At the 66th UNGA, the Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to attend the “Desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” on the 19 September 2011. Moreover, the HPM is expected to deliver a keynote speech on the “Economic Empowerment of Rural Women and Food and Nutritional Security” on 21 September 2011. She will attend a dinner event on the “Vision of Digital Bangladesh” on 19 September; a high level meeting titled “Every Woman Every Child’ on 20 September; and the “Private Sector Forum” on 20 September 2011. In the above meetings, she will highlight Bangladesh’s MDG success and will call for global assistance in her government’s endeavour to achieve the remaining targets. This year Bangladesh will co-sponsor a Ministerial meeting titled “Commitment to Accelerate Progress on MDGs” on 21 September 2011 together with Japan.

(g) Food Security and the challenge of MDG-1 on Hunger and Poverty

Ensuring food security is one of the major targets of the overarching goal of eradicating poverty and hunger, the first of the MDGs. This is also one of the most important agenda of the present government of Bangladesh. To achieve Vision 2021 and to attain the MDG goals, the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has undertaken several measures to achieve food security through, among others, increased agricultural and livestock production. These measures include:

- Ensuring production and supply of quality fertilizer and use of balanced (with proper ratio of phosphate and potash in particular ) fertilizer;
- Reducing the prices of fertilizer to an affordable level for the farmers;
- Reducing the cost of irrigation through lowering diesel price;
- Providing price incentive to the agricultural products;
- Ensuring timely supply of quality seeds; and
- Providing the farmers with technology support in terms of storage and quality control.

The producer prices of rice have been increased in recent years. Domestic procurement target has also been increased from 1.25 million metric ton in 2007-08 to 1.5 million metric ton in 2008-09 and 1.6 million metric ton in 2009-10. The Government of Bangladesh has increased its budget for food support in its Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP). The allocation to Safety Net in the FY 2011-2012 is 2.908 million MT, which was 2.770 million MT in 2010-11. The government has also imported a large amount of food grain to build a
safe public stock in 2010-11 to distribute food grain among poor and vulnerable people through public food distribution system. A GO to GO Agreement with Vietnam Government has been signed to ensure food availability during emergency period. Similar agreements with Thailand, Ukraine and Myanmar are under process.

The present government has also taken initiatives to increase its storage capacity of food grain up to 3.0 million MT by 2020. As of 23 July 2011, the public stock of food-grain in godowns is 1.06 million MT. The present government’s Food Policy provides a strategic framework to address key challenges Bangladesh that is facing in achieving food security in all its dimensions and is aligned with the PRSP, National Agriculture Policy and other related government policies. Bangladesh is also working to adopt modern technology in the areas of biotechnology, post harvest technology, agro-processing & value addition, use of ICT in agriculture, GIS in agriculture, and weather forecasting including on flood and drought. The government has also established food security electronic database, virtual library and documentation centre.

It may be noted that Bangladesh took the initiative at the LDC Ministerial meeting during UNCTAD XII to form the UN Secretary General’s special task force to respond to the food crisis and soaring food prices for addressing the numerous problems that beset agriculture, food security, rural development and poverty reduction. More recently, Bangladesh has finalized the improved version of the Bangladesh Country Investment Plan (CIP) for agriculture, food Security and Nutrition following the "National Forum on improving the Bangladesh Country Investment Plan (CIP) held in Dhaka on 20 March 2011. The CIP is a country-led document formulated on the basis of wider consultation of stakeholders, an effort towards aligning with the UNGA 64/224 resolution. CIP has been incorporated in 6th Five Years Plan (FYP). The total cost of the CIP is estimated at US$ 7.8 billion. Of this, US$ 2.8 billion are already financed through allocated GoB budget resources and contributions by the Development Partners. The financing gap is therefore US$ 5.1 billion, of which US$ 3.4 billion has been identified as first priority requirements.

These measures, along with the need for supporting food security for vulnerable LDCs such as Bangladesh, were times and again highlighted by the Hon’ble Prime Minister at all international meetings on food security as well as on climate change. While attending the Global Food Security Summit in Rome on 16-18 November 2009 and the 65th UNGA in 2010, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for substantial contributions from the developed countries to address the challenges in ensuring food security in developing countries, which is critical for attaining the MDGs. She highlighted how the global financial and economic meltdown hit the poor in LDCs, including in Bangladesh, and how spiralling food price has already pushed the number of hungry people to an unprecedented 1 billion. Earlier at the 64th UNGA, Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for the need to agree on and implement sustainable agricultural policies, transfer of technologies, and equitable and fair trade rules for food and agricultural products with special and preferential treatment for LDCs.

At the regional level also Bangladesh has been deeply committed to pursue food security in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation initiatives, e.g. the SAARC Food Bank, the SAARC Disaster Framework, SAARC Food Security Programmes, SAARC
standard of Food Products, Trans-boundary movement of diseases and pests etc. Bangladesh is also participating actively in the activities of SAARC Agricultural Centre, SAARC Meteorological Centre etc. It has been working relentlessly for the effective functioning of SAARC Food Bank.

(h) Digital Bangladesh

As part of its national development strategy, the Government of Bangladesh took office with the vision of creating a digital Bangladesh by 2021. The National ICT Policy of 2002 gives importance to the issues of e-Governance, declaring that "the Government shall use ICT systems within the public administration to improve efficiency, reduce wastage of resources, enhance planning and raise the quality of services." The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh further approved a National ICT Policy 2009 on 1 April 2009 which is a revised version of National ICT policy 2002. The current ICT Policy is revised in line with the national goals, objectives and capabilities and incorporated all the issues which are not stated in the National ICT policy 2006.

In the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), it was decided that a knowledge-based society would be developed throughout the world by 2015, which is in line with the government's decision of building a digital Bangladesh by 2021. The government is now more prudent in taking steps towards their vision of achieving a digital Bangladesh.

To transform the current government into an e-Government, a separate body has been established for policy formulation and coordination of the e-Governance activities. Accordingly, the Government of Bangladesh had established an e-Governance cell at the Prime Minister's Office in 2006. The cell is in charge of the following activities:

1. Preparation and implementation of e-Governance Vision, Strategic Goals and Flagship Projects through a consultative process
2. Development of an infrastructure strategy
3. Development of a conducive, legal and regulatory framework
4. Coordination and implementation of a Human Resource Plan

The Access to Information (A2I) Programme with technical assistance from UNDP was initiated in September 2006 to support the e-Governance cell at the Prime Minister's Office.

The project aims:

1. To ensure the appropriateness of new initiatives and programmes for e-Governance within the context of national priorities.
2. To support the development of new projects and programmes for ICT for Development and provides technical assistance for monitoring and evaluation of these projects.
3. To prioritize and mainstream ICT into the national development policies and to assist in the development of a national e-Governance Vision and strategy that can harness digital opportunities for development in consultation with the stakeholders.
To identify emerging opportunities for ICT for Development initiatives and programmes in support of national priorities in the context of national e-Governance Vision.

**Objective:**

1. Provide technical assistance with the preparation and publication of a National e-Governance Vision setting in the context of local best practices and interests/expertise of various stakeholders.

2. Provide advisory services for the identification, formulation, strategic partnership and resource mobilization and establishment of results and performance-based monitoring and evaluation framework work for:
   a. e-Governance Driver Projects
   b. Enabling Environment Projects

Each project/component developed under this programme will have the following features:

   a. Meets national priority and adhere to the national e-governance vision.
   b. Sustainable after the completion of the project with or without assistance from other stakeholders.
   c. Demonstrates highest development impact.
   d. Primarily focuses on Government to Citizen (G2C) services delivery.
   e. Commonly agreed by all major stakeholders through an inclusive consultation.

3. Develop capacity of the e-governance cell aimed at strengthening skills and competencies to execute the projects undertaken by the cell.

4. Ensure coordination between relevant stakeholders. The e-government cell will address the existing problem of coordination by providing an effective platform to bring all stakeholders together including government, development partners, ICT4D CSO/NGOs, and the citizen at large.

The Government of Bangladesh has initiated a number of projects and programs to achieve the objectives of National ICT Policy 2009 and UN Millennium Development Goals. Notable ongoing projects and programs of the government under the Ministry of Science and Information & Communication Technology are given below:

1. Establishment of Basic Infrastructure of Hi-Tec Park at Kaliakoir, Dhaka
2. Establishment of Software Park in Dhaka.
3. Establishment of ICT Incubator in Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong
5. Establishment of Community e-Center at selected Upazilla
Establishment of National Data Center.

Training of the Government Officers and employees on use of ICT.

Establishment of the Office of the Controller of Certifying Authority.

Established a national committee for Standardization of Bangla for use of ICT.

National ICT Innovation Fair Launched

Mobile Banking Solution

ICT Division under MoSICT

Development of Specification for Bangla Coded Character for Information Interchange Bangladesh

Shared Access Centers for removing Digital Divide

4501 Union Information and Service Centers (UISCs) across the country were officially inaugurated on 11th November 2010. Former Prime Minister of New Zealand and UNDP Global Administrator Ms. Helen Clark visited Bangladesh in November 2010 to experience the historic event. The Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated Union Information Service Centres (UISCs) from her office in the city on November 11 2010 by talking through videoconference to UNDP global administrator Helen Clarke in Char Kukri-Mukri union of Char Fashion upazila of Bhola district.

At the country statement of the general debate of the 65th UNGA, the Hon’ble Prime Minister highlighted her government’s policy and aim to use ICT to accelerate socio-economic development. She mentioned that her government is determined to achieve a “Digital Bangladesh”, and transform it into a middle income country by 2021, the ‘Golden Jubilee Year’ of our nation’s independence.

At the 66th UNGA, the Hon’ble Prime Minister, during her deliberations in different high level segments and the UNGA General Debate, may highlight Bangladesh’s special focus, goals and achievements in ICT, its mission and vision to use ICT as an appropriate tool for poverty reduction and realizing VISION 2021 for the people of Bangladesh. Apart from that Bangladesh may promote this concept at the General Assembly and cosponsor a resolution and make statement on same under the agenda item, “Information and Communication Technology for Development’.

(i) Recognition of Bangla as an official language of UN

Recognition of Bangla as an official language of the UN was mooted by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the 64th Session of the UNGA and reaffirmed her request to the UN membership to declare Bangla as an official language of the UN at the General Debate at the 65th UNGA. The Hon’ble Prime Minister is expected to make a call again during the forthcoming 66th UNGA.

Mentioning that Bengali language was spoken by over 250 million people worldwide, the Prime Minister referred to the resolution adopted by the Bangladesh National Parliament requesting the UN to adopt Bengali as one of the official languages of the United Nations, and urged the UN membership, in view of the rich heritage of Bengali language and its singular place as a symbol of people’s faith in the power of languages to sustain cultures
and identity of nations, to support Bangladesh’s move in making Bengali as one of the official languages of the United Nations.

About 250 million people, in Bangladesh and elsewhere, speak in Bengali. Apart from Bangladesh and in the Indian State of West Bengal, it is also spoken by a significant number of Bengali-speaking diaspora all over the world. This is perhaps the only language for which people have laid down their lives.

It is in this spirit that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also stressed at the 64th GA that declaration of the International Mother Language Day by UNESCO was a recognition of the sacrifice made by the language martyrs of Bangladesh. Recognition of Bangla as an official language of the UN would be further honouring the International Mother language Day and reaffirming the rights of the 250 million people to speak at the UN in their mother tongue.

It may be recalled that at Bangladesh’s initiative, during Prime Minster Sheikh Hasina’s previous term in office, 21 February was declared as “The International Mother Language Day” by UNESCO, and is being celebrated throughout the world as a symbol of global struggle to save languages and cultures of different communities. Given the contribution of Bengali language in raising awareness in the international community about the importance of language in protecting cultures and traditions, Bengali deserves to be an official language of the UN.

Following the adoption of a resolution by the National Parliament of Bangladesh in April 2009 for recognizing Bangla as an ‘official language’ of the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in New York approached the Office of the Secretary General of UN and followed up the matter with the relevant departments of the UN Secretariat. Status of implementation of the issue is as follows:

a. The first requirement for such an initiative is to get the acceptance of the proposal through the General Assembly. Article 18 para 2 of the UN Charter states “Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations...and budgetary questions.” The inclusion of a new official language will involve huge additional expenditure on the part of the UN membership. Such inclusion has not been done since establishment of the UN after the Second World War. It is estimated that the approximate cost of translating one page into Bengali would be around US$ 2,500 (two thousand and five hundred USD). Each year, the UN publishes hundreds of thousands of pages for its official work.

b. Due to resource and financial constraints, UN is now finding it very difficult in getting documents published in all the existing six languages or in disseminating information through electronic means in all those languages. UN is now trying to establish English as the only working language because of the financial and logistic shortcomings. In many occasions, English and French are used as the only working languages of UN.

c. In the early 1980s, some German-speaking countries tried to include German as an official language of UN but failed. At present, there is a section in UN which prepares many of the UN documents in German language, but all the costs involved in this
regard are borne by Germany, Austria and Switzerland. An NGO approached the UN to include Hindi as an official language of UN. Subsequently UN informed the NGO that such proposal should come through the Permanent Mission of India. India did not approach UN through government channel to include Hindi as an official language of UN. Portugal also drew the attention of UN on the importance of the Portuguese language as it is spoken, apart from Portugal, by the people in Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, and by a good number of diaspora all over the world.

Bangladesh Mission in New York is following up the matter with the UN.

(j) Bangladesh Championing Women empowerment

Bangladesh today is globally acclaimed a champion of women empowerment through its women political leadership, political, social and economic empowerment of women and recorded achievement in equality and empowerment of women through the attainment of MDG 3.

Under the leadership of the Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina the government has initiated various programs and projects for the development of women and children which are making contribution towards the achievement of the targets set in the “Vision Paper 2021”. The Government has been implementing different programmes and projects to empower women and establish the rights of women and children by mainstreaming them in the overall development process of the country. The present Government has undertaken various programmes for alleviating poverty of women in Bangladesh. The prime objective of these efforts is to ensure women’s over-all development by ensuring their equal and active participation in the mainstream socio-economic activities including empowerment, stopping violence, preventing trafficking and ensuring safety in work places. Comprehensive initiatives are being undertaken to ensure women’s economic empowerment through skill development by providing extensive training, creating job opportunities, ensuring participation in labour market and providing support to the small and medium entrepreneurs.

The Government has taken various steps to protect the rights of women. Rights of women are recognized in the Constitution of Bangladesh. Apart from the Constitution, there are several enactments, rules and policies to deal with the matters related to women and children. Such new policy, laws/acts relating to women are - National Women Development Policy 2011, Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010, The Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act 2000 (Amended in 2003) (Nari O Shisu Nirjaton Domon Ain) etc.

The important programs/projects for empowerment of women are VGD program, Vulnerable Group Development for Ultra poor (VGDUP), Maternity Allowance in Rural Areas, Lactating Mothers Allowance for Working Mothers in Urban Areas, Early
Learning for Child Development Project, Multi-sectoral program on violence against women, Policy leadership and advocacy for gender equality (PLAGE II) etc. Projects and programs like hostel for working women, day care centers, distribution of sewing machines etc are playing positive role for the advancement of women. Department of Women Affairs through 64 district and 412 upazila offices, Jatiyo mohila Sangstha through 64 districts and 48 upazila offices and Bangladesh Shishu Academy through 64 District and 6 Upazilla offices are implementing various activities.

Under the program “Vulnerable Group Development (VGD)” a total number of 7,50,000 distressed and ultra-poor women have been receiving food assistance and development package training. Through this program 30 kg of wheat or rice per month per ultra poor women is being distributed. In 2010-11 an amount of Tk. 735,56.63 lakh had been allocated for this purpose.

Vulnerable Group Development for Ultra-poor (VGDUP) project provide life skill training on income generating activities as well as Nutrition, Primary Health, Human Rights, AIDS, Reproductive Health, Gender and Rights issues, Environment etc. In addition to the training to support 80,000 VGD women through subsistence allowance (in 24 months cycle Tk. 400/-for allowance, of this Tk. 350/- is cash payment to the VGD women, rest Tk. 50/- will be given after completion of the activities), asset transfer (Tk. 6500/- is given for procuring productive assets) and saving creation. So that they can engage in self employed income generating activities. An amount of Tk. 6130.00 lakh has been allocated to accomplish those activities in 2010-2011.

Micro-credit program has been taken to create opportunity for poor and distressed women to develop their socio-economic condition by self-employment. From 2003-04 to 2010-11 a total amount of Tk. 3225.00 lakh was distributed in 473 Upazilas through DWA officers among 60,588 women.

To facilitate women’s participation in income generating activities by providing 18 Daycare services and secured shelter to the children of age 6 months to 6 years. There are 13 Daycare Centers in Dhaka city and 5 Daycare centers in 5 divisional towns. In each centre 80 children are receiving services. A total of Tk. 155.04 lakh has been allocated for the fiscal year 2010-11.

Ten day care centers have been established under the development project 07 for the lower income group and 03 for the middle income groups. This project provides balanced food, primary health care, pre-school education and indoor games and recreational facilities to the children to ensure their sound physical, social and mental growth. The main objective of the project is to provide safe day care services to the children (6 months to 6 years) of lower and middle income working women.
The program “Yearly one Time Grant to the Women Volunteer Social Welfare Centres” is involving the rural poor women for the Development of socio-economic activities. Grants worth Tk. 3510.17 lakh has been given to 54,960 registered women associations from 2000-01 to 2010-11 fiscal year.

The Program “Maternity Allowance”, an amount of TK. 3696.00 lakh was sanctioned for 88,000 poor pregnant women in 2010-11 fiscal year. The objective of the project is to reduce mortality rate of poor mother and child, and to increase breast feeding.

There are 4 ladies Hostels for working women in Dhaka city and 4 hostels in districts level under the Department of Women Affairs. A total number of 1348 women have been accommodated through these hostels. It has been planned to construct two more hostels in Sylhet and Barisal.

Every year DWA distributes “sewing machine” to poor and trained women for making them self-reliant. A total number of 961 sewing machines have been allocated for distribution for the year 2010-11 of which 146 sewing machine were distributed by DWA.

To promote the women entrepreneur, Department of Women Affairs has established “Sells and Display Centre (Angana)” in its ground floor as sales and display center. It is functioning smoothly. This centre have purchased goods and materials amounting Tk 8028.15 lakh and sold Tk 8436.59 lakh and earned profit Tk 408.43 lakh from July 2000 to February 2011.

Under the programme “Women Support Centre” distressed, shelter less, helpless and oppressed women are given emphasis for rehabilitation and other (food, health, clothes) facilities. This Support Centre has given shelter to 4680 mothers from July 2000 to January 2011.

Construction is going on of 5 offices cum shelter homes and training centres to carry out the on going “Women support program” at 5 divisional towns to prevent violence against women. An amount of Tk. 1266.00 lakh has been allocated in 2010-11. Women and Children Diabetic, Endocrine and Metabolic Hospital is to extend treatment services to women and children through setting up 100 bedded hospital for women and children. An amount of Tk. 1120.00 lakh has been allocated in 2010-11.

The main activities of the pilot initiative entitled - Supply of Safe Drinking Water and Social protection of Women and Children from Climate Change effect is to supply of safe drinking water through establishment of deep-tubewell and rain water harvesting plant
and protection of women and children through renovation of toilets and awareness of health and hygiene. An amount of Tk. 300.00 lakh has been allocated in the year 2010-11.

Bangladesh, a signatory to the MDGs, CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) has been committed in attaining the objectives of ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women. Bangladesh Government has been actively engaged in formulating proactive policies and taking affirmative actions for accelerating the implementation process in achieving the goal of holistic empowerment of women. The recent victory of Bangladesh’s candidature to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for the term 2011-2014 represents the recognition of the global community to the approach of the present Government of Bangladesh. Mentionable, Bangladesh got elected securing a record 153 votes to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for the term 2011-2014.

The situation of women empowerment and gender equality is promising when one looks at the share of women in the highest policy making elected body – the National Parliament. During 1991-2001, there were 30 out of 330 seats in the National Parliament reserved for women. The situation of women in the National Parliament 42 seats (out of 330 including 30 reserved seats) in 1991, 43 in 1986, 41 in 2001, and then an increase to 64 seats in 2008. During the last four governments of parliamentary democracy women’s participation in the Parliament were 12.7 percent in 1991-95, 13 percent in 1996-2000, and 12.4 percent in 2001-06 and 19 percent in 2008. In the current parliament reserved seats for women have also increased to 45 from 30. This Parliament also got directly elected 19 women Parliamentarians (almost doubled). Moreover, the current government has the highest number of women as cabinet member (6 women members in the cabinet including the Hon’ble Prime Minister. The government has also taken a good move to appoint/select Deputy Leader of the House, Foreign and Home Ministers for the first time from Women Parliamentarians, which gives out positive message in ensuring political empowerment of women.

Table-6: Proportion of female member in the parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female member</th>
<th>Total seats</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991 (30+12) = 42</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 (30+13) = 43</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>13.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 (30+11) = 41</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>12.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 (45+19) = 64</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>18.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ensuring maternal health and reducing maternal mortality (MDG-5) is high priority agenda of the Government. It is strongly felt that improving women’s health including sexual and reproductive health and rights make significant importance in promoting
women’s economic empowerment. Healthy and empowered women provide more and better for children, families and communities.

During the 66th UNGA Prime Minster Sheikh Hasina is expected to deliver the Key-note speech as the Chief Guest of the event of UN Women and UNFPA entitled ‘Economic Empowerment of Rural Women and Food and Nutritional Security’. The Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon specially invited the Hon’ble Prime Minister to attend a special event on ‘Every Woman Every Child’.

(k) Promotion and protection of the rights of children


A five year term project entitled “Empowerment and Protection of Children” is being implemented by Bangladesh to create a culture of respect for children’s protection rights through development of child rights based and gender appropriate policies, advocacy, change of societal attitudes, strengthened capacity in government and civil society responses to protection issues and the establishment of protective mechanisms against abuse, exploitation and violence. Access to opportunities through Kishori Kendras (KKs or adolescent clubs), is the primary aim of this project. Adolescents are empowered by going through informal Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) on CRC, Child Marriage, Dowry, and Trafficking etc. Usually, 25-30 adolescents attend the afternoon sessions (4-6 PM) 2 days a week. Four (4) partner NGOs, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), TOYMU and GRAUS are involved in running the 2860 KKs in 29 districts. Trained adolescent peer leaders are responsible for operating the KKs. 137280 sessions have been conducted on Life Skill Based Education (LSBE) module-I & II. 98,480 adolescents (60%) participated EOA activities. Child friendly spaces (CFs) of permanent nature have been started in Khulna & Cox’s Bazar. To make this program sustainable, DWA and BSA have been taken into consideration for playing key roles in future. Through this project a new initiative entitled Social Projection Initiative for Vulnerable Children in Urban Areas has been established. The basic objective of this initiative is “to strengthen the socio economic resilience of the caregivers of the vulnerable children in urban slums to capacitate them to play a protective role for their children”. The main of this initiative is to make the project area Child Labor free. This type is first
time in Dhaka City Corporation. Through this pilot initiative 500 children will be selected and 1500 taka will be given up to 18 months.

Bangladesh is one of the first few countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). After adoption of CRC by UNGA in 1989 Bangladesh ratified it in 1990. Bangladesh Government attaches highest importance to the needs of children through prioritising eradication of child poverty education, health, nutrition, water supply, sanitation and other child related issues.

The government emphasises on the 54 Articles of the Convention seeking to promote well-being of all children & to protect them against all forms of exploitation, discrimination, neglect and abuse. The rights exshrined in the constitution of Bangladesh & the convention on Rights of child are given utmost importance in adopting various program & policies to achieve the said goal.

Since ratifying the Convention in 1990, Bangladesh has been taking steps to secure the rights of children. According to Article 28(4) of the Constitution of Bangladesh, "Nothing shall prevent the state from making special provision in favour of women and children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens". Several laws have been enacted to combat violation of human rights in specific contexts. These include The Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act, 2000 (amended in 2003).

Bangladesh prepared the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children in 1990, 1999 and 2005 to fulfil its commitment towards development of children. The Government, UNICEF, other development partners, NGOs, private sector and civil society continue to support initiatives for development of children by adopting and conducting various programs. The country, as a result, has made significant improvements in this arena as evident from a number of social indicators, including reduction of under five mortality rates, infant mortality rates, improvement in school enrolment, reducing dropout of students of Primary & Secondary level school, minimise the under age marriage specially of girl child, immunization coverage, vitamin A supplementation coverage and safe drinking water supply. Disparity between boys and girsl has been eliminated to a great extent.

Bangladesh has demonstrated its firm commitment in protecting and upholding the rights of the child by signature, accession and ratification of the following international human rights instruments, namely:

1) In 2000 Bangladesh ratified the ILO Convention 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action on Elimination of Worst forms of Child Labour (ratified in 2001).
2) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Accession 2000).
At the regional level Bangladesh has endorsed the SAARC Convention on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution in 2002 and the SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia. Bangladesh is also committed to the Rawalpindi Declaration of SAARC calling for the eradication of child labour by 2010. Bangladesh is also a signatory of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002). The ratification/accession/signature of all these international and regional Convention, Covenants and Declaration demonstrates the Government's commitment in promoting and protecting the rights of the child in all spheres of life. At the national level the Constitution of Bangladesh, the Children Act, 1974, and National Children's Policy, 2011 are effective instruments for protecting the rights of children. The Children Act 1974 is being revised in line with Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

In February 2009, the Government constituted a high level National Committee on Women and Children Development (NCWCD), chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister. NCWCD meeting was held at 22/4/2010, Rehabilitation of street children was a high priority agenda of the meeting and the Hon'ble Prime Minister emphasised the urgent necessity of adopting effective measures to address the issue. There was also a decision to strengthen inter-ministerial cooperation in effectuating rehabilitation of street children. Committee members agreed to take steps for ensuring protection to those engaged in child labour, to formulate Code of Conduct for children employed in household work as domestic workers, to prevent use of children for commercial purposes, like drug trade and drug smuggling, to protect sexual exploitation. Bangladesh has submitted 3rd and 4th Periodic Report in 2007 to UNCRC Committee. UNCRC committee sent Concluding Observations on the basis of said Periodic Report.

The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption of many legislative measures including:

a) The Citizenship (Amendment) Ordinance 2008, where by children born of Bangladeshi women married to non Bangladeshi men are now entitled to Bangladeshi citizenship.

b) The Bangladesh Labour Law-2006, which particularly prohibits hazardous work for children under 18 years old.

c) The Birth and Death Registration Act 2004 which links birth registration to access to social services to stimulate and increase demand.

d) Progress towards achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a significant reduction in child mortality; an increase in enrolment in primary school and the attainment of gender parity at the primary and lower secondary levels.
17th March, the birthday of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is observed as National Children's Day & extensive programmes are carried out throughout the country for promoting the welfare of children. Steps have been taken to prevent Sexual harassment (eve teasing) through social awareness raising program all over the country. According to direction of Hon'ble High Court Division to prevent sexual harassment committees have been formed in different ministries and steps have been taken for formation of such Complaint committees at the district level. Initiation of counselling programme in schools to raise awareness regarding child rights issues is being considered.

According to election manifesto present Government is committed to protect & promote the rights and interests of children in accordance with Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Constitution of Bangladesh. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is implementing following various programs and projects for ensuring physical and mental well being of Children. Children's issue being a cross cutting in nature other Ministries also undertake & implement programs for materializing child welfare.

(a) Early Learning for Childhood Development through Shishu Academy.
(b) Capacity Building for Monitoring of Child Rights through Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.
(c) Empowerment & Protection of Children through Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.
(d) Sisimpur Outreach Project through Shishu Academy.
(e) Reducing dropout rates & increasing enrolment at tertiary level.
(f) Project have been taken for vulnerable women and children of disaster affected (Aila affected) risky areas due to climate change have been provided with adequate safe drinking water, sanitation, to aware them, to prepare against natural disaster and bring them under social safety net.

Honourable Prime Minister is awarded (MDG) by United Nation for reducing child mortality rate. Some significant steps for promotion and protection of child rights are-

Day Care Centre: There are seven Day Care centres in Dhaka city and five in other divisional towns totaling 12 day care centers for the low income group. In the Dhaka City Day Care centers 80 children in each can be kept while there are facilities for 60 children in each Divisional centre.

Adolescents’ Club: Life skills training courses were organized by the Empowerment and protection of Children project through 2860 clubs in 29 districts across the country focusing on child marriage, eve teasing, Dowry, Rights of the Child, livelihood,
swimming and disaster preparedness etc. The members of the clubs regularly participate in cultural activities and sports.

Early Childhood Learning for child development: The ECD project is being implemented and led by Bangladesh Shishu Academy, and through this project 2486 pre-primary education centres are functioning. The activities of these centres include foundation training and refreshers course to teachers, preparation of the draft policy for early childhood care development. For ensuring preprimary education for disadvantaged children living in prison, first phase of this programme has been initiated at Dhaka Central Jail. Child friendly spaces and play corners have been set up in 6 Medical College Hospitals.

Drawing & painting centre for hardcore poor children: For programmatic expansion, Bangladesh Shishu Academy, established a Drawing training Centre in the High School premise of Baunia embankment on 13 May 2010.

Bangladesh believes that rights of the child can best be protected by imparting education and promoting access to health care. Accordingly, education and health sectors get significant budgetary allocation with a focus on children. Bangladesh has made substantial progress in reducing child mortality and malnutrition. There are notable declines in iodine deficiency disorders, and maternal and neo-natal tetanus. Vitamin 'A' supplementation and Oral rehydration therapy, polio vaccination, universal immunization programmes have saved many child lives. Disparity between boys and girls in most social indicators has also been reduced and in some cases eliminated, for instance, in primary school enrolment.

Government-private sector-NGO collaboration has resulted in notable improvements in the overall situation of children in our country. This has been most significant in the implementation of special programmes for the disadvantaged children including abandoned children, street children and children with disabilities.

Children are most hard hit in situations of armed conflicts and under foreign occupation. In this connection, it is encouraging to note that the UNDPKO has adopted a ‘Child protection policy directive’ in relation to peacekeeping processes, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. Bangladesh, as the second largest TCC, is happy to note that each of the peacekeeping missions now has a child protection adviser.

1) Rights of people with disabilities

The Government of Prime Minster Sheikh Hasina is specially commitment bound as per election manifesto to ensure full participation and equal rights of people with disabilities
as enunciated in the National Constitution. In 1995 the first National Policy for the disabled was approved by the Government. An action plan to make this policy operational was approved in 1996 by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her first term in office.

It may be mentioned here that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Bangladesh was one of the first countries that ratified this convention in 2008. Bangladesh is also a signatory country to international covenants and instruments on rights of the disable.

The Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina adopted Bangladesh’s first comprehensive disability legislation in 2001 during their first term in office which is known as Disability Welfare Act, 2001. The legislation includes the definition of persons with disabilities and identifies those with physical disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech impairment, mental disabilities (cognitive disabilities or mental retardation) and mental illness characterized as loss or damage, partially or wholly of mental balance. Persons with multiple disabilities (more than one type of impairment) are also covered under the Act, whether the cause of disability is congenital or as a result of accident or disease, maltreatment or of other reason. Presently, the government is working to update the Disability Welfare Act, 2001 so that it can easily cover all the issues related with disabilities.

In order to address the disability issue including autism exclusively Jatiya Protibandhi Unnayan Foundation (JPUF) was established in the year 1999 by Sheikh Hasina’s government under the Ministry of Social Welfare. Since then, the Ministry of Social Welfare and JPUF are closely working together to bring the issues related to autism to the notice of the common people of the country. The autism issue was almost ignored or in the dark due to lack of proper initiatives both from the Government and Non-government organizations. The present Government is currently preparing a database on this issue to provide proper treatment to autistic children in particular in due course of time. Besides, there are Government programmes through which the autistic babies are being dealt with.

Access to education is the key to make the persons with disabilities self-reliant. Bearing this in mind, the Ministry of Social Welfare has already introduced Disability Related Coordinated Special Education Regulation, 2009 which include the learning procedures of autistic babies. This is considered to be a vital step for the cause of welfare and rehabilitation of the autistic babies.

The present government, under the umbrella of JPUF, has also introduced one stop service entitled "Protibandhi Seba O Sahajya Kendro" where people with disabilities are given different treatments. Five such centers have so far been established at the cost of Tk. 5 crore and 41 lakhs in five different districts of the country. The number and service of such centers will be extended to all the areas of the country gradually. JPUF has also arranged a special type of resource centre entitled Autism Resource Centre in Dhaka. It is a new approach and is considered to be a vital step towards addressing the autism issue and its impact in family as well as in the society. It may be mentioned here that at present
there are as many as 56 intellectually disabled schools where 7667 such students are getting special education. A total of 518 teachers are working in these special schools. In order to make these teachers devoted to their service the Government is now paying 100% of their salaries and allowances.

Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Specialized Hospital is working well to provide medical services to the autistic babies. Moreover, the present government has planned to set up Autistic School in all 64 districts of the country with necessary dormitories. The present Government has observed the 3rd World Autism Awareness Day, 2010 on 2 April 2010 in a befitting manner.

In line with the commitment, the Government of Bangladesh hosted a Special Conference on Autism in Dhaka entitled “Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities in Bangladesh and South Asia” from 25 to 26 July 2011 in association with a New York based international NGO- Autism Speaks (Global Autism Public Health Initiative). Its objective was to harness the expertise, knowledge and experience of experts and personalities involved with this medical challenge to formulate a strategy for an effective response.

Autism and developmental disabilities are found in all socio-demographic situations. These are equally prevalent in urban and rural areas. Like many other countries, the prevalence of such disorders is increasing day by day in the country. These are influencing everyday functioning of the affected children, and severely affecting their developmental, educational and social attainments, causing significant economic costs to families and societies.

The conference received active and personal guidance of the Hon’ble Prime Minister and her daughter Ms. Saima Wazed Hossain. Hon’ble Prime Minister inaugurated the Ministerial Segment, in which President of Indian National Congress Mrs. Sonia Gandhi was the chief guest. The participating dignitaries included wife of the President of Sri Lanka and the wife of Vice President of the Maldives. Apart from Ministerial delegations from five countries of the region, the meeting was attended by experts from South Asia and South East Asia as well as other stakeholders.

This Conference gave opportunity for the participants to share experiences and efforts to improve the situation of autistic and other disadvantaged children. Indeed, the objective of the Conference was realized as it succeeded in adopting an outcome document which calls for developing a greater understanding of the challenges faced by affected people. The Dhaka Declaration, as it is known, also calls for mobilizing resources, increasing capacity and strengthening collaboration in order to develop regionally sustainable interventions and programs for children with special needs.

(m) Migration and Bangladesh’s challenge
Considering the size of the expatriate population (5% compared to world average of 3%) and their contribution to national economy (remittances constitute over 10% of GDP), securing interests and protection of rights of the migrant workers are now Bangladesh’s one of the top most foreign policy priorities. Presently over 6.5 million people, working in different countries, send remittances of over US $ 10 billion annually. Therefore, labor migration plays an important role in Bangladesh’s national economy.

Unfortunately, the Bangladesh migration dynamics is fraught with malpractices including violations of rights and service contracts, most of which begin at home. Promotion and protection of the rights of the migrants remain a formidable challenge for the country. Major areas of concern are: reduction of migration cost, simplification of visa regime, ensuring minimum wages and acceptable working conditions, health insurance and social security coverage, and elimination of malpractices (visa trading) and exploitation of labour.

Bangladesh is gradually coming to the realization that it will need to look for export of semi-skilled and skilled labour in place of unskilled and raw hands. This in itself may reduce exploitation of Bangladesh workers abroad. Bangladesh is working closely in establishing minimum wage levels and ensuring safe and decent conditions of employment of contract workers, particularly women, in low skill and low wage sectors. Bangladesh is also in the process of developing a model employment contracts that have built in enforcement mechanisms.

In the last few decades impact on climate change in particular on displacement of people alongside environmental degradation, economic compulsions, and socio economic factors has become evident. Sea level rise and frequent extreme weather conditions seriously affect food security, livelihood, health, environment and ecology that could contribute to movement of people. These affect livelihood of people both in short and long-term and often force them to migrate.

In recent times, labor migration has also been impacted by political unrest and conflicts particularly in the Middle-east and North Africa; and other emergencies. In such situations, migrant workers face multitude of vulnerability ranging from loss of employment and savings, persecution and even threat to life requiring evacuation and relocation. It is pertinent to examine how the employers, countries of destination and origin as well as relevant international organizations could work together to protect migrants in such emergency situations.

For the protection of the interest of the migrant workers, the present government is engaged in bilateral and regional consultations processes. A separate Ministry named Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment has been working relentlessly in facilitating legal migration of professionals, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workforce from Bangladesh. The Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) is assisting the Expatriates’ Welfare Ministry in its persistent endeavour. Bangladesh is an active member of Colombo Process, a regional consultative platform of 11 labour sending countries of South and South East Asian region. It is also a member of Global Forum for
Migration and Development. Bangladesh hosted the 4th Colombo Process Ministerial meeting in April 2011.

Bangladesh seeks to bring transparency in recruitment process both at the sending and receiving end. Bangladesh would like to work with other labor sending as well as receiving countries in areas of reduction of migration cost, simplification of visa regime, health insurance and social security coverage, and elimination of malpractices (visa trading) and exploitation of labour. At the national level, a stringent Anti Trafficking law has been drafted to discourage illegal labour trafficking and criminalise trafficking in persons and its abatement.

Bangladesh believes that labour sending countries should work together to optimize the benefits of organized migration. In the process there is necessity to consult on issues faced by overseas workers, and share the lessons learned and best practices on overseas employment. Bangladesh sees strong merit in promoting regular migration to enhance mutual benefit for host and origin countries and in this context finds merit in circular migration and voluntary repatriation of workers in irregular situations.

Bangladesh is eager to work closely in establishing minimum wage levels and ensuring safe and decent conditions of employment of contract workers, particularly women, in low skill and low wage sectors. Following the examples of some South Asian and South East Asian countries, the government is in the process of developing model employment contracts that have built-in enforcement mechanisms. Parallel to this, Bangladesh is working on reduction of cost of migration with focus on enhancing transparency, reducing corruption and stopping exploitation with due determination.

Bangladesh seeks cooperation from the international community in promotion and protection of the rights of the migrant workers. The countries of origin and destination can work together to enhance mutual benefit through ensuring decent working conditions, minimum wage standards, and promoting ethical practices in the recruitment process and fighting exploitations by illegal recruiting agencies and human traffickers. Recently, Bangladesh has ratified the UN Convention on Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families as a manifestation of its firm commitment to the cause of migrant labour.

Bangladesh seeks international support for a legal regime for compensation to migrants in emergency situations. The recent middle-east crisis has made it clear that in the event of an emergency, political or otherwise, it is the poor migrant workers, who always suffer the most. Bangladesh would like to see an institutionalized approach to face such situations. A proper emergency evacuation framework with provision for compensation can ensure financial security and prevent from destitution of many.

Bangladesh also seeks international support to its proposal for a mechanism to rehabilitate climate migrants. A big challenge for a country like Bangladesh is the management of climate change-induced displacement of people. A large number of
people are being displaced as a result of river erosion and sea level rise and other natural calamities. Studies show that by 2050, Bangladesh may have to face a situation where 20 million people may be displaced. This will greatly compromise our development gains. Given the importance and imminence, it is timely to consider establishing an international legal regime to address climate change-induced displacement, which would address both the internal as well as trans-boundary dimension of human displacement.

**(n) Human Trafficking and Bangladesh initiatives**

Trafficking in women and children has been a long-standing concern of the international community and the United Nations. According to UN reports on the issue, trafficking in women and children is one of the fastest-growing areas of organized crime. Bangladesh Government maintains ‘Zero tolerance’ for the perpetrators of trafficking in persons and related crimes. Bangladesh, as a responsible member of the international community, has always been striving to follow the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter, including respect for international law and maintaining peaceful relations with the global community. Upholding and protecting the rights of women and children, is at the top of the agenda of the Government of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a State Party to almost all United Nations conventions and all the major international instruments concerning women and child as well as those relating specially to empowerment of women, i.e., CEDAW and its Optional Protocols, Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols etc. Bangladesh has been actively involved in cosponsoring all United Nations resolutions that concern the ‘advancement of women’ and ‘women’s rights’. Bangladesh, jointly with the UK, is the principal sponsor of the United Nations resolution on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the UN system”. This stems from Bangladesh’s conviction that the need for gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women is as much a concern of the developing country as of the developed, and that there are certain values that are fundamental and universal. Bangladesh was deeply involved with the evolution and adoption of the UN Security Council first ever resolution on women (UNSC 1325) during its term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2000. Bangladesh co-sponsored the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/156 on Trafficking in women and girls. The Government of Bangladesh, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has been making sincere efforts to combat trafficking in persons, in particular trafficking in women and children. The Government has made substantial progress in combating trafficking in persons. The Government in cooperation with NGOs and the international community has undertaken important steps to prevent trafficking and to rescue and reintegrate those women and children who have been victims of trafficking. The process includes reactivating the judicial system, strengthening of law enforcing agencies, advocacy and awareness raising programmes for parents and communities, promotion of girls’ education, sexual and reproductive health programmes, expanding the scope of micro-credit programs, micro-entrepreneurship development schemes and enhancing other economic activities for poor families. In addition, more sensitive programmes to address the issues of safe return, which include repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration, have been undertaken.
Bangladesh stands ready to cooperate internationally, regionally as well as multilaterally, the United Nations in particular, to combat trafficking in persons. Bangladesh is also a signatory state of several International/UN Instruments such as UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime 2000, which calls for the prevention, suppression and punishment for trafficking in people, UN Convention on the Migrant Workers, etc. Regionally, Bangladesh is a State Party to the 2002 SAARC Convention on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution. Bangladesh has been maintaining the two mechanisms arising out of this Convention — i) Standard Operational Procedure and ii) Regional uniformed toll free help-line for women and children on the issue.

The Cabinet approved in principle a draft law to combat trafficking in persons in July 2011. The draft law entitled ‘The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2011’, details a comprehensive approach to human trafficking in Bangladesh and addresses labour trafficking for the first time in a direct manner under national law of Bangladesh. It marks a step forward in defining trafficking to cover all people, not just women and children. It has provisions for stringent punishment to the extent of death penalty as well as life imprisonment. The Government has also formed a joint taskforce with India for rescue, recovery, repatriation and integration (RRRI) of women and children victims of trafficking in these two countries. Relevant ministries as well as NGOs and international development partners are working together for finalization of RRRI process. Counter Trafficking Committees (CEC) at different tiers of local government regularly follow-up activities relating to trafficking of women and children and report on implementation. Under the SAARC initiative, two regional Toll-free help lines, dedicated for women and children, have already been commissioned. The present government has also launched a website to receive information on women and children trafficking.

Bangladesh made a statement highlighting the actions and position at the First Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking a high level meeting on trafficking at the sidelines of the 65th UNGA. This was an informal meeting of the ‘Group of Friends’ united against Human Trafficking – Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Libya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Venezuela. At that meeting Ministers would talk informally over lunch and then adopt the Ministerial Declaration. After the adoption, the ‘Group of Friends’ requested the UNSG to circulate the Declaration as a UN document. During the meeting, Bangladesh underlined the need of public awareness raising events with victims and other relevant stakeholders. We also stressed upon global partnership in tackling this heinous crime, which is also putting a heavy toll on us as each year as a significant number of our women and children are being trafficked through porous Bangladesh-India border and also to middle-eastern countries.

A 4-member Bangladesh delegation led by the Hon’ble Foreign Minister attended the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime held in Bali, Indonesia on 29-30 March 2011. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Director General (United Nations) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Private Secretary to the Foreign Minister accompanied her.
The Bali Process on Human Trafficking is convened by the Governments of Indonesia and Australia and attended by countries from Asia and Pacific. It is a regional approach to prevent trafficking in persons, and address irregular peoples’ movements. The fourth Ministerial Conference held consultations on regional cooperation on law enforcement and border security including intelligence and information sharing. It also discussed the regional framework approaches to combat trafficking.

Bangladesh is actively participating in the Bali Process since its inception in 2002 as a demonstration of the national commitment to curb trafficking in persons particularly women and children. Bangladesh is deeply engaged in the process and participated in all the meetings and conferences held so far. Bangladesh remains active as a member of the Ad Hoc Group of the Bali Process which is tasked to develop practical outcomes at the operational level to assist countries to mitigate increased irregular peoples’ movement as well as to enhance information sharing arrangements. Hon’ble Foreign Minister, Dr. Dipu Moni, MP attended the Third Bali Process Ministerial Conference in 2009, and highlighted issues relevant to the national commitment of Bangladesh in combating human trafficking. The Hon’ble Foreign Minister highlighted the present Government’s efforts to combat trafficking as well as the problems related to Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh.

(o) Presence of Myanmar Refugees in Bangladesh:

In 1948, following a communal riot between Rohingya Muslim and Rakhain Buddhist, around 50,000 Rohingya muslims were forced to migrate to Bangladesh. Since a large number of Myanmarese of Mog and Rakhaine origins are living in Bangladesh. They have their relatives in Mongdaw. In 1948, when the communal riot became extreme around 200,000 Rohingya Muslim came to Bangladesh. Most of these Refugees were repatriated.

The problem, however, resurfaced in 1991. During November 1991 to June 1992, about 250,877 Myanmar nationals from the Rakhaine state of Myanmar again entered into Bangladesh without any documentation. These people were given refugee status, and the management of these people has since been conducted jointly by the Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR. A bilateral meeting was held between the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar in Dhaka in April 1992, and an MOU was signed on 28 April 1992 to resolve the issue.

Repatriation of Myanmar Refugees:

Since their largest entry into Bangladesh in 1991, 2,36,599 out of 2,50,877 Myanmar Refugees returned voluntarily and smoothly back to Myanmar through an agreed process of national identification verification and recognition process from the Myanmar side. An MoU was signed between the GOB and the UNHCR on 12 May 1993 in this regard.

Currently around 24902 (+ 4000 linked members) registered refugees are residing in the two camps at Kutupalong (10,161) and Noyapara (14,754) awaiting repatriation back to Myanmar. Out of these 24902 refugees, around 9,905 were earlier cleared by the Myanmar Government in 2005 in consultation with the RRRC and Myanmar authorities.
But unfortunately no repatriation has taken place since 2005. In addition, 14992 are pending clearance from the Myanmar side. (source-MFDM)

Since assumption of office, the present Government has taken a number of initiatives for confidence building and political engagement with the Myanmar Government with a view to expediting resumption of the repatriation process. During the visit of Dr. Dipu Moni M.P., Hon’ble Foreign Minister to Myanmar in May 2009, Myanmar side requested to provide a complete and updated list of the Myanmar refugees registered in Bangladesh. Accordingly a list of 2914 families (total 23532 individuals) was delivered to Myanmar side on 03 August 2009.

During the 4th FOC held in Dhaka (28-30 December 2009), Myanmar Deputy Foreign Minister (Foreign Secretary) said that 6360 recorded (as verified by Myanmar side) are in Bangladesh and Myanmar would soon take them back to their country. The Foreign secretary intimated his counterpart that according to our record no less than 28000 refugees are in the two UNHCR camps alone. Further there are more unauthorized settlements outside the camps where many Myanmar nationals are living who came to Bangladesh from time to time.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar vide their Note Verbale no- 47 03 2010 (2478), dated- 13 August 2010, informed Bangladesh Embassy in Yangon that they are agreeable to take back 474 families totaling 2,415 individuals living in the Kutupalong and Nayapara Refugee Camps. They further stated that the remaining individuals living in the above mentioned camps are required to be verified on the following criteria-

i) Returnees must be residents of Myanmar

ii) Returnees must be the ones who voluntarily wish to return to Myanmar by themselves

iii) The members of the split families must have attestation from the higher level courts of Bangladesh and

iv) Both parents of the additional offspring born in other side of the country must be resident of Myanmar.

However, during the recent 5th FOC (held on 25 August 2011), the Myanmar side finally agreed to repatriate the earlier cleared 6000 plus Myanmar refugees after further verification.

Presence of the Undocumented Myanmar nationals in Bangladesh and its ramification on Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral relationship as well as interference of the international community:

Apart from the registered Myanmar refugees, some 300,000 to 500,000 undocumented Myanmar nationals have entered Bangladesh illegally taking advantage of the long-drawn stalemate in repatriation process of Myanmar refugees. These undocumented Myanmar nationals are creating a host of security, economic, social and environmental problems for the local communities as well as at the international level for Bangladesh. These undocumented people offer services at a very low cost. They are employed in Hotels, Motels, ports. They also work as rickshaw pullers and day labourers. As a result,
Bangladeshi workers are losing their jobs. Their presence is generating tension in these two districts as they tend to take a share of the local employment market. This has added a new dimension in the already existing challenge relating to Myanmar refugees.

- Their presence is also creating scope for syndicate of criminals from both the sides for Trans-border crimes like drug trafficking, human trafficking etc.

- There is a disproportionate interest of the western countries specially the USA and the EU in providing all-out humanitarian assistance and basic services to the undocumented Myanmar Nationals with an implied intention to integrate them locally but more importantly through this process they are trying to be friend with the undocumented Myanmar nationals against the Myanmar authorities as well as against Bangladesh authorities. There is also a tendency to perpetuate the presence of international NGOs and humanitarian agencies around the two refugee camps and near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border creating a host of tensions and belligerent attitudes towards local administration and law enforcement agencies. They are backed by the donor countries financing the refugee camps. They are also serving the political interest of their respective government who again wants to perpetuate their presence in border areas to get a strong grip against Myanmar, a country in which they have no access.

**(p) Global Financial and Economic Crises and Bangladesh’s challenges**

The global economy has been experiencing a severe crisis since 2008-09 and is inflicting disproportionate negative impact on LDCs, their exports, remittances, migration, investment, etc. Like other developing countries, Bangladesh economy is also not insulated from the crisis. The Global Recession has impacted our economy, primarily in three fronts: export, migration and foreign capital flows. Bangladesh’s main export item, Ready-made Garments, is facing dwindling demand and price-pressure. The outflow of our migrant workers is showing discouraging trend. These sectors are not only our key sources for foreign exchange earning but also the means of livelihoods of millions. The flows of FDI and ODA have also become uncertain.

The crisis is affecting global trading system, global finance, and most importantly development aspirations of the developing countries particularly with regard to their achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Such a prospect brings anxiety to the LDCs like Bangladesh, which do not possess the wherewithal to withstand such long and deep recessions. The crisis is having a disproportionate negative impact on the LDCs. Sharp contraction in exports, falling prices for primary commodities, declining remittances, severe credit crunch, and a massive withdrawal of private capital flows have led to contraction in their economic growth as well as rising unemployment and poverty. World Bank estimates show that the current crisis would trap additional 53 million people in poverty, on top of the 130 to 135 million people pushed into poverty last year by the soaring food and fuel prices. Latest statistics from Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) puts the number of hungry people now at unprecedented 1.02 billion, which is one-sixth of the humanity.
The economic crisis threatens to have far-reaching ramifications in the social and human domains of the least developed countries. It has pushed millions of their people below the poverty line and into hunger through loss of employment both at home and abroad, exports, incomes, savings, remittances, social welfare, and so on and so forth. The crisis compels the LDCs to divert their scarce resources from development to programmes adopted to cope with the immediate adverse impacts of the crisis.

Bangladesh maintains that, the global financial crisis is a consequence of inequity and injustice resulting from an unfair international structure, which still remains mostly unchanged. Hon’ble Prime Minister in her speech in the 65th UNGA mentioned that the Brettonwoods institutions must accommodate stronger presence of developing countries, especially LDCs. While BWIs could cater to long term development assistances, she proposed the establishment of a special fund under the United Nations to deal exclusively with SDRs and Grants. Bangladesh also proposed all stakeholders to respect country-led ownership of all development projects as enshrined in the Accra Agenda for Action.

The financial crisis driven global growth slowdown impacted Bangladesh with some lags, noticeably slowing down exports, imports and new investment from around the close of FY2009-10. With limited, regulated external exposure keeping the financial sector free of toxic assets and contagion, the impact of global slowdown on Bangladesh economy turned out to be relatively moderate and short lived. Despite weakened exports, the economy retained firm footing in growth path, and indication of robust bounce back in external trade came out clear by end of FY2010-11. Bangladesh maintains some capital account controls to protect the relatively small economy from destabilizing surges of footloose international capital flows.

Bangladesh economy proved resilient to global financial crisis, posting GDP growth of almost 6 percent during the past couple of years. Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government as well as Bangladesh Bank has been monitoring its impact on the economy and is providing necessary fiscal and monetary policy supports. Persistent efforts have been made by the Government and BB to adopt growth supportive macroeconomic policies for attaining the higher real GDP growth and to contain inflation within tolerable levels.

Like many other central banks, BB needed to take monetary and exchange rate measures in an attempt to limit the damage to the economy from spreading in financial markets. Recovery phase in growth followed shortly; external trade has accelerated sharply in FY2011-12 with both exports and imports growing by over 40 percent, total external trade likely to exceed USD 50 billion by end of 2011-12. Due to increased global demand, apparels exports and raw jute and jute goods have bounced back strongly, low labor costs retaining competitive edge even after the recent wage hike. In the post-crisis surge, exports to new markets in fast growing Asian economies and exports of newer items like marine vessels and IT enabled services are gaining momentum. Domestic demand also remains robust, with spiking rural real wages signaling tightness of rural labor markets. Extensive self-employment lending by microfinance institutions and SME financing flows promoted by BB’s financial inclusion campaign are visibly transforming economic life in rural regions.
In the monetary scene in Bangladesh, the foreign asset based monetary expansion during global financial crisis driven by growth surge in remittance inflows from workers abroad has shifted in post crisis FYs 10&11 to domestic asset based monetary expansion and sharp slowdown in external fund inflows. The combination of domestic credit growth surge far out of line with nominal GDP growth and weak external fund inflows during post global crisis recovery has caused build up of inflationary and balance of payment pressures. Reining in runaway credit expansion therefore remains imperative for limiting inflation and preserving external sector viability. Monetary policies in FY2012-13 will therefore need to continue in the restraining stance on credit growth as pursued in FY2011-12.

(q) International Trade and Development

It is well established that trade can play very vital role in fostering economic development. Trade can generate gains for developing countries, in most cases, more than in any other area of international economic cooperation. The ongoing World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade negotiations under the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) seek to establish a fairer and more equitable trading system for all its Members by addressing inequities in current multilateral trading rules.

Developing countries, particularly the LDCs face difficulties in such areas as tariff escalation and tariff peaks; erosion of preferences; non-tariff barriers; technical barriers, including sanitary and phytosanitary measures; antidumping measures; limitations on the movement of natural persons for the provision of services; the transfer of knowledge and technology, including the additional costs of technology generated by the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS); the lack of recognition of intellectual property rights for traditional knowledge; and, generally, the need for more effective application of special and differential treatment (SDT) for developing countries in international trade. Already visible protectionist surges in response to the current economic slowdown around the world highlight the importance of actions to ensure that the global trading system will remain open to support the development efforts of all countries, particularly the world’s poorer countries.

At the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Doha in 2001, the members of the WTO agreed to complete, by the end of 2005, a series of trade negotiations focused on the needs of developing countries (The Doha Development Agenda). Subsequent United Nations conferences and summits have stressed the need to achieve a timely, successful and development-oriented outcome to the negotiations associated with this agenda. Success in meeting the goals established in Doha remains a potentially valuable element of the global development agenda.

Globalization and the resulting rapidly changing structure of the global economy increase the risk that least developed countries (LDCs) will become further marginalized in world trade. Recognizing this challenge, all developed countries and developing countries in a position to do so should provide duty-free and quota-free access for all exports from all LDCs. They should also reduce, and set a date for eliminating, all non-tariff barriers to exports from LDCs, including subsidies to their own exports and domestic production.
Rules of origin and trade procedures imposed by developed countries on imports from LDCs should be simplified and harmonized.

Trade among developing countries and LDCs has been increasing rapidly in recent years, despite the persistence of substantial tariff and other barriers to such trade. In order to realize the further potential of such trade, developing countries should endeavour to finalize as soon as possible the third round of negotiations of the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries that they agreed to undertake at UNCTAD XII. It is encouraging that some developing countries, including China, India, and Turkey are now providing duty-free access to some products from least developed countries. We are confident that other developing countries with larger economies would also follow suit. Bangladesh has been calling upon the WTO members to marshal the political will to achieve successful completion of the Doha Round and the full realization of its development agenda. The key development deliverables, particularly the duty-free, quota-free market access and support for productive capacity building for LDCs, should be pursued expeditiously and comprehensively. Developed countries and developing ones in a position to do so must provide duty-free, and quota free market access to all products from all LDCs, unilaterally and without discriminations, even before the conclusion of the Doha Round.

The substantive negotiation on international trade takes place in Geneva under the framework of WTO. However, the Second Committee of the General Assembly provides political directions through an all-encompassing resolution. For last few years, there had been a big divide between developing and developed countries or even within the developing countries. Some industrialized countries are not interested in discussing the trade issues in New York. In their view, such an attempt may pre-empt or prejudice the ongoing negotiations under WTO. During last several years, the General Assembly failed to reach consensus on trade resolution. It was extremely difficult to reach agreement even within the G77 particularly on some specific issues like agricultural subsidies, biological diversity, TRIPs, South-South Cooperation etc.

The Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her Plenary statement at the 65th UNGA drew attention to the need for urgent action to avoid the unravelling consequences of the current global economic and financial challenges on the socio-economic progress of the past decade. She highlighted as a representative of a major exporting LDC that market access conditions for LDCs should be further improved and made more predictable and sustainable through the elimination of remaining tariff and non-tariff barriers, relaxation of rules of origin, expansion of product coverage, and simplification of administrative procedures in relation to the generalized system of preferences and other market-access arrangements. Developed countries that had not already done so should provide immediate, predictable, duty- and quota-free market access on a lasting basis to all products originating from all least developed countries, even before the conclusion of the Doha Round. There should be a clearly defined time frame and procedure for achieving 100 per cent market access for least developed countries, as well as a concrete mechanism to review and monitor implementation of the commitments on market access, including rules of origin.
Without focused assistance in building trade capacity, other attempts to do so through trade might not yield fruit. LDCs also need full access to affordable modern technology and know-how. Completion of the Doha Round is critically important, and there is a need for strong political leadership, firm commitment, continued engagement and flexibility on the part of key stakeholders. Appropriate policy responses are crucial to overcoming the global crises, and international trade can play a catalytic role in that regard. The Monterrey Consensus reaffirmed the commitment to undertake meaningful trade liberalization and ensure that trade played its full part in promoting economic growth, employment and development. Since development was at the heart of the Doha Round, the interests and difficulties of the least developed countries, as the world’s most vulnerable group, should be taken on board in order to integrate those countries into the multilateral trading system.

(r) **The Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011**

The fourth UN LDC Conference was held in Istanbul from 9-13 May 2011; at a time when many of the developed partners were still in the process of recovery from the recent financial melt-down. Many were clearly not in a position to undertake new and additional commitments. The Doha Round of negotiations on trade reached an impasse. An assessment of the MDGs would be done only around 2015. Again, not much has been achieved through the UNFCCC process. Interest on LDCs and their vulnerability is often eclipsed in this intense debate. Today, all major sectoral level negotiation await progress in the forums like UNFCCC- CoP (Durban), Rio plus 20 (2012), the Doha Round (WTO) as well as completion of the MDG process in 2015. Negotiation thus became extremely difficult in the absence of consensus emerging in relevant processes.

Moreover, the emerging South did not show any enthusiasm to support the LDC cause. They reasoned that they had their own set of vulnerabilities and significant segment of their population were still experiencing poverty and hunger. LDCs as a whole are also faced with a gradual loss of focus in the present development debate, given increasing emphasis on Africa and small island developing countries as well as the land-locked countries. The result has been lesser attention to difficulties faced by the Asia-Pacific LDCs.

The Bangladesh delegation to the meeting was led by the **Hon’ble Prime Minister** and included Ministers in charge of Finance, Planning, and Foreign Affairs, Industries, Civil Aviation and Tourism, and Women & Children Affairs. Hon’ble Prime Minister addressed the summit level meeting of the LDC group on 8 May 2011 and the General Debate on 10 May 2011. She also attended a high-level thematic debate on productive capacities on 9 May 2011.

Bangladesh stood out in the group for her specificities and distinct requirements, which are not shared by too many LDCs. In the negotiation, Bangladesh sought to articulate the imperative for greater investment in infrastructures and agriculture, enhanced market access and dismantling of trade barriers, operationalisation of the Special and Differential Provisions in the WTO, easy technology transfer, easy movement of service providers,
addressing the issue of displaced persons due to climate change, and water resources development and productivity. Bangladesh also worked relentlessly on enhancement in ODA and FDI, and debt relief as manifestation of solidarity to other LDCs. Bangladesh demanded substantial increase in ODA, to at least 0.25 per cent of GNP by 2021. In the end, there was an agreement to review ODA commitments in 2015 with a view to enhancing it. On trade, Bangladesh was focused on timely implementation of 100% DFQF market access to "all products" of all LDCs.

After protracted negotiation, some progress was registered in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, education, health, remittances etc. Little progress could be achieved in areas like trade (on enhancing market access beyond what was agreed at the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in 2005), climate change, and voice and representation of LDCs in global governance. Two major issues remained unresolved till the very end and dominated negotiations in Istanbul. One was on enhanced commitment on ODA and greater clarity and enhanced trade opportunity for LDCs on trade.

The Conference adopted a political declaration and a Programme of Action (IPOA) for the next decade. The IPOA does not however contain entirely new commitments on trade, aid, and social areas. It does not have numerical sector specific targets either. But it contains a good number of new elements with regard to agriculture, energy, infrastructure, water, migration, climate change etc.

The lack of additional commitment in key areas like trade and ODA, however, do not make the fourth UN Conference a failure at a time when the donors are experiencing difficulties and suffering from a fatigue against ever-increasing demand for assistance. Given that LDCs are faced with a gradual loss of focus, maintaining unity and extracting continued commitments from partners and getting their support in some areas may be seen significant achievements.

Bangladesh played a lead role in the drafting of the text and could include many of its interests and concerns in the draft. Commitments on preservation and development of water sources, management of watersheds through sub-regional and regional collaborations; response to the challenges faced by people displaced as a result of extreme weather events; strengthening capacities of meteorological and hydrological services; debt- relief on a case-by-case basis; development of a system of short-term migration are new additions. However, our efforts to include preferential treatment to services and service providers of LDCs; extension of exemptions under TRIPs; ban on restrictions of food and other imports by LDCs; enhancement of ODA did not succeed.

Bangladesh has been able to present its case on DFQF and can expect incremental gains in the ongoing negotiations on trade under WTO. The opportunity to articulate our genuine concerns on DFQF has created greater awareness and wider acceptability of our demand. At the same time, the determination to take on the US has brightened bangladesh’s image as a country that is bold enough to remain engaged with the great power. The Conference has re-galvanized Bangladesh as the natural leader within the LDCs and established Bangladesh as a country that has the potentials and determination to graduate out of the group and become a middle income country.
Bangladesh's flagship resolution on a Culture of Peace and Non-violence

Bangladesh tables its flagship resolution “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010” under the agenda item Culture of Peace every year. The resolution has been enjoying unanimous support of UN membership with the number of countries co-sponsoring the resolution ever increasing. The resolution is based on a theme that epitomizes the essence of the efforts to save the humanity from the scourge of war and conflict through establishment of a culture of peace among societies, nations and countries. It is a set of principles and conduct for a way of living designed to renounce violence and prevent the eruption of conflicts. It also focuses on the underlying causes of such conflicts. It attempts to address problems through dialogue and negotiations between individuals, States and groups and establishes areas of strength and weakness so that both governments and NGOs can develop policies that will encourage a culture of peace.

Bangladesh, born after a bloody Liberation War, greatly values the principles of tolerance, respect for diversity, democracy, and understanding. These ideals were endorsed by the UN membership in the Declaration and the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999 by the UN General Assembly. It gave a clear set of guidelines for action and to advance the cause of non-violence. It involved various actors such as States, international organizations, civil society, community leaders, parents, teachers, artists, professors, journalists and humanitarian workers.

Proliferation of ethnic, religious and civil conflicts emphasizes the need for a global transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. A culture of peace can facilitate the emergence of universally shared values in a world where war and conflict continue to run rampant and international terrorism threatens the safety and security of the humanity. It has enormous power to create a world order where amity would supplant atrocity, harmony would overcome hatred, and tolerance would replace prejudice.

Bangladesh delegation introduced a new Preambular Paragraph (PP) in the Resolution in the 63rd session to uphold the spirit of the Language martyrs Day and International Day of Mother Language, 21 February. The paragraph reads, “Recalling the proclamation by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization of 21 February as the International Mother Language Day, which aims at promoting and preserving linguistic and cultural diversity, and multilingualism, in order to foster a culture of peace, harmony, cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding”.

Bangladesh delegation added one new PP and two new Operative Paragraphs (OPs). In the new PP, Bangladesh welcomed the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children. Of the two new OPs, OP11 mentions about an initiative of the special Unit of South-South Cooperation of the UNDP during the Shanghai World Expo 2010. Bangladesh should take advantage of such mega events to promote the idea of ‘culture of peace’. The other new OP is OP17 through which we have requested the Secretary-General for a summary report on the activities carried out in the last ten years by UNESCO and other UN entities, Member States and civil society,
including non-governmental organizations, to promote and implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

(t) Bangladesh’s leading role in the UN Peacekeeping Operations

In keeping with Bangladesh’s Constitutional commitment to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security Bangladesh has been active and visible in making its mark under the auspices of the United Nations in keeping the peace and restoring democracy and stability in conflict ridden parts of the world for the last three decades.

It was through sending of a 15 member peace-keeper team from the Bangladesh Armed Forces in 1988 that Bangladesh started its UN peacekeeping journey. It was a good coincidence that the Peacekeepers of the world got Nobel Peace Prize the same very year. Bangladesh, as a top TCC, has participated since 1988 in 52 UN peacekeeping missions in 36 countries with more than 100,200 uniformed personnel. Currently, more than 10,500 personnel are deployed in 12 missions (in 12 countries) ranking top amongst TCCs. Bangladesh has earned global reputation by sending one all-female Formed Police Unit (FPU) to Haiti. Bangladesh is also focusing on the increased civilian involvement in the peacebuilding. We are pleased that our representation at the UN HQs on Peacekeeping has tripled since the Hon’ble Prime Minister made an appeal for more recruitment at decision level. Ms. Ameerah Haque, a Bangladeshi professional is now serving as the Secretary General's Special Representative in Timor Leste.

Bangladesh's commitment to global peace has not been without a price. 103 of her brave peacekeepers died and 116 were wounded in maintaining world peace far away from home. The country salutes them and remembers their valor and sacrifice on the Peacekeeping Day every year on 29 May 2011.

In addition to that, other important issues taken up by the Fifth Committee delegate are given below with a few of the achievements for Bangladesh in those areas:

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Achievement for Bangladesh</th>
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<td>Second Resumed Session</td>
<td>a. Increasing troop cost by US$ 85 million, out of which Bangladesh’s share is likely to be US$ 8-10 million;</td>
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<td>b. Set up of a Senior Advisory Group by taking representative of TCCs;</td>
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<td>c. Expeditiously resolve all backlogs of death and disability cases with compensation. In last year’s session, the amount of compensation has been raised from US$ 50000 to US$ 70000; and</td>
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<td>d. Urges the Secretariat to ensure proper representation of TCC in the relevant department such as DPKO/DFS (details follow).</td>
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UNPKO has provided Bangladesh forces a unique opportunity to work in environments that are evolving, complex and multidimensional, and undertake military, quasi-military and civic actions. It has also facilitated them to gain immense experience and exposure to conflict management, modern weapons and equipment, international operating procedures, command and control system, etc. Their experiences and best practices in various national development activities, disaster management, and counter-insurgency operations have also positively contributed to UNPKO. The factors that contributed to their wide acceptability and credibility include their professionalism, discipline, neutrality, compliance of mission mandate, cordial relations with host populations, etc.

Peacekeeping operations demand multidimensional approach. Hence, our forces need to constantly revise and update policies and practices in order to maintain their meaningful presence and lead role in future UNPKO. Back home, there should be a continuous institutional study and research on the evolving policies and best practices of UN peacekeeping at all levels, i.e. tactical, operational and strategic. Our forces should be more conversant with local languages, especially French and Arabic for the missions in French and Arabic speaking countries.

International Day of UN Peacekeepers -2011 was observed on 29 May 2011. In this connection, an event entitled “Commemoration to Deceased and Injured Peacekeepers” was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on 29 May 2011. Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up a stall at BICC alongside the stalls of the Armed Forces and Police. Brochure, UN publications on peacekeeping and peacebuilding and photographs and other relevant documents to highlight Bangladesh’s diplomatic contributions to international peace and security were presented at that stall. United Nations Wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a seminar entitled “Bangladesh for Global Peace, Democracy and Development” to commemorate “International Day of UN Peacekeepers-2011”. Hon’ble Foreign Adviser, Hon’ble Defence Adviser, Assistant Secretary General for UN Peacebuilding Support, Chief of Army Staff, UN Resident Representative in Dhaka, Heads of different , former Ambassadors, senior officials from civil and military, representatives from print and electronic media attended the above seminar.

Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh took the initiative to send female peacekeepers to UN Peace operation in 1997 and also recruit women in Bangladesh Army some of whom are already participating in current operations. Currently Bangladesh is regularly contributing female police officers to UN operations. Bangladesh is also currently making important policy contributions in UN
peacekeeping organisational and deployment issues in the UN Department of
Peacekeeping and holding leadership position in ongoing field missions.

(u) Bangladesh’s role in maintenance of peace and security through
peacebuilding

Policy Level

The United Nations efforts to bring sustainable peace generally operate in a two layer-

system: policy formulation at intergovernmental level at the UN headquarters and
practical operations of peacebuilding activities in the post conflict countries. The
Headquarters policy initiatives of the UN are discussed, debated and finalized through
intergovernmental dialogues. Bangladesh has been actively involved in these processes
which started through its pioneering role in adoption of the Security Council resolution
1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Before establishing the PBC, Bangladesh, along with
some like-minded countries, could conceive the role of women that may bring qualitative
change in establishing sustainable peace in a post conflict country. Since the
establishment of PBC in 2005, Bangladesh has been playing significant role in crafting
peacebuilding policies by focusing on, among others, the principle of national ownership,
capacity building, women empowerment, predictable funding, development activities,
basic health and education and so on.

Since early 2010, Bangladesh has assumed the responsibility of Coordinator of the Non-
Alignment Movement (NAM) in the PBC Caucus and has been playing leadership role of
15 countries in the PBC and of 117 countries in global NAM forum. As NAM coordinator,
Bangladesh has led the conclusion of at least two land mark documents viz. 2010 Review of
the Peacebuilding Architecture; and contributing to the finalization of the report of the Review
of the International Civilian Capacity. In both cases, Bangladesh has had constructive
engagement with the review teams in preparation phase as well as in implementation
mechanism. Bangladesh’s views as NAM coordinator, of national ownership, capacity
building south-south cooperation, predictable funding, development activities as basic
pillar of sustainable peace, among others, have been amply reflected in the reports. Now,
we need to have coordinated efforts in the capital to translate our policy views in the
practical action of peacebuilding.

In addition to that, other important issues taken up by the Fifth Committee delegate are
given below with a few of the achievements for Bangladesh in those areas:

| NAM Chairmanship in PBC | a. Review of the PBC Architecture in 2010;  
b. Review of the International Civilian Capacity;  
c. Replicating lessons learned in post conflict countries; and  
d. Organizing Visit of the ASG, PBSO to Bangladesh |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
Operational level:

In the field, Bangladesh has been playing pioneering role through the activities of peacekeepers as peacebuilders as well as through Non-Governmental organizations’ activities for delivering scaled-up services in health, education, business development and livelihood support in many parts in post conflict countries. Peacekeepers create environment for local stakeholders and international community to conduct nation-building activities while the civilians engage in state building through peacebuilding activities.

During the 64th UNGA, Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a summit meeting organised by US President Barak Obama for HoS/HOG of the top ten peacekeeper provider countries underlined enhanced engagement of the countries providing peacekeepers in the Security Council decision-making process to bridge the gap between mandate and resources allocated for fulfilling the mandate. With reference to the stretched out mandate of the modern day peacekeepers, whose role, besides traditional peacekeeping, had now extended to electoral assistance, human rights situation monitoring, resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons, The Prime Minister recommended provision of safe passage to UN and other humanitarian agencies, security sector reform and training of security personnel, and disarmament and demobilization of armed groups, etc. Bangladesh was highly praised at the Summit by US President Barack Obama for its contribution to UN peacekeeping and was quoted as a “shining example” not only enhancing the prestige of their country but also the honour of the United Nations.

During the 65th UNGA, the Hon’ble Prime Minister reiterated Bangladesh’s commitment to global peace and security and our unflinching support to UN peacekeeping operations. The Hon’ble Prime Minister also mentioned that despite these involvements, Bangladesh’s presence in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations remains negligible, as is also our voice in planning strategies of peacekeeping missions. The Hon’ble Prime Minister, therefore, in all fairness, called for our proportionate representation in the DPKO.

At the country statement of the general debate of the 66th UNGA the Hon’ble Prime Minister may highlight Bangladesh’s contribution to international peace and security, reiterate Bangladesh’s long-standing demand for ensuring proportional representation of Bangladesh at all levels and sectors of UN peacekeeping and the role of training of peacekeepers for efficient implementation of their mandate, and recognition of BIPSOT (Bangladesh Institute for Peace Support Operations and Training) as a regional peacekeeping training institute.

(v) International War Crimes Tribunal
The war crimes, crimes against humanity committed during 1971 has surpassed cruelties and horrors of any war crimes of contemporary time. Durable peace and justice will not be established until the war criminals are brought to justice. Principle VII of the Nuremberg Charter declares that the complicity in commission of the foregoing crimes is
also a crime under international law. Prior to Nuremberg Charter on December 11, 1946 the United Nations General Assembly declared that “genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law and therefore punishable under international law.

Holding a free and independent trial of war criminals of Bangladesh’s War of Liberation of 1971 and ending an era of impunity and injustice, is high on the agenda of the Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni raised this issue in all relevant multilateral forums since assumption of Office including at the United Nations during the UNGA, the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council and bilaterally with many governments, primarily to shape global opinion in favour of these trials. The Foreign Minister during her visit to the UN during the last two years raised this issue with relevant legal authorities of the United Nations and sought guidance and assistance to conduct these trials as per due process of internationals law. The United Nations is now fully appraised of this issue and has committed to support Bangladesh in the holding of these trials in an independent, fair and transparent manner so that these trials hold the test of due process of relevant international law. Meantime at the request of the Foreign Minister the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva carried out a review of the 1973 International Crimes(Tribunal) Act and found it largely compliant with international human rights and humanitarian legal standards.

The government has already enacted international Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973 and established an independent Tribunal with the power to try and punish “any individual or group of individual, or any member of any armed, defence or auxiliary forces who commits or has committed, in the territory of Bangladesh, whether before or after commencement of the 1973 Act, any of the crimes.

The Tribunal is composed of one Chairman and two Members of whom Chairman and one Member are the sitting Judges of the Bangladesh Supreme Court and another member is a retired District Judge.

Some of the alleged war criminals – who committed or acted as abettors to who committed various war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh including-- murder, rape and arson, have been arrested.

Important features of the International Crimes Tribunal Act and concerns related to war crimes prosecution by the ICT-BD:

Independence of the Tribunal:

Independence of a judicial mechanism is a key and fundamental condition of its functions. Section 6(2A) of the Act provides that “the tribunal shall be independent in the exercise of its judicial functions and shall ensure fair trial”. This provision is quite compatible with the international standard.

Superior responsibility:
Section 3 and 4 of the Act establishes superior responsibility. A superior is always responsible for the activities of his subordinates, whether he had any kind of knowledge or not. No actual knowledge (knew) or constructive knowledge (should have known) is required.

Definition of Crimes against humanity:

The definition of 'Crimes against Humanity' under the 1973 Act is almost similar to that under the ICTY Statute. In both these definitions there is no need to prove that the relevant crimes were committed as part of a 'widespread or systematic attack'. If the specific offences of 'Crimes against Humanity' which were committed during 1971 are tried under the 1973 Act, it is obvious that they were committed in the context of the 1971 war. This context is itself sufficient to prove the existence of a 'widespread and systematic attack' on Bangladeshi self-determined population in 1971. The Tribunal, as per section 19(3) of the 1973 Act, shall not require proof of facts of common knowledge; it shall take judicial notice of such fact.

There is a concern that the definition of crimes against humanity as stated in the ICT act does not comply with the international standard. It is true that the definition differs from that of the Rome Statute. It may be noted that even the definition of crimes against humanity as defined in the ICTY and the ICTR differ from that of the Rome Statute. The Rome Statute clarifies that the definition contained in the Statute is ‘for the purpose of the Statute’. The Statute recognizes that these definitions were not final.

Pre-trial arrest/detention:

The Act of 1973 does not have any explicit provision in this regard. However, although arbitrary arrest or detention of accused at pre-trial stage is prohibited, if it is expedient for the purpose of effective investigation, the Investigation Agency may through the prosecution seek such arrest or detention by an application before the tribunal and on being satisfied the Tribunal can make an order detaining the accused. (Rule-9).

Rules of Evidence (Section 19)

Prosecuting the perpetrators of crimes against humanity after long 40 years is a challenge. So, probative evidence is admitted regardless of its format, unless the rights of the accused are deemed to be prejudiced by admission. Section 19 provides provision of admitting all reports, photographs, films and other materials carrying probative value as evidence. This provision has been supplemented by the Rule 44 of the Rules of Procedure. All proceedings before the Tribunal shall be in public provided that the tribunal may, if it thinks fit, take proceedings in camera [section 10(4)] and no oath shall be administered to any accused person [section 10(5)]. Further, statement made by an accused to investigation officer during interrogation shall not be admissible in evidence [Rule 56(3)]

Rights of defence
At least three weeks before commencement of trial list of witnesses intended to be produced along with recorded statement of such witnesses or copies thereof and copies of documents which the prosecution intend to rely have to be furnished (Section 9(3)).

Copy of formal charge together with documents collected during investigation shall be furnished to accused person at a reasonable time before the trial [section 16(2)].

The accused shall have right to examine witnesses [section 10(1)]; Right to interpreter [section 10(3)];

**Death Penalty**

As a form of punishment, “death penalty” has been carried out on numerous occasions in Bangladesh in the past. The same was applied to the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and there was no criticism or protest against the punishment. Besides, the ICC Statute has not totally discarded national practices and the Article 80 titled “Nonprejudice to national application of penalties and national laws” contains that “nothing in this part affects the application by states of penalties prescribed by their national law, nor the law of states which do not provide for penalties prescribed in this Part”.

**Retrospectivity of the Act**

International crimes are subject to prosecution and punishment irrespective of domestic criminalisation of international (war) crimes. The 1973 Act has simply enacted, in a fashion of recognition, the then existing international rules concerning war crimes and crimes against humanity. The duty of the State to locally prosecute international crimes pre-dates the 1973 Act. Moreover, the prosecution of crimes against humanity is a widely acknowledged exception to the principle of non-retrospectivity.

**Presumption of innocence**

As per the universal criminal jurisprudence, no one can be convicted unless the charge brought against him is proved 'beyond reasonable doubt'. This settled norm does not need to be embodied in the Act.

Even in absence of any explicit provision on this aspect the tribunal, ethically, must see what happened in similar situations in other courts and what they have done, and take those decisions into account. Besides, the provision that the burden of proving the charge shall lie upon the prosecution (Rule 50) amply implicates the theory of innocence of an accused until and unless he is held guilty through trial. However, a new rule has been adopted that a person charged with crimes as described under section 3(2) of the Act shall be presumed innocent until found guilty [Rule 43(2)].

**(w)Counter-terrorism**

The General Assembly adopted in 2006 the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which aims to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. The strategy is the first common approach to fighting terrorism in all its forms,
outlining practical steps to prevent and combat it, which range from strengthening State
capacity to combat threats to better coordinating the United Nations system’s counter-
terrorism activities. The adoption of the strategy fulfils the commitment made by world
leaders at the 2005 World Summit. Significantly, Bangladesh has ratified thirteen
universal legal instruments4 to counter-terrorism under the United Nations action to
counter-terrorism and also party to several regional agreements.
The Government of Bangladesh, under the dynamic leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister
Sheikh Hasina, unequivocally condemns terrorism in its all forms and manifestations in
the strongest possible terms.

Bangladesh has been following “zero tolerance” in its efforts to counter terrorism and
religious extremism. During its tour of duty, since January 2009, the Government has
been aggressively pursuing those who are involved in extremist activities and many
suspects have already been arrested from various parts of the country and huge quantities
of arms and ammunitions have been recovered and many have faced legal consequences.

The Anti Terrorism Act 2009 has been enacted by the Government to furthering its
commitments and work. Bangladesh is firmly committed to counter-terrorism efforts in
the regional and international levels through multilateral and regional anti-terrorism
frameworks and cooperation. Anti Terrorism Act, 2009 includes all reporting
requirements as per international standards as well as provisions of punishment for non-
compliance of such reporting by the designated reporting agencies.

In addition to our own efforts, Bangladesh hosted a counter-terrorism programme in
Dhaka at the initiative of the United Nations Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate
(UNCTED) on “Regional Workshop for Police Officers and Prosecutors in South Asia to
effectively countering terrorism” from 08 to 10 November 2009. Bangladesh has been
regarded as an important partner by all South Asian countries in combating terrorism.

Counter terrorism - national action

The primary objectives of Bangladesh’s counter-terrorism efforts are to (a) ensure the
security of lives and livelihoods of its citizens from terrorist attacks and (b) defeat the
forces of terrorism that challenge the authority of the State and the legitimacy of its
Constitution.

Within a short time, Bangladesh has been able to establish effective counter-terrorism
programs, institutions and enact anti-money laundering laws. As a result, terrorist threats

4 Terrorism has been on the international agenda since 1934, when the League of Nations took the first
major step towards outlawing the scourge by discussing a draft convention for the prevention and
punishment of terrorism. Although the Convention was eventually adopted in 1937, it never came into
force. However, since 1963, the international community has elaborated 14 universal legal instruments and
four amendments to prevent terrorist acts. Universal legal documents involve convention, protocol and
several amendments.
posed recently by the Islamic militant groups have been brought under control. The country has also adhered to various international legal instruments to fight terrorism, actively cooperated to develop regional cooperation against terrorism.

Government is always keen to guide and support for the strategic drive to facilitate remittance flow through official channels. Under its relevant provision, the NGO Affairs Bureau is empowered to cancel registration, stop project actives and take legal action against the violators. So far, Bangladesh has closed the operation of Saudi Arabia-based charity Al-Haramain Foundation and the local Rabita Trust office in compliance with relevant UNSC resolutions. The Government has also ordered freeze of account of Kuwait-based charity Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS) for their alleged involvement in terrorist financing.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken some concrete measures to address money laundering and terrorist financing. In order to address the shortcomings of the existing anti-money laundering law to meet international standards including UNSC Resolution 1373, the Money Laundering Prevention Act (MLPA), 2009 has extended the list of predicate offences in 2010 which includes (i) Terrorism and Terrorist Financing (ii) Piracy (iii) Environmental Crime (iv) Insider Trading and Market Manipulation (v) Sexual Exploitation and (vi) Organized Crime – demonstrating the Government’s commitments to combat terrorism in all possible dimensions.

The government of Bangladesh is working on finalizing the national counter-terrorism strategy paper. The government of Bangladesh is also working on finalizing the Anti-Terrorism (amendment) Act 2011 and Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2011 to incorporate potential acts terrorism, such as killing, threatening, carrying or possessing illegal arms and ammunition, abduction, creating panic, using Bangladesh's soil for carrying out terrorist activities in, or outside the country.

**Bilateral Counter-terrorism Cooperation**

- Bangladesh has active counter-terrorism cooperation with the United States. The United States has helped developing Bangladesh's counter-terrorism capacity building through training and equipment support.
- It also receives training and technical assistance from the UK and Australia.
- Bangladesh and India are working closely to expand cooperation to fight terrorism. At various high-level meetings, the two sides agreed that terrorism posed a threat to both countries and that there was a need to cooperate closely to tackle this menace.
- Bangladesh and India also hold regular meeting between the heads of BDR and BSF. Currently, there are a number of criminals and terrorist suspects who are staying in India. Bangladesh has sought India's help for their return.

In the US State Department Annual Country Report on Terrorism 2011, the US Government has commended the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh against terrorism. The just published report stated “Bangladesh continued to increase its domestic capacity, as well as its international and regional counterterrorism cooperation in 2010, working
with its partners to increase information sharing and Bangladeshi capacity development. Bangladesh is becoming a positive regional example for its forward-leaning stance and willingness to cooperate both bilaterally and multilaterally”. The report rightly stated on the fact that the Bangladesh Government had acted on its pledge to focus serious attention on counter terrorism which resulted in bringing to book several high profile figures in Bangladesh related to terrorism throughout 2010 and 2011.

Despite measures against international terrorism, Bangladesh notes with concern that terrorist activities are on rise in recent years. Bangladesh has recommended to the General Assembly that a comprehensive approach should be taken toward elimination of terrorism comprising of three basic aspects:

1. Work toward an all encompassing international regime for combating terrorism;
2. Cooperation among all states; and
3. Diffusion of terrorism through socio-political understanding of the problem.

Counter Terrorism is a very sensitive issue and normally debates on such issue linger for months. For example, it took few years to come up with a consensus resolution in 2006. However, Bangladesh was instrumental in the unanimous adoption of the UN Counter Terrorism Strategy Resolution Review 2010 draft adopted in the General Assembly on September 8 2010. All 192 countries unanimously adopted the resolution and many leading players highly praised the leadership of Bangladesh Mission in achieving such diplomatic miracle.

(x) Disarmament and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Issues

Bangladesh sees disarmament as an instrument for enhancing international security. As a member of the UN Security Council (in 2000-2001), Bangladesh was particularly active and visible in international disarmament efforts, reaffirming its commitment to the adherence of international disarmament instruments. Bangladesh's commitment and priority to disarmament both nuclear and conventional, flows from her deep constitutional obligations to the goal of general and complete disarmament. In keeping with these principles Bangladesh has taken a number of unique decisions which has reaffirmed Bangladesh’s leadership role in the South Asia region in the area of disarmament and earned it tremendous goodwill and acceptance in the international arena.

Bangladesh is a State Party to almost all the major disarmament treaties including NPT, CTBT, CWC, CCW, BTWC, APMBT, etc. Bangladesh, as the first South Asian country, signed and ratified the CTBT. The decision to ratify the CTBT received highest commendations of world leaders and government. Inspired by same commitment, Bangladesh also signed and ratified the "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction" and the "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction" as the first South Asian country.
As a State Party to the mine ban treaty, Bangladesh has accepted certain obligations, including destruction of existing stockpile, reporting compliance and enacting national legislation banning use, production and transfer of APMs. Mentionable, the deadline for completion of destruction of our stockpile was 1 March 2005. Accordingly, Bangladesh, with the financial assistance of Canadian Government completed destruction of 1, 89, 227 APMs being held by Bangladesh Army. A total of 14,999 mines of different categories were retained under Article 3 to impart general training to Bangladesh Army Personnel and specifically to assist engineering contingents to prepare for UN peacekeeping Missions. Bangladesh annually reports to the authority under Article-7 of the Convention.

Immediately after the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1997, Bangladesh submitted necessary declaration regarding the chemical weapons and their production facilities. To meet the obligations of CWC, "Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Act 2006" was passed by the Parliament and following that Bangladesh National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention (BNACWC) has been established. BNACWC is working towards formulation of rules and regulations under that Act. Thus, Bangladesh is seen at the forefront of disarmament and international peace and security, offering an example for other South Asian countries by acceding to the remaining core disarmament treaties to which Bangladesh is not yet a part, particularly those which would contribute to save innocent civilians. Bangladesh also ratified the Four Protocols which ban an entire range of inhumane weapons during the Millennium Assembly. Bangladesh took special initiative following the nuclear test explosions by India and Pakistan in an effort to maintain South Asia as Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and bring peace and stability in the region.

Bangladesh considers the elimination of nuclear weapons to be the highest priority in the disarmament context. Bangladesh believes that disarmament and development has an intrinsic and mutually reinforcing link. The reduction of military threats to security is a must for addressing non-military threats to peace and security as it is essential for re-allocating resources from armaments to development. Savings from a small cut in the military expenditure by major powers may contribute substantially to financing of development in the developing world. Bangladesh, therefore, is concerned that any increase in the number of Nuclear Weapon State will not only have serious implications for international peace and security but also for development. As an active member of the G-21 in the CD, Bangladesh remains committed to contributing to discussions, deliberations, debates and substantive negotiations on a broad range of disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Bangladesh along with other members of the G-21 submitted a Programme of Action for phased elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2020. Bangladesh feels this is not only a realistic proposition, but also an expedient one as the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Canberra Commission, the European Parliament, various think-tanks and the professionals converge on this point. To this end, Bangladesh has supported and will continue to support efforts leading towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, and inhumane weapons and combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The Hon’ble Foreign Minister addressed the High Level Meeting on “Revitalizing the Work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations” held in New York in September 2010 and the high-level segment of the
2011 Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland on 1 March 2011. The Hon’ble Foreign Minister stressed that Bangladesh steadfastly supported a multilateral approach to non-proliferation and disarmament. She underlined that Bangladesh remained concerned that despite efforts made by successive presidencies, the consensus to begin substantive work continued to elude the Conference on Disarmament. She mentioned that the Member States kept talking, but they fell short of acting, and when they felt motivated to act finding common ground became most challenging.

Bangladesh delegation attended the Second session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) held at the UN Headquarters on 28 Feb-04 March 2011. Bangladesh made a statement in the session. In the statement, the Bangladesh delegate, inter alia, said that the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) should crystallize in the context of existing international arms transfers, regimes and the commitments already assumed by States under the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the two International Covenants on human rights, other widely supported international conventions and established principles of customary international law.

Bangladesh became a State party to the NPT on 31 August 1979. Bangladesh has also signed the "Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water or the PTBT, 1963" and became a party to the CTBT in 2000. All these instruments are considered by Bangladesh as crucial steps towards complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the world. In the area of verification and nuclear safeguards, pursuant to provisions of the NPT, Bangladesh has also signed a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA which entered into force on 11 June 1982.

Bangladesh’s position on NPT has always been principled and consistent. Our unequivocal support for the NPT and commitment to its consolidation and implementation emanate from our constitutional obligations to general and complete disarmament. Bangladesh is of the view that substantive negotiations on total and comprehensive nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework through a legally binding instrument should commence forthwith in the Conference on Disarmament. An ad-hoc committee on nuclear disarmament must be set up to address this crucial issue. Bangladesh also firmly believes that the threat of use of nuclear weapons is contrary to international law. Bangladesh attaches high importance to security assurances which are a matter of great interest to all non-nuclear Weapon states. However, the total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the best security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh delegation attended the ‘General Debate 2011 Substantive Session of Disarmament Commission’ held in New York in April 2011. Bangladesh Permanent Representative in New York made a statement in the Substantive Session. Bangladesh, in its statement, called for adopting a balanced approach in addressing the three pillars of NPT—nuclear disarmament of countries currently possessing nuclear weapons, non-proliferation to countries not yet in possession, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for all.
The Hon’ble Foreign Minister is expected to attend a High-level Meeting on “Nuclear safety and security (NSS)” to be held on the sideline of the 66th UNGA. The Hon’ble Foreign Minister may underline Bangladesh’s commitment to peaceful use of nuclear energy, promote nuclear safety standards and security guidelines as well as the increased use of integrated review services are important prerequisites for the world’s community to establish a global nuclear safety and security partnership. We call upon all states to join, as appropriate, and implement the respective international instruments.

First Committee (Disarmament and International Security Committee) of the General Assembly deals with disarmament and related international security issues. It provides space for each state to discuss their positions on disarmament-related matters. The 66th Session of the UNGA is expected to discuss a range of disarmament and non-proliferation issues on many of which Bangladesh will have serious stake like nuclear disarmament, Transparency in armaments, the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, etc. Bangladesh position would be in line with its foreign policy objectives relating to renunciation of the use of force; attainment of a general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament and linkages between disarmament and development. During the upcoming session, Bangladesh delegation may reiterate its call for adopting a balanced approach in addressing the three pillars of NPT—nuclear disarmament of countries currently possessing nuclear weapons, non-proliferation to countries not yet in possession, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy for all. At the same time, we may stress the devastating nature and the perennial threats posed by proliferation of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons.

(y) UN Election: Bangladesh’s representation (current/recent) in the UN Organization/Bodies/Caucuses

During the tenure of the present government Bangladesh has won all international elections and is currently member of executive bodies of the highest number of international organizations. Bangladesh generally enjoys an excellent track record of winning elections at various UN bodies. Following is a list of Bangladesh’s current membership along with their terms:

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<th>Organizations/Bodies</th>
<th>Terms</th>
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<td>1. ECOSOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Committee for the United Nations Population Award</td>
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<td>4. President, UNICEF Executive Board</td>
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<td>5. President, Disarmament Board</td>
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<td>7. Chairman, NPT Credentials Committee</td>
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<td>8. Chair, Asian Group</td>
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<td>9. Coordinator, NAP Peacekeeping Caucus</td>
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<td>10. UNDP/UNFPA/WEP Executive Board</td>
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<td>11. Programme Coordination Board (PCB) of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)</td>
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13. Executive Board of UNESCO 2009-13
14. Organizational Committee of the UN Peace-building Commission 2009-10
15. Commission for Social Development (CSocD) 2009-13
17. Governing Council of United Nation 2009-11
18. Environmental Programme (UNEP) 2009-11
19. UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) 2009-12
20. International Maritime Organization Council 2008-09
21. Commission on Sustainable Development 2008-11
22. Committee for Programme and Coordination 2008-10
23. Governing Body of ILO (titular membership) 2008-11
24. Executive Board of WHO 2008-11
25. Executive Council of International Seabed Authority (ISBA) 2009-12
26. Executive Board of UNICEF 2009-11
27. Postal Operations Council of UPU 2009-12
28. Council of Administration of UPU 2009-12
29. International Civil Service Commission 2009-12
30. Friends of Climate Change 2009-10
31. Friends of Trafficking 2010
32. UNDP Technical Advisory Panel on MDGs 2010
33. Committee for the United Nations Population Award 2010
34. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 2011-14
35. Facilitator, UN Counter Terrorism Strategy Review, 2010 2010
36. Member, Executive Board of UN Women 2011-2012
37. Member, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council 2010-2014
38. Vice President, Bureau of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board 2011
40. Chairman, Second Committee (Economic & Financial Committee of the 66th UNGA 2011