

Honorable Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguish Participants, Ladies and Gentleman,

On behalf of the Bangladesh delegation, I express our sincere thanks to the Government of Tajikistan, for the warm and generous hospitality. We appreciate the timely organization of this International High-level Conference on International Decade for Action entitled “Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028”. Bangladesh has been a co-sponsor of the UNGA resolution 10-year program. It is time to work out an ambitious but feasible action plan for achieving the targets of SDG-6. I concur with all previous speakers that it is time to move from discussions and deliberations, to action.

Excellencies; Our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, a member of High Level of Platform, on the SDG 6, has initiated the process of achievement of all the SDGs in the country, with due diligence. We have set-up an institutional mechanism for implementation of the goals and achievement of the targets within the stipulated time frame. A senior civil servant has been appointed as the National SDG coordinator. His task will be to ensure smooth and coordinated Inter-ministerial coordination. I am proud to announce that we have made significant progress in SDG 6.1 and 6.2. Except for a few geographically inaccessible location safe drinking water is available in the entire country. I have to admit that a big challenge for supplying of safe drinking water, is in the coastal belt. It is getting acute and problematic as salinity is increasing due to sea level rise coupled with reduction of fresh water supply from upstream. We are building up a water supply and sanitation systems to cover all educational institutions with especial attention to need of female students. We have achieved total success in ending open defecation.

Excellencies; Water is a finite resource. It is an economic good; it is also a social and environmental good. It is essential for survival of human beings; it is prerequisite for growth; it is essential for enhancing productivity in agriculture sector and ensure food security. In every source of water, we see competing demand. On the other hand as population is increasing, and, as we have to improve our living conditions, we need more water. Demand for water is increasing; its supply remains static. Bangladesh is a country where total annual availability of water may seem to be very high. Rainfall, river discharge and ground water availability in the monsoon months are very high. Then, in the dry months of winter and summer we suffer from serious shortage of water; during this

period, rainfall is almost nil; rivers dry up and ground water level falls well below the suitable abstraction level. Thus, we suffer from floods in the monsoon months and drought like condition during other time of the year. River bank erosion as well as heavy siltation are our major concerns. Therefore, we need to optimize the use of water and integrated river management. In recent years, the behavior of climate and weather has become erratic. We are facing untimely floods in both pre-monsoon and post monsoon periods. We are observing lower rainfall in the peak of the monsoon. This is affecting productivity in agriculture sector. In 2016, Bangladesh was a food exporting country. In 2017 and 2018, we have been compelled to import food. We need to take to account temporal and spatial variation of availability of water. One of our main constraint, in proceeding with integrated water management as we live in lowest part of the river basins. More than ninety percent of the water that flows through Bangladesh come from across our boarder. We need to push for basin wise and basin wide approach in water management. SDG 6.5 talks about integrate management of water resource at all levels, including through trans-boundary cooperation, as appropriate. This is a topic on which we need to pay serious attention. We need to develop an action program for achieving effective management of water in all river basins.

Excellencies; Bangladesh is paying full attention to SDG 6.3. We hope to improve water quality by reducing pollution, treating wastewater, and push for recycling. We need technical as well as financial support along with support for capacity building on these issues. Bangladesh is an emerging economy. Rapid urbanization is happening. We are pushing for growth in industrial sector to create employment for the younger generations that are coming to the job market. In the process, pollution level from industrial and urban waste is increasing, unabated. We seek access to affordable technologies for pollution control. Bangladesh strongly supports the recommendation of SDG 6.5 that IWM practices require participation of communities at all level. My ministry has developed a guideline for full and effective participation of local communities in all water development projects.

On SDG 6.6, Bangladesh is committed to protect and restore all water related ecosystems. However, population pressure is a big challenge for us. Bangladesh has identified important wetlands and forests to be brought under protection to conserve their sensitive ecosystems. We have declared a member of wetlands as Ramsar sites. We look for

ecosystem based as well as community based adaptation for managing adverse impacts of climate change.

Excellencies; Bangladesh is in the process of graduating from a LDC to Middle-income Country. Under the able leadership of our Prime Minister, we believe that we shall be able to achieve the SDG's targets while maintaining the growth rate. I have tried to report our approaches in implementing SDG-6. I must highlight the importance of building capacity among the professionals for various activities such as improvement of water use efficiency, water harvesting and ground water recharge, treatment of wastewater and sanitation related activities, especially in urban areas.

Ladies and gentlemen; to conclude, my team and I believe that, we shall go back home with lots of new ideas and enriched knowledge from the three day Conference. We plan to participate in all the panels with open mind and we are ready to share our national experiences as well as develop collaboration with all parties.

Thank you all for your patience with me.

Joy Bangla
Joy BangaBandhu