

# Bangladesh's progress in implementing SDGs

Dr. Mahamud Sattar

Bangladesh gained membership of important international organizations immediately after independence under the visionary leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the great architect of independent Bangladesh and the greatest Bengali father of the nation. The most significant of these is Bangladesh's membership of the United Nations as the 136th country on September 17, 1974, with the unwavering support of the world. Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the blessed daughter of the Father of the Nation, has taken the leadership of Bangladesh to a new height in the United Nations following his footsteps. He is the only Prime Minister in the world who has simultaneously signed the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on behalf of his country.

The concept of Sustainable Development Goals was originally conceived to achieve the achievements that remained elusive in the Millennium Development Goals. Considering the incompleteness of the MDG and the need for sustainable development, in 2011-12, the United Nations invited proposals on sustainable development from various countries, international and regional organizations and individuals. Accordingly, a proposal was submitted from the Government of Bangladesh and a proposal from the private sector as well (PKSF, 2021). In June 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. There, consensus was established based on extensive discussions and debates with heads of government, civil society, business and development partners on a new set of goals for global development. On the basis of the said consensus, the working group was formed to prepare a draft proposal for sustainable development by reviewing the proposals received on sustainable development. Bangladesh was also a member of the said working group. After lengthy discussions and reviews, the draft recommendations for sustainable development were finalized. In the inaugural Declaration of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, world leaders declared: “As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge to leave no one behind. Upholding human dignity is our fundamental responsibility, we want to see that the goals and objectives are achieved equally for all races and peoples and all sections of society and we will try to reach the most disadvantaged groups first”. Consequently, in an effort to move the world towards sustainable achievement, on September 25, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030, in the presence of 193 heads of state. It is also known as Agenda 2030. The SDGs rest on three pillars – economic, social and environmental, so that development is sustainable, inclusive and holistic. In formulating this global agenda, Bangladesh proposed 11 goals out of which 10 goals are specific and 1 goal is reflected in other goals. 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 indicators were set by the United Nations for the development agenda. Right after the announcement, Bangladesh took comprehensive activities to implement the SDGs under the guidance of the Honorable Prime Minister.

The greatest Bengali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave the outline of sustainable development in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, it has been exactly reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 declared by the United Nations after 40 years. The master plan adopted by the government to build the 'Golden Bangladesh' of the Father of the Nation includes every aspect of the Global Development Agenda 2030 announced by the United Nations.

The long, medium and short term plans adopted by the government for the development of Bangladesh and the improvement of people's quality of life, all the elements to achieve the goals of SDG exist in the proper implementation of all those plans. However, Bangladesh is making detailed plans to achieve the SDG targets more closely and implementing them. Bangladesh has already achieved international recognition in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since its inception, Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) has been involved in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 implementation plan and the determination of implementation strategies. GIU has very efficiently performed tasks such as capacity building through training of government officials at home and abroad on SDG implementation and setting national priorities of SDG targets and indicators in view of the socio-economic reality of Bangladesh. However, the proper implementation of the SDGs requires planning and implementation strategies at the local level, as well as the direct participation of local people and local

institutions. In view of the above facts, GIU proposed 39+1 model of localization after identifying 39 priority indicators at the national level with an additional 1 indicator proposed at the local level which was approved by the Cabinet. Bangladesh is formulating and implementing SDG implementation strategy in the light of national 39 priority indicators. SDG is a "Whole of Society Approach". As it is necessary to involve all the members of the society in this process, it is very important to involve the local public and local institutions. In identifying the +1 local priorities under the 39+1 model, GIU has followed the innovative method of "Whole of Society Approach" involving local public, public representatives, representatives of civil society, representatives of business and social organizations, mass media representatives, government and private officials, which is undoubtedly appreciated demands. The SDG local indicators prepared through the participation of people at all levels are playing an important role in the integrated development program of Bangladesh.

The strategy followed by the Governance Innovation Unit to identify priority indicators at the division, district and upazila levels involving the local public, public representatives, representatives of civil society, representatives of social and cultural organizations, business and media representatives and local government and non-governmental officials is a universal SDG localization Ideal model. However, a more universal SDG localization model can be incorporated into the development plan by identifying overall development priorities or objective priorities rather than identifying a priority. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's development philosophy is reflected in the 'Sustainable Development Goals 2030'. In the development philosophy of the Honorable Prime Minister, as the poor, helpless, marginalized and marginalized people have been given priority to improve their quality of life, the United Nations has pledged to build a world free of hunger and poverty through the United Nations 'Sustainable Development Goals 2030'.

The government is working tirelessly to create Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty, which is actually the main theme of SDG-1 and SDG-2. The main target of the development agenda of the honorable Prime Minister is the people, so are the SDGs. Governments have incorporated the framework provided in the SDGs into their own development agenda to address the challenges of social inclusion, economic development and environmental protection. One of its objectives is to fulfill global commitments by implementing its own plans. To meet the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals, the government has already taken special programs for the homeless and landless, marginalized communities, remote areas and those living in vulnerable situations. Bangladesh became the first country to make the best SDG progress between 2015 and 2020, thus the Honorable Prime Minister was awarded the "SDG Progress Award" at the 9th International Conference on Sustainable Development in September 2021. As a result, along with international recognition, the image of Bangladesh in the world also increases.

Ambitious targets like SDG are being implemented at the state level by identifying the correct and effective priorities considering the reality of the country. Bangladesh has identified priority indicators in such a way that if they can be implemented, many global indicators will also be implemented along with the priority indicators. Taken as a whole, the new indicators reveal Bangladesh's own priorities as well as global targets on sustainable agriculture, reducing inequality, quality education, gender equality, climate change. Although the achievement of SDG nationally is promising, Bangladesh is lagging behind in localization. If SDG localization does not proceed as planned, it may not be possible to achieve all targets of SDG in the stipulated time. But for an effective SDG localization model, in the light of global 231 indicators and national 39 priorities, an overall priority indicator list is needed at each local district and upazila level, as well as a proper action plan with resources to implement those indicators. However, currently steps are being taken to implement the priority indicators that have been identified. Implementation of the priorities received at the district and upazila levels will gain recognition among grassroots stakeholders for their participation in government planning, and the local people will also benefit.

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Writer: Economist

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