

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Finance
Economic Relations Division
PRS-HAP Cell

Speech of the Chief Guest, Secretary, ERD, Ministry of Finance

Hon'ble Guest H. E. Mr. Masayuki Inoue, Ambassador, Embassy of Japan

Hon'ble Guest Mr. Manoj Basnyat, Country Director, UNDP office

Representatives of Development Partners

Excellencies

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamu Alaikum

It gives me immense pleasure in welcoming you all this morning to this gathering in ERD, Dhaka. Earlier we used to meet in various forums to share our common agenda for socio-economic development in Bangladesh. We exchanged views and ideas on how best we could work in partnership to promote and accelerate our development process.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Government and Development Partners agreed to strengthen harmonization and effectiveness of aid, to align aid to the PRSP, and to continue forward with the aid coordination process under government leadership. The main objective of HAP is to reduce poverty, improve partnership collaboration and sustain development gains towards achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In line with Paris Declaration, Harmonization Action Plan was approved on 28-08-2006. HAP is intended to be the working document outlining directions for future action by both GOB and DPs. A senior official has been appointed in ERD as a focal point with a clear mandate to promote the implementation and monitoring of Harmonization Action Plan and Poverty Reduction Strategy. A PRS-HAP cell has been constituted to facilitate the Implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategy and Harmonization Action Plan. The Cell has been closely liaising with GOB departments and the LCG focal points. Moreover, GOB-DP joint Harmonization Taskforce has established and functioning to monitor the Harmonization Action Plan and Paris Declaration implementation. PRS -HAP Cell has been instrumental in coordinating not only the HAP but also in coordinating the Paris Declaration Evaluation, OECD-DAC survey 2008, and preparing themselves for participating in the High Level Forum in Accra where Bangladesh was the only country to participate from all South Asia. ERD will strengthen the Cell so that its effort is sustained. PRS -HAP Cell further needs to be strengthen for the benefit of both GOB and our Development Partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Bangladesh, with a number of other countries and international organizations, participated at the High Level Forum (HLF) and placed its signature to the joint commitments contained in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. Since then, the Government of Bangladesh has been taking commendable efforts in pursuit of better aid coordination and harmonization and has enhanced coordination/consultation to implement Paris Declaration. First of all, Bangladesh formulated the Bangladesh Harmonization Action Plan (HAP) to localize the spirit of the Paris Declaration and promote its implementation. This was then followed by a dissemination workshop to enhance understanding among the involved staff in line ministries. Bangladesh in close consultation with Development Partners, also took part in the OECD-DAC baseline survey in the 2006 Survey on monitoring of the Paris Declaration. In 2007, the Government of Bangladesh volunteered, at the Evaluation Reference Group meeting held in Paris, to conduct a country level evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The Paris Declaration highlights the importance of an independent cross-country evaluation to compliment the monitoring of its implementation. To fulfil this commitment, the Government of Bangladesh, in collaboration with Development Partners, have taken the initiative to conduct a country level evaluation of the implementation of the commitments of the Paris Declaration. The main purpose of the evaluation is to strengthen aid effectiveness by assessing what constitutes better practices for partner and donor behaviour in regard to implementation of the Paris Declaration. Natural Resources Planners Limited, a local consulting firm has been assigned to conduct the country level evaluation. The study is in progress. This report mainly presents the summary preliminary findings of the evaluation on the basis of data collected during the period between 23 December 2007 and 17 January 2008. Three sample sectors namely (a) Primary Education (b) Energy and Power and (c) Environment as crosscutting issue have been selected for a detailed study.

Ladies and Gentleman,

We know that the 3rd High Level Forum (HLF-3) on Aid Effectiveness will be held in 2-4 September 2008 in Accra. In order to contribute to the HLF-3, Government of Bangladesh has committed to conduct OECD-DAC Survey 2008 from 2 January – 31 March 2008 as far Paris requirement. The DAC Evaluation Network has agreed with the working Party on Aid Effectiveness and the Joint Venture on Monitoring the Paris Declaration to move forward with the evaluation process together with partner countries with a view to prepare an initial report by the 2008 HLF in Ghana and a more comprehensive evaluation by 2010.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Partners in the Paris Declaration have demonstrated their support for a strong focus on monitoring as well as the importance of an independent cross-country evaluation process. The purpose of an independent evaluation is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives. While monitoring will, and continues to identify what progress has happened, an independent evaluation will answer questions about how it happened and why or why not and will provide an opportunity for in-depth analysis of both partner and donor behavior; analysis of underlying assumptions, and provide a long-term perspective in examining the effects of increased aid effectiveness.

Ladies and Gentlemen

However, it appears that if PD evaluation is to be effectively implemented, then we need to bring it closer to those who are contributing to implement, monitor and record progress of it so that this will enhance the common understanding of development effectiveness, Paris declaration or Harmonization efforts among all. In view of the above, this Workshop on aid effectiveness and harmonization is proposed to this works the respond to the strong needs from the relevant ministries/divisions to deepen the understanding of the issues and a first attempt to sensitize our colleagues. So, I invite you all to take advantage of this occasion to learn about the advance of Paris Declaration and Monitoring to your work.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy that ERD in collaboration with the development partners have organized this Paris Declaration Evaluation Workshop which I am sure will be able to suggest guidelines and would help in establishing a more effective plan of actions streamlining Accra High Level Forum within the stipulated timeframe. I thank you all again for kindly attending the workshop. Your presence and active participation will provide inspiration, guidelines and encouragement to the organizers. With this few words I like to invite you all to participate in the PD Workshop and declared the workshop open.