

Speech of the Secretary, ERD, Ministry of Finance

Hon'ble Guest H. E. Mr. Masayuki Inoue, Ambassador, Embassy of Japan
Hon'ble Guest Mr. Manoj Basnyat, Resident Coordinator a.i, UNRC 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 august gathering in ERD, Dhaka. This workshop is the first of its kind focused solely on the Paris Declaration and harmonization agenda. 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

Bangladesh with over 85 developing and developed countries signed in the year 2005 the "Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness" underscoring that for development assistance to be effective it needs to be fully aligned with national priorities and needs. The Harmonization Action Plan constitutes another step forward to make the commitments a reality at the country level. The Harmonization Action Plan is the outcome of several joint consultations, analysis and hard work from both the Government of Bangladesh and the Development Partners through the Local Consultative Group. It has been prepared on the basis of the principles anchored in the Rome and Paris Declarations and the ground realities embedded in the Bangladesh medium term development strategy: Unlocking the Potential: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (PRSP)" for FY2004/2005-FY2006/2008.

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 OECD-DAC survey 2006, where Bangladesh was the only country to participate from all South Asia. ERD will strengthen the Cell so that its effort be sustained. PRS-HAP Cell further needs to be strengthen for the benefit of both GOB and our Development Partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I must thank all relevant stakeholders who contributed to finalize the whole process of the Harmonization Action Plan. I also would like to take this opportunity to call upon all the line Ministries and the Development Partners to extend their continuous support (a) to further localization and adaptation of the harmonization efforts to Bangladesh realities and (b) help disseminate the core messages of the Harmonization agenda, to use it as a guiding tool for your work and help us to improve our coordination tasks to the grassroots levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Formulation of HAP itself is not a goal, rather, it is to be monitored and reviewed among stakeholders to ensure that HAP is implemented and actually enhance the aid effectiveness. To make HAP more operational, it was agreed that workable

indicators are to be worked out jointly by GoB and DPs, with wide participation from line ministries/divisions who are actually working on development projects. Indicators were further discussed during OECD/DAC survey 2006 exercise.

However, it appears that if HAP 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 sensitise our colleagues.

So, I invite you all my colleagues from the line ministries and departments to take advantage of this occasion to learn about the relevance of Paris Declaration and Monitoring to your work.

I welcome and thank my fellow colleagues and resource persons for their contributions all along in various forms to make this session meaningful;

I also would like to welcome the representatives from the development partners; Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your presence, your encouragements and support.

Last but not least I also would like to thank Japan and UN family for their special efforts to liaise between ERD and the Local consultative Group on the Aid coordination issues.