

Honorable Prime Minister, H.E. Sheikh Hasina, MP

Honorable Minister for Finance, H.E. Mr. Abul Maal A. Muhith, MP

Mr. Jin Liqun, President-designate of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

Mr. Wencai Zhang, Vice President, Asian Development Bank

Mr. Kingo Toyoda, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Ms. Janina Jaruzelski, Head of Mission, USAID and co-chair of the Local Consultative Group

A very good morning to you all.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Bangladesh Development Forum 2015. We are truly honored by the presence of the Hon'ble Prime Minister and of senior representatives from our development partners, many of whom have travelled a long way to join us here today. We are also grateful for the presence of representatives of civil society organisations and think thanks.

We are here today to reinforce the development cooperation between the Government of Bangladesh and its partners, a journey that began immediately after our independence. Over the next two days, we will engage intensively with our Development Partners on some of the critical issues that will greatly impact on our development aspirations to become a Higher Middle Income Country in the near future. Based on achievements of the past years, we have just launched

our 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. The 7th Five Year Plan articulates new strategies, institutions and policies to complete the remaining agenda of the social and economic outcomes of the Vision 2021 and the Perspective Plan. The 7<sup>th</sup> Five year Plan will be the vehicle for us to lay a strong foundation to attain SDGs as well as to graduate Bangladesh to a non-LDC. The BDF is being held at a time that gives us opportunity to capture both the global and national perspectives on charting a sustainable development path for us. We adopted 17 SDGs in September.

The ODA and its role in national development is still evolving. While the magnitude and scope of SDGs will necessitate greater mobilization of resources, it is equally important that we target those resources on sectors like physical infrastructure, health, education and institutional capacity building. ODA also should play a catalytic role helping to create capacity for enhanced mobilization of domestic resources; to bring in private sector for investment; to support quality education and skills development for a knowledge led development, to support research and development to upscale the technical base. Over the next two days, we will discuss with our development partners on the design of policies, programmes and institutions that will enable effective use of resources. After a key note session where we will introduce our thinking on inclusive growth in Bangladesh, 6 priority topics for discussion have been chosen:

- (i) Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change
- (ii) Infrastructure
- (iii) Partnerships for effective development
- (iv) Health & Education
- (v) Social Protection

(vi) Gender

Internationally, the World has just endorsed the UN's new "Global Goals". 17 goals for 7 billion people, aiming for 3 extraordinary things: End extreme poverty. Fight inequality & injustice. Fix climate change. This is an incredibly ambitious agenda. This Bangladesh Development Forum serves as a starting point for discussions with our partners on how we will translate these Global Goals into reality in our country.

Goal 17 of the SDGs calls for an inclusive global partnership for sustainable development. This implies that we all have to work together (public & private sector, domestic & external financing) to attain the development goals. BDF 2015 is an attempt towards forging a better, effective and enhanced partnership between Government and DPs.

I would like to thank the LCG and my colleagues of ERD, other ministries and DPs who have put extraordinary amounts of effort and time in making the BDF happen.