

**Workshop on
Effective Engagement of the Media for Sustainable Graduation
01 September 2022**

Outcome Document

A workshop on 'Effective Engagement of the Media for Sustainable Graduation' was organized on 01 September 2022 at the NEC-II Conference Room of Economic Relations Division (ERD). The Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP) of ERD organized the workshop. ERD Secretary Ms. Sharifa Khan graced the event as the chief guest, while Wing Chief of the Development Effectiveness Wing of ERD and the Project Director of SSGP Mr. Farid Aziz chaired the event. Members of the Development Journalist Forum of Bangladesh and journalists from various media houses of the country participated in the workshop. Excerpts from the discussions and recommendations of the workshop are furnished below.



Participants of the workshop

Inaugural Session:

Welcome Speech of Mr. Farid Aziz, Additional Secretary and Project Director, SSGP, ERD:

Mr. Farid Aziz, in his welcome speech, highlighted the background and objectives of organizing the event. Focusing on the importance of media in ensuring social progress-- he termed it as the fourth pillar of the state as well as the mirror of the society. He also expressed his hope that Bangladesh's media would play a positive role in ensuring a smooth and sustainable graduation of the country through objective and in-depth analytical reporting on the relevant issues. Mr. Farid urged the participants of the workshop to provide their thoughtful opinions and recommendations as to how the media can be engaged in the process of sustainable graduation.

Remarks from Mr. Hamid Uz Zaman, President, Development Journalist Forum of Bangladesh (DJFB)

President of the Development Journalist Forum of Bangladesh (DJFB) Mr. Hamid Uz Zaman thanked ERD and SSGP for taking the initiative to organize the workshop. He hoped that the event would play an effective role in creating a better understanding of the graduation paradigm among the media personalities. He also hoped that media representatives would be invited to cover various agreement signing ceremonies and other events of ERD on a regular basis.

Inaugural Speech from the Chief Guest: Ms. Sharifa Khan, Secretary, Economic Relations Division:

Ms. Sharifa Khan, in her remarks, observed that Bangladesh, with her huge economic as well as its strong industrial and export base, offers a unique case among the graduating LDCs. She explained that LDC graduation would offer both challenges and opportunities for the country. In this context, she emphasized on taking appropriate measures for reaping the benefits of graduation. In this context, she sought the cooperation of media in creating a positive perception about LDC graduation among the mass people. She also asked the participants of the workshop to provide their insightful opinions and feedbacks on how to take the LDC graduation agenda to wider sections of the society.

Keynote Presentations

Presentation on 'An overview of LDC Graduation: Bangladesh Perspectives' by Dr. Md. Rezaul Bashar Siddique, Component Manager, SSGP:

In the beginning of his presentation, Dr. Md. Rezaul Bashar Siddique, explained, in detail, the background and process of LDC graduation. Later, he reflected on Bangladesh's LDC graduation journey. He explained that Bangladesh, in current trend, is expected to graduate from the LDC category in 2026. Dr. Siddique, in his presentation, provided a detailed overview of the multifarious benefits and challenges posed by LDC graduation. Lastly, he observed that Bangladesh would need to (a) take advantage of its status as an LDC over the next four years; (b) strive to secure a new set of ISMs as a graduating LDC; and (c) take adequate preparation towards Sustainable Graduation by undertaking the needed homework and by implementing the LDC graduation strategy.

Presentation on 'Measures Undertaken by the Government for smooth and sustainable graduation' by Mr. Md. Anwar Hossain, Component Manager, SSGP:

Mr. Md. Anwar Hossain, in his presentation, provided an overview of the national consultative framework devised for preparing the country for smooth and sustainable graduation. He reflected on the roles of the seven thematic subcommittees formed under the national committee on graduation. Mr. Hossain explained the process that the government would follow in preparing the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS). He highlighted on the roadmap and action matrix developed for formulating the STS. He presented the broad areas that would be covered in the planned STS. Lastly, he focused on the priorities for sustainable graduation as well as the next course of action.

Breakout Session

At this stage, the participants of the workshop were divided into three groups. They were asked to identify some key recommendations and prepare group presentations based on the following key questions:

- How media can support in the awareness program for sustainable graduation
- What measures the government may undertake to engage stakeholders at:
 - grassroots level
 - thinktank, academia, CSOs
 - private sector

Recommendations from Group Presentations

The following major points of recommendations came from the participants through their group presentations:

Engagement of Media:

- Media should provide objective reporting on both the opportunities and challenges posed by the LDC graduation;
- The government should provide regular update on LDC graduation related issues to the media through SSGP and/or other relevant government entities. A senior official from ERD should be designated as a spokesperson;
- A subcommittee could be formed involving the media personalities who would be regularly covering the LDC graduation issues;
- Training programs for local journalists in collaboration with DJFB could be organized;
- Publishing or broadcasting news items, supplements, TVCs and documentaries on electronic and print media;
- Offering fellowship programs on LDC graduation and relevant issues for journalists;
- Arranging regular visits for journalists/ media representatives at various development projects;
- Regular and intense consultations on graduation related issues with the high-level media personnel (i.e.- editors or equivalent);
- Media representatives should be incorporated as members of various graduation related national committee and subcommittees;
- Providing regular update on LDC graduation related issues through online and digital platforms like websites and social media; and
- Creating a knowledge hub through accumulating LDC graduation related books, journals, articles, research papers, media reports, multimedia items etc.

At the Grassroot Level:

- Devising and carrying out diversified modes of campaigning programs for the local level stakeholders regularly;
- Holding regular consultation with the local administration, public representatives and media;
- Incorporating the LDC graduation issue into the primary and higher secondary curriculum; and
- Devising a demand driven publicity scheme through involving the younger generation in various publicity schemes in collaboration with DJFB.

Think Tank, Academia, CSO:

- Think tanks should carry out in depth research on the multifarious impacts of LDC graduation and should make them public;
- Think tanks should also provide their feedback and recommendations on government policies and strategies regarding smooth and sustainable graduation;
- Organizing inclusive workshops, seminars and symposiums with participation of stakeholders and involving the media platforms (i.e.- DJFB);
- Think tanks should also be involved in raising the common concerns of LDCs at the global level (i.e.- advocating for the continuation of international support measures for the LDCs); and
- Incorporating representatives from think tanks as members of various sub committees.

Private Sector:

- Media should carry out in depth reporting on potential impact of LDC graduation on private sector as well as the implications of relevant government policies while identifying the areas for reforms and improvement;
- Following an inclusive and participatory approach while ensuring the representation of private sector in LDC graduation related consultations;
- Regular consultation with sectoral business chambers and district-level business chambers. National and local level media should also be involved in such local consultations;
- Arranging tripartite collaboration between government, private sector and the media to raise awareness about the graduation related issues at the local level;
- Collaborating with the media in identifying new areas of potential impacts of graduation;
- Awareness building about the impacts of LDC graduation among the local business chambers and trade bodies through the national level business chambers;
- Providing private sector with effective incentives for product and market diversification to reap the benefits of LDC graduation; and
- Ensuring active participation of the private sector representatives in LDC graduation related international events and trade negotiations.

Concluding Session

Ms. Sharifa Khan, in her concluding speech, stated that ERD with support from SSGP, would continue to organize stakeholder consultations on various LDC graduation related issues. She also said that senior level representatives from media entities would be regularly invited in such consultations. She observed that think tanks should carry out more in-depth research on LDC graduation related issues. She called for an active role of media in motivating the think tanks in engaging in such tasks. Underscoring the need for diversification of awareness materials on LDC graduation—she said that relevant video tutorials could be prepared explaining the LDC graduation issues which could later be shared on social media platforms for necessary public sensitization.

The chair of the workshop Mr. Farid Aziz, in his concluding remarks, thanked all the participants of the workshop for their active engagement. He also observed that the recommendations coming from the workshop would be very useful for SSGP in reaching out to a wider array of stakeholders. Lastly, he concluded the workshop by thanking all who were involved in organizing the event.