

# BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT FORUM

15-16 February 2010

## **SUMMARY NARRATIVE**

### What is the BDF for?

- Setting a 5 year vision with specific milestones within it
- Renewing the healthy and solid partnership between GoB and DPs

### What would constitute a successful meeting?

- Agreement to specific actions in each area
- Endorsement of the JCS (draft action plan)
- Positive media coverage

### What is the vision for Bangladesh?

- To become a MIC within poverty halved to 20% by 2021

### How will this be achieved?

- Focus on delivery of strategic priorities- with clear timeline
- Guided by the JCS
- Targeting of specific populations or geographical areas?
- Diversification of economy
- Rising international aid commitments

### Strategic priorities [*boiled down*]

#### *Governance:* Strengthened democratic accountability through:

- Central and local government being inclusive, responsive to citizens and more transparent- with clear 1/3/5 year measurable outcomes

#### *Climate change:*

- help those already affected by climate-related emergencies
- continue to innovate in responses and plan for long term adaptation and sustainable solutions

## **KEY MESSAGES FROM DPs**

### **Headlines:**

- Support **GoB vision** for Bangladesh to become a Middle Income Country, with poverty halved from 40% to 20%, by 2021.
- Key challenge is to **Deliver**
- **Joint Cooperation Strategy** will reinforce GoB-DP partnership to help the country and its people prosper.
- **Strategic priorities** are well known: increased private investment; increased power generation, planned urbanisation; improved public sector capacity; better quality and coverage of basic health, education and water services; strengthened democracy.
- **Success measures** also well known: faster growth (8% not 6%); reduced poverty (20%, down from 40%); power gap filled (+1200 MW, with plans for further expansion); higher completion rates for primary and secondary school, with higher pass results; improved nutrition rates; fewer maternal deaths; rule of law respected by all; gender and other discrimination eliminated.
- **BDF** will discuss/agree specific actions required, of GoB and DPs, particularly on the business session topics.

### **Speaking points - general**

- Note/welcome progress made against MDGs, last decade or more.
- Welcome approval of revised NSAPR, after Parliamentary debate.
- Agree Vision will require higher annual growth – of at least 8% – that is more balanced across regions.
- Bangladesh therefore needs to attract – and absorb – more external resources and diversify the economy.
- International aid commitments at record **[rising]** levels - aggregate for 2009-2010 **[to be confirmed]**, but absorption could be improved.
- Welcome GoB-DP partnership in moving forward on JCS process.
- Welcome GoB support for private sector led growth; and PPP initiative in last budget: need to make this happen. More to do on infrastructure challenges and business environment.
- Applaud GoB efforts to strengthen regional partnerships (e.g. India accords) for long-term development

## **Speaking points - governance**

### **Parliament and Democracy**

- Continue to pursue positive democratic reform, encourage constructive dialogue between the majority and opposition parties, and deepen the practice of democracy.
- Strengthen accountability and responsiveness of government to its constituents: at national, district, division and community levels. Right to Information Act a welcome/promising/important step in the right direction.
- Enable local government to deliver quality services equitably and transparently
- Welcome this Government's commitment to implement the CHT Peace Accord.

### **Human Rights and Judiciary**

- Ensure the protection and enforcement of human rights of all, especially the most vulnerable, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, or religion.
- Correct urgently the increasingly harsh treatment of registered and non-registered Rohingya population. Tackle/stop the recent incitement to hatred by local politicians and officials in Cox' Bazaar district (xenophobia).
- Ensure the independence and professionalism of the judiciary.
- Rule of law to be respected by all (torture, extra judicial killings, culture of impunity, violation of the rights of women and children remain persistent issues, whether factual or perceived).

### **Civil service reform and Anti-Corruption**

- Welcome proposals for comprehensive and credible civil service reform to increase management capacity, including a new Civil Service Act.
- Credible reform of the public finance management system with a view to: (i) strengthened accountability to the population; and (ii) reduced fiduciary risks, facilitating the introduction of more aligned aid modalities (budget support).
- Eliminate corruption and increase transparency at all levels: corruption hurts the poorest most; and remains a “tag” that Bangladesh needs to get rid of.

### **Macro-economy**

- Maintain sound macro-economic management – did well to weather the global economic storm.
- But global context still a challenge; impact on export growth and remittances now being seen. To minimise the vulnerability to changes in the global economy, focus on diversifying the economy to reduce downside risks.
- Close the infrastructure gap, particularly for energy supply. Better integration of power and gas policy, planning and investment will be essential. ADP implementation must improve and the PPP initiative operationalised.

## **Speaking points – social**

### **Population**

- Population growth, though considerably reduced, presents major challenges for the future. Dhaka over-crowded; land at a premium. Address urban planning and internal/international migration issues.
- Population growth also presents an unexploited resource: focus on skills development, enhancement of employment opportunities, and developing labour intensive sectors.

### **Health, Nutrition and Education**

- Further improve access to, and quality of, education and health services.
- Strengthen health system to ensure availability and use of critical health services by the poor, women and children.
- Nutritional status remains persistently poor despite growth and social development. Food security remains fragile; agricultural adaptation to climate change will be essential.
- Reduce the gap between rich and poor and the unequal access to social issues.

### **Gender**

- Reintroduce the National Women's Development Policy 1997 (recently announced); and enact the Domestic Violence Bill.
- Withdraw GoB's reservations to the international convention (CEDAW).
- Eliminate gender discrimination at all levels.

## **Speaking points – climate change**

- Climate change poses particular challenges for Bangladesh.
- Commend the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- Almost constant need for emergency relief in most vulnerable places: needs to be factored into longer-term investment/development activities, for long-term adaptation and sustainable community resilience.
- Bangladesh has leading research and innovations: for example, establishing a protected area network; salt resistance rice varieties; CDMP.
- Delivery of the multi-sectoral action plan is the top priority.
- Urgent help necessary for Aila victims still camping in utterly miserable circumstances on flood protection embankments. Breaches need to be repaired as a matter of priority.
- (Other environmental issue should not be forgotten: river pollution, deforestation, etc).