

**Speech by Honourable Finance Minister at the inaugural ceremony of Bangladesh Development Forum 2020**

**Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh;**

**My dear colleagues in the cabinet and parliament;**

**Excellencies;**

**Distinguished Guests from home and abroad;**

**Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**A Good Morning and greetings of 'Mujib Year' to you all.**

It is an honour for me to be here this morning with all of you, the iconic personalities living in our planet, who are destined to serve the cause of humanity and thereby to build a happy and prosperous world. It is indeed my privilege to welcome you all to the 4<sup>th</sup> Bangladesh Development Forum.

**Distinguished Dignitaries,**

This year's Bangladesh Development Forum coincides with the birth centennial of our Father of the Nation, the greatest Bangalee of all times, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In the lives of Bangalee nation Bangabandhu emerged as an envoy of peace and freedom. Without the birth of Bangabandhu we could not have our freedom and a sovereign Bangladesh, also free ourselves from all source of oppression. For this reason at the beginning of my speech I humbly remember Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with our four national leaders killed in jail, family members of Bangabandhu killed on darkest hours of 15 August 1975, 3 million martyrs and 2 hundred thousands of our mothers and sisters who sacrificed everything in liberation war. I solicit to Allah for eternal peace of their departed souls.

**Distinguished Guests,**

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave us independent Bangladesh but unfortunately we lost him before culmination of his dream of building a developed "Golden Bangladesh". However, in the absence of Bangabandhu, his legacy of blood, our Hon'ble Prime Minister is taking care of the incomplete task of building a poverty and hunger free developed Bangladesh as initiated by Bangabandhu. The stable democratic government led by our Prime Minister took our economy to a respected height in the world in last 11 years. Bangladesh has achieved 188% growth, the highest in the world in last one decade, where China was second with 177% growth. Furthermore, during the last five years, in terms of per capita income growth Bangladesh topped along with India and China having a growth rate of 45%. This success story of Bangladesh is now considered as a 'Development Miracle' by the economic and business researchers worldwide.

UK based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) opined that Bangladesh economic standing is expected to overtake Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore by 2024.

**Distinguished Guests,**

- Bangladesh has fulfilled all criteria for graduating to a developing country by 2024
- The economy is growing over 8 percent now, the highest in Asia
- Poverty and extreme poverty reduced to 20.5 and 10.5 respectively, which is around the world average
- Per capita income quadrupled in ten years to 1,909 US dollars
- Inflation hovers around 5 percent
- Inward remittance is growing over 20 percent
- Bangladesh has one of the lowest debt to GDP ratio in the world, only 34 percent

- For the first time taka denominated “Bangla Bond” is listed in London Stock Exchange
- 100 special economic zones are being established where 10 million people will have the opportunity of employment
- 10 mega infra-structures are under construction including Padma Bridge, Dhaka mass rapid transit, Karnafully tunnel, Payra sea port, Marabari coal fired power plants and so on.

#### **Distinguished Delegates,**

Bangladesh is a land of opportunity. There are many reasons to invest in Bangladesh that include but not limited to consecutive higher economic growth, strategic location, young, skilled and competitive workforce-our median age of population is 26 only and we will reap demographic dividend up to 2065, digital facilities, tax holiday and exemptions, facilitation of utility connections, hassle-free repatriation of profits and so forth.

#### **My Dear Friends,**

You are aware that Bangladesh, a front-runner in implementing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - the predecessor of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is well on its track and has taken comprehensive action plan and programmes to achieve the relevant targets and goals of SDGs by or before 2030.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

You all are aware that world economy is passing through a financial sluggishness. After great depression of 1930s the world economy experienced the lowest economic growth last year.

During Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 and the global recession of 2007-08, Bangladesh remained immune and resilient due to vibrant and successful leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister. We expect that despite worldwide economic turmoil our target of economic growth 8.2 percent as stated in our national budget will be achieved although we have a little bit slow-downs in export and imports at par with global slow-downs.

#### **Dear Friends,**

I would like to request all citizens of Bangladesh to rise up their spirits and make consistent efforts for sustained development by helping Hon'ble Prime Minister and her government, so that we can achieve the developed 'Sonar Bangla', long cherished dream of our father of the nation, to ensure peace, progress, prosperity and equity for all of us by the year 2041.

To conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for her gracious presence in the inaugural session of the Forum. I am confident that her presence will act as a catalyst as well as will be encouraging, for all of us to make BDF successful. Accordingly, development partners should align their forthcoming assistance programme with the long term plans of the Government. I also convey my heartfelt thanks to respected guests from home and abroad and representatives of development partners for their participation.

I hope that in two days' conference thought provoking ideas will come up to make effective decisions and strategies for achieving our ultimate development goals.

Thank you all. I wish all of our overseas friends a comfortable stay in Dhaka.  
Joy Bangla Joy Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh live forever!.