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BANGLADESH

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hannan

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations
Offices and Other International Organizations in Geneva and Vienna
at the 13th General Conference of UNIDO
Vienna, 09 December 2009

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by congratulating you Mr. Chairman and members of your bureau for your elections to the highly deserving positions. I am confident that your prudence will guide us to fruitful outcome of this Conference. At the same vein, allow me also to register our appreciation for the commendable work done by your predecessor.

Mr. Chairman

It is my great pleasure to most heartily felicitate Director General Yumkella on his reappointment. With outstanding leadership, he has instilled dynamism and vigour in UNIDO. We believe that UNIDO will continue to remain a trusted, efficient and effective partner for development and work further towards fulfilling the thematic priorities of the Organization. We fully endorse the vision of the Director General for his second term to make use of green technology for industrial development. And Bangladesh is keen to receive such technologies. We would welcome UNIDO's leading role to build necessary capacity and transfer such technologies to countries like Bangladesh.

I would particularly commend the Director General's personal initiative in linking countries of the South so that they can benefit from experiences and complementarities of their economies.

We expect that during his new tenure, UNIDO will enhance and strengthen its presence in the field to ensure better delivery on its projects. We also hope that UNIDO will sharpen its programmatic focus on LDCs and create an LDC Unit within the Secretariat to service the special and particular needs of these most vulnerable countries. We commend the Director General's initiative to hold the UNIDO LDC Ministerial meeting last week. This, I hope, would become a permanent feature in

UNIDO's calendar of meetings. Such meetings in Vienna, prior to General Conference, is the least that could be done to integrate the LDCs in the decision making process as they are scantily represented in Vienna. In this regard, we call upon the Members to endorse the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the LDC Ministers last week.

Mr. Chairman,

Argentina, on behalf of G77 and China and Pakistan, on behalf of the Asian Group have made statements. We align ourselves with them. I shall therefore focus on a few Bangladesh specific issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Under its trade capacity building and agro-industries programmes, UNIDO has been assisting Bangladesh to improve the quality management system of the country to be accepted at international level, increase awareness on international quality standards and potential for exports through Bangladesh Quality Support Programme (BQSP). Following the successful implementation of BQSP, the second phase - The Better Work Standards (BEST) has been finalised. We deeply appreciate the assistance of European Commission and the Government of Norway in supporting these programmes. These projects are expected to help increase our competitiveness and overcome some non-tariff barriers we face in various markets.

We would encourage UNIDO to continue its work to develop productive capacities in developing countries, particularly the LDCs. We share the views that building productive capacity is key to poverty reduction. At a time when our economies are devastated by the food, fuel, financial and economic crises, naturally we have to rethink our development paradigm. We have to invest more in agriculture to ensure our food security, expand production base to create employment, produce goods and services and reassess our global connectivity risk exposure. As the basic tenants of the theory of comparative advantage still remains valid, market access for our goods and services will be crucial for lifting us from the morass of the crises and reinstate us to the path of development. In this whole archetype the critical element would be availability of appropriate and affordable technology.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the intricately related issue of environment. We are slowly but surely heading towards a climatic catastrophe. Ironically, as in the case of global financial and economic crisis, the worst victims of climate change are the least contributors to the cause. Yesterday, at Copenhagen, Germanwatch presented a report on Global Climate Risk. Bangladesh has been identified as the country most affected by extreme weather events. Natural calamities claim more than 8,000 lives every year. Material damages account for about two per cent of our GDP.

Whatever development gains we have made are being threatened by the repeated and increasing vagaries of nature. However, nature is not to be blamed for it. It is us, the global community, who have contributed in various degrees to the degradation of climate. These formidable challenges can not be addressed without the burden sharing by the international community.

We are faced with the phenomenal challenges of coping with climate change and preserving the climate system on one hand, while on the other, of development and freeing our people from the miseries of poverty. On one hand, increasing the access of poor to energy services and energy resources is critical in attaining the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs. On the other we have to seek cleaner sources of energy.

Mr. Chairman,

In Bangladesh, we already have more than 300 thousand off-grid households powered by solar energy. We have set the target of meeting 10 per cent of energy needs from green sources by 2020. To this end, we have eliminated import taxes on solar panels and encouraging local industries to invest in green energy. These are in line with the Government's vision to build information and communication technology based "Digital Bangladesh" by 2021. UNIDO can be an active partner in our efforts. Once again, transfer of appropriate, affordable technology and adequate resources would be key to meet the developmental and environmental challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

We have common but differentiated responsibilities to protect the climate system. We also have a long list of commitments made by our development partners. We believe, development and preservation of climate are not mutually exclusive. However, it would require delivery on the commitments made. The financial and economic crisis has proven that resources are not scant. We hope that the intents will not be either.

I thank you.