

PPP Global Investors' Forum : Bangladesh 2012
Inaugural Ceremony

Speech

By

Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina

Honourable Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Mr. Chairman,
Representatives of our development partners,
Distinguished Speakers and Participants,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning, everyone.

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to the "PPP Global Investors Forum: Bangladesh 2012".

I want to thank the PPP Office and the Board of Investment for organizing the conference in the month of our glorious victory against the occupation forces in 1971. I think, this is the ideal time to inform you about the bright prospects of trade and investment in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is recognized as an investment friendly country by the world. I am proud to be able to say that recently there has been widespread recognition by the esteemed commentators about the prospects of Bangladesh to be the next engine of growth in the region. Earlier this year, CNBC produced a ranking of the best countries with long term growth, in which they ranked Bangladesh in the 5th position.

In January 2012, HSBC published a report "The World in 2050" which predicts that Bangladesh's GDP per capita will increase 6 fold over this period. The per capita income has already been increased to 850 US dollar this year from 630 dollar in 2008. Citigroup ranked Bangladesh as one of the 3G countries to deliver high growth and profitable investment.

Goldman Sachs has placed Bangladesh in its list of "Next Eleven" after "BRIC". J.P. Morgan set the country in its "Frontier Five". The World Bank has ranked Bangladesh as the 20th country for Investor Protection ahead of India, China and Vietnam.

Despite global economic meltdown, we have been achieving 6.5% GDP growth rate. This was possible owing to my government's careful stewardship. Bangladesh has been maintaining with a stable sovereign credit rating for the 3rd consecutive year indicating macro-economic stability.

We have been implementing "Vision 2021" to turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country with a strong infrastructure within the next decade.

The success and growth that we have achieved over the last 4 years and the recognition that is now coming from international organizations about the bright prospects that lay ahead demonstrates that we are on track to realize our vision. We are nearing the goals of our Vision 2021 in many areas including digitization and poverty alleviation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The excellent Human Development Index that we achieved similar to that of middle-income countries is attributed to my government's proactive policies, economic dynamism, remittance of workers from abroad, growth in exports of RMG and other products and resilience of the people of Bangladesh. All these factors certainly contributed to our growth. But let me tell you that none of this happened by default. Rather, we earned all by design.

My government has been working relentlessly to achieve the goals of inclusive growth and infrastructure development. From attaining self-sufficiency in food to solving the unbearable power crisis, we pursued sound policies and took effective measures to realize our goals. Over 50 million people have been elevated to middle-income group from low-income status.

We are proud of our achievements in the face of adversities. We realize that one of the key conditions for achieving our goal of becoming a middle income country by 2021 is to boost investments in infrastructure from only 2% to 6% of GDP.

Our government, therefore, has identified and prioritized Public Private Partnership (PPP) as one of the key initiatives to meet this investment gap. PPP will enable us to deliver public services at an affordable price, reducing the pressure on the national budget. The additional fund can then be allocated for the development of other sectors of the economy, especially in the social sectors such as health and education. Our Sixth Five-Year Plan during FY2011-FY2015 targets 75% of the investment to come through partnerships with the private sector.

We are fortunate to have a very dynamic and vibrant private sector that is globally recognized for its innovativeness, adaptability, and resilience. Working together, the government wants to pursue opportunities that benefit the private sector through generating a profitable revenue stream; that deliver to our citizen much needed quality public services at affordable prices; and fulfils the commitment of government to meet its social obligations and development imperatives.

This is a new beginning, a new form of partnership, whereby the government stands ready to share the risks along with the private sector, especially those who will be able to manage best. For this, we are ready to commit all necessary material and human resources.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the earlier tenure of my government from 1996 to 2001, that the two most successful PPP projects in Bangladesh Meghnaghat 450 MW Power Plant and Haripur 360 MW Power plants were contracted. Through these two projects we were able to secure the lowest electricity tariff in the region. These projects received "Euro Money" award as examples of successful project finance transactions. We now want to extend our past success in the power sector to other sectors such as transport, water supply, tourism, housing and urban development, and even social sectors.

In order to develop a robust PPP Program, we have set up the PPP Office at Prime Minister's Office to support the investors in implementing PPP projects.

The process is underway to enact the PPP Law with provisions for transparent process of selection of private partners for the implementation of PPP projects. The Honorable Finance Minister as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs will guide and oversee the PPP program.

I am happy to know that Ministry of Finance and PPP office have already developed a comprehensive set of documents including operational manuals and instructions, and financing guidelines for facilitating PPP project implementation based on global best practices.

All the opportunities being highlighted in "PPP Global Investors Forum: Bangladesh 2012" will demonstrate that Bangladesh is very serious about the contribution of PPP in national development. I hope, this event will also be a platform for displaying the portfolio of attractive opportunities for our potential private partners across a spectrum of sectors including transport, energy, shipping, ports, social infrastructure like healthcare and education.

I am delighted that our development partners have been working in partnership with the PPP Office in ensuring the establishment of a robust, transparent and comprehensive framework for accelerating the implementation of PPP projects in Bangladesh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The event has brought together policymakers, regulators, development partners, lenders, investors to prepare recommendations. We will seriously consider all the recommendations of this Forum to fine tune our PPP program further. It is my sincere hope that you will avail the opportunities unveiled in this forum for our mutual benefits. It will help advance the socio-economic development of the country as dreamt by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I wish the conference all success and declare the PPP Global Investors Forum open.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.

May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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