

**2nd International Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management
Inaugural Ceremony**

Speech by

HE Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister,

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

BICC, Dhaka, Tuesday, 1 Jaistha 1425, 15 May 2018

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The Chairperson,
Dear Colleagues,
Distinguished guests and
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning to you all.

I welcome you all at the inaugural ceremony of the 2nd International Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management.

I pay deep homage to the Greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with gratitude the four national leaders, 3-million martyrs and 200 thousand women, who sacrificed their modesty for the cause of independence.

The conference has been designed with the key objectives "to share knowledge and experience, and to identify future actions for inclusive implementation of the Sendai Framework, its regional plans and the Dhaka Declaration-2015".

I think, this conference and recent move of global community towards inclusion of disability in disaster management is crucial. Bangladesh is taking lead with the international community to facilitate this important agenda at international, regional, national and local level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh is known as role model of disaster management and now moving towards building resilience. Bangladesh is one of the most affected countries by the impacts of global climate change, although it contributes very little in the climate change.

Bangladesh is facing recurrent disasters such as cyclone, tidal surge, flood, tornado, lightning, land slide etc. Over the last thirty years, Bangladesh has faced nearly 200 climate induced disasters which claimed thousands of lives, damaged huge assets and livelihoods.

According to Global Climate Risk Index 2018 published by GERMANWATCH, more than 524,000 people died worldwide as a direct result of around 11,000 extreme weather events from 1997 to 2016. During this period, the losses incurred are estimated at USD 3.16 trillion in Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) owing to impacts of weather-related events. However, Bangladesh was 6th mostly affected country in 2014 and 2015 consecutively.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the loss and damage from recurrent disasters, we have shown the increment of food production almost four folds compared to that of 1970. The projected GDP growth rate this fiscal is 7.65 percent. Our per capita income increased to USD 1,752.

Bangladesh's economy is now the 44th largest of the world. We have become eligible to be graduated from LDCs by fulfilling all 3 parameters. Besides, Bangladesh is well ahead of its South Asian neighbours in various socio-economic parameters like women empowerment, gender equality, human resource development, universal education and sanitation.

At the same time, we achieved success in reduction of poverty, economic vulnerability, maternal and child mortality. Starting with a stigma of one of the poorest countries now we are working to become a middle income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Father of the Nation had initiated the Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) in 1972 which is one of the first community based disaster preparedness programs in the world. It is now recognized as a flagship program in the field of disaster risk management in Bangladesh.

The mortality has reduced dramatically from around one million people by cyclone of 1970 to around three thousand five hundred by cyclone Sidr in 2007. It is the result of our investment and innovation to improve early warning generation and dissemination, establishment of cyclone shelter and active engagement of dedicated CPP volunteers to the preparedness and response activities.

Now we are replicating the CPP model for other disasters. This paradigm shift had helped us to adapt with the changes of global policy instruments such as Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all are committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and its targets by 2030. We are implementing all the developmental activities, including of disaster management for all people, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, excluded group like persons with disabilities. These are:

- Integration of risk-informed development approach in the seventh five-year plan.
- Coordination programs among the ministries to address disaster vulnerability.
- Establishment of a National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) to address the large disasters.
- 4,088 storm shelters and 255 flood shelters have been constructed during last 9 and a half years all over the country to reduce disaster risk. Besides construction of 220 storm shelters is going on.
- Construction of 423 flood shelters and 66 relief godowns is underway.
- Quick shifting of women, children, disable persons, old people and pregnant women to shelters during disasters has been ensured.
- Foodgrade plastics containers among 5 lacs households with the capacity to preserve 56 kg rice or 40 kg paddy has been provided to address food shortage during disaster.
- As a result, 5 lakh households will be able to preserve around 28 thousand metric tons of foodgrain or seed.
- 10,500 tents have been procured for shelter during disasters. Necessary equipments have been procured for earthquake response.
- 56 thousand trained volunteers are developed at the coastal regions.
- Training has been provided to 32 thousand urban volunteers in Dhaka, Chattagram and Sylhet.
- In order to render weather forecast and early warning service, cell phone number 1090 as tole free IVR system has been introduced.
- We have enacted the "Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013" and Neuro-Developmental Disabled Protection Trust Act, 2013 to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities.

Bangladesh along with some other countries actively and successfully advocated in the global platforms to include the issues of disability in the disaster risk management and response mechanisms.

As a result, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) comes up with specific calls for disability inclusion in all actions of disaster risk management and response.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Persons with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in disasters time. They need to depend a lot on family members and neighbors for support, which is usually comes at last moment. Inadequate disability related information, lack of skilled staff members are the challenges for their inclusion in risk reduction and emergency response.

I am happy to recall that the first International Conference on Disability and Disaster held in Dhaka in December 2015 adopted "Dhaka Declaration".

I would like to thank UNISDR and member states for acknowledging Dhaka Conference as an international event in New Delhi Declaration-2016 of seventh Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR). The conference has recognized the Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) as a global best practice.

I hope that the outcome of the conference would give guidelines to all member countries to implement the concrete actions for improving the lives and livelihoods, including strengthening resilience of persons with disabilities.

I urge the international community to put the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development and disaster risk management process.

I would also like to convey my gratitude and thanks to Ms Saima Wazed Hossain, International Focal Point, Advisory Group on DIDRM, Bangladesh and WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in South-East Asia Region for successfully bring disability inclusive disaster risk management issue to national and international arena.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I strongly believe, the conference will be a successful event that will lead to a better life of persons with disabilities in all countries. I hope, the stay of the distinguished guests here would be enjoyable and memorable one.

With these few words, I declare the 2nd International Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management 2018 open.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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