



International Seminar on

Towards Sustainable Development: Lessons from MDGs & Pathway for SDGs

New York, USA

October 10, 2017

Compilation of Session Proceedings



Knowledge Partner &
Seminar Organizer

Supported By



The Institute for Policy, Advocacy,
and Governance (IPAG)



Economics Relations Division (ERD)
Ministry of Finance
Government of Bangladesh

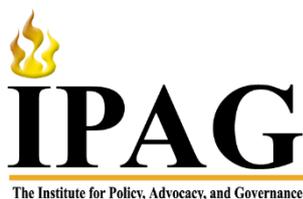
Towards Sustainable Development

Lessons from MDGs & Pathway for SDGs

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Executive Summary

As the world moves towards the path of sustainable and inclusive growth, the 17 SDGs as set out by the Agenda 2030, need to build on the successes of the MDGs, while including novel areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. Towards that end, more than 100 development professionals attended an international conference on *“Towards Sustainable Development: Lessons from MDG & Pathways for SDG”* organized by the international think tank, The Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance (IPAG), with support from the Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh. The international seminar was held on October 10 (Tuesday) 2017 in New York at the Millennium Hilton Hotel One UN Plaza. The seminar was inaugurated by Honorable Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith MP and attended by Mr. Magdy Martinez-Soliman, the Assistant Administrator, United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The seminar highlighted the successes of Bangladesh in achieving the MDG and how lessons learnt from the MDG can help achieve the SDG. Discussions included the resource constraints faced by developing countries in meeting MDG and SDG and the role of international development agencies for facilitating transition from MDG to SDG. The seminar was attended by multilateral institutions like UN, UNDP, WB and IFC as well as leading think tanks, academia, civil society and media from the US.

Eminent international figure, Dr. Alaa Murabit, one of the 17 Global SDG Advocates spoke on the occasion. The business community was represented by Dana Bolden, Group Director, Coca-Cola Company who spoke about the important role of the business community in supporting the SDG. Ana Saldarriaga, Young Leader for the SDG also spoke on the need for ensuring participation of youth in the 2030 SDG Agenda.

Due to the overall success and effectiveness of the event, the participants look forward to more engaging platforms in the future. The participants in the seminar agreed that Bangladesh is a success story that needs to be highlighted in the international arena and can act as a model for other developing countries in devising their SDG initiatives.

Agenda

Towards Sustainable Development: Lessons from MDGs & Pathway for SDGs

Venue: Diplomat Ballroom, Millennium Hilton New York One UN Plaza

Date & Time: October 10, 2017 (Tuesday); 8:30 AM – 12:45 PM

Knowledge Partner & Seminar Organizer: The Institute for Policy, Advocacy and Governance (IPAG)

| | |
|---|---|
| 8.30 am – 9.00 am | Registration |
| Inaugural Session | |
| (9.00 am – 9.35 am (35 Mins)) | Schedule |
| 9.00 am – 9.20 am | Welcome Note: Prof. Syed Munir Khasru Chairman, The Institute for Policy, Advocacy and Governance (IPAG) Opening Remarks: Magdy Martinez-Soliman Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator & Director Bureau for Policy & Programme Support (BPPS), UNDP |
| 9.20 am – 9.25 am | Speech by the Chief Guest: |
| 9.25 am – 9.30 am | Abul Maal A. Muhith Finance Minister, Government of Bangladesh |
| 9.30 am – 9.35 am | Audio-Visual on “MDGs & SDGs” Unveiling of the Book on ‘Towards Sustainable Development: Lessons from MDGs & Pathway for SDGs’ Group Photo |
| Session I: MDGs & SDGs: Connecting the Dotted Lines | |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| (25 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Jackson Ewing, Director of Asian Sustainability, Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) • John Meyers, Managing Director, SwissContact USA • Dr. Shamsul Alam, Senior Secretary & Member, General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh <p>Intra Panel Discussion, Q&A and Open Floor Discussion</p> |
|-----------|--|

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| 10.55 am – 11.10 am (15 mins) | Coffee Break |
|---|---------------------|

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|---|--|
| Session III: SDGs: The Opportunities & Challenges for Developing Countries | |
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| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 11.10 am – 11.50 am (40 mins) | Event Schedule |
|---|-----------------------|

| | |
|---------------|---|
| (8 mins) | <p>Keynote Presentation:</p> <p>Dr. Ruth DeFries, Denning Family Professor Sustainable Development, Columbia University</p> |
| (4 mins each) | <p>Panel Discussion:</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Karolina Mzyk Callias, Global Team Leader, SDG Philanthropy Platform, UNDP, Istanbul, Turkey</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ajit Zacharias, Senior Scholar, Levy Economics Institute, Bard College, New York • Heather Grady, Vice President, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, New York • Jenny Perlman Robinson, Fellow, Center for Universal Education, The Brookings Institution • Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, Secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh |
| (25 mins) | <p>Intra Panel Discussion, Q&A and Open Floor Discussion</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| Session IV: Role of Developed Economies In Facilitating SDGs | |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 11:50 am – 12.30 pm (40 Mins) | Event Schedule |
|---|-----------------------|

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| (8 mins) | <p>Keynote Presentation:</p> |
|----------|-------------------------------------|

Speaker List

■ Inaugural Session



Welcome Note:

Prof. Syed Munir Khasru

Chairman, The Institute for Policy, Advocacy and Governance (IPAG)



Opening Remarks:

Magdy Martinez-Soliman

Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator & Director, Bureau for Policy & Program Support (BPPS), UNDP

Speech by the Chief Guest:



Abul Maal A. Muhith

Finance Minister,
Government of Bangladesh

Session I: MDGs & SDGs: Connecting the Dotted Lines



Keynote Speaker

Sarah Cliffe

Director
Center on International Cooperation
New York University



Panelist

Masud Bin Momen

Ambassador & Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Bangladesh
to the United Nations in New York



Panelist

Anit Mukherjee

Policy Fellow
Center for Global Development
Washington DC



Moderator

Swaminathan Aiyar

Research Fellow
Center for Global Liberty &
Prosperity (India & Asia),
Cato Institute, Washington DC



Panelist

Reid Hamel

Senior Fellow
Global Food Security Project
Center for Strategic & International
Studies (CSIS), Washington DC



Panelist

Thangavel Palanivel

Deputy Director
Human Development Report Office
United Nations Development
Program (UNDP)

Session II: MDGs & Bangladesh: Key Achievements & Lessons Learned



Keynote Speaker

Nik Sekhran

Director, Sustainable Development,
United Nations Development
Programme (UNDP), New York



Panelist

Dr. Shamsul Alam

Senior Secretary & Member, General
Economics Division (GED), Planning
Commission, Ministry of Planning,
Government of Bangladesh



Panelist

Jackson Ewing

Director of Asian Sustainability,
Asia Society Policy Institute
(ASPI), New York



Moderator

Lauren Bradford

Director, Global Partnerships
Foundation Center



Panelist

Subinay Nandy

Former Director, Asia and the Pacific
Division, United Nations



Panelist

John Meyers

Managing Director
SwissContact-North America

Session III: SDGs: The Opportunities & Challenges for Developing Countries



Keynote Speaker

Dr. Ruth DeFries

Denning Family Professor
Sustainable Development
Columbia University



Panelist

Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury

Secretary, Finance Division
Ministry of Finance
Government of Bangladesh



Panelist

Ajit Zacharias

Senior Scholar
Levy Economics Institute
Bard College, New York



Moderator

Karolina Mzyk Callias

Global Team Leader, SDG
Philanthropy Platform
UNDP, Turkey



Panelist

Heather Grady

Vice President,
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

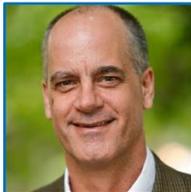


Panelist

Jenny Perlman Robinson

Fellow, Center for Universal
Education, The Brookings Institution

Session IV: Role of Developed Economies in Facilitating SDGs



Keynote Speaker

Anthony F. Pipa

Senior Fellow
Global Economy and Development
The Brookings Institution



Panelist

Kazi Shafiqul Azam

Secretary
Economic Relations Division (ERD)
Ministry of Finance
Government of Bangladesh



Panelist

Ronak D. Desai

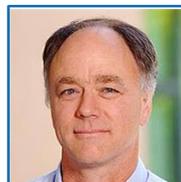
India and South Asia Program,
Belfer Center
Harvard Kennedy School



Moderator

Björn Gillsäter

Manager and Special
Representative to the
United Nations,
World Bank Group



Panelist

Frank A. Wolak

Director, Program on Energy and
Sustainable Development,
Stanford University



Panelist

Sundaa Bridgett-Jones

Senior Associate Director
The Rockefeller Foundation



Valedictory Speaker:

Dr. Alaa Murabit, M.D

SDGs Global Advocate & High Level
Commissioner for Health Employment and
Economic Growth, UN



Luncheon Speaker:

Dana Bolden

Group Director
Coca-Cola Company



Strategy Session Moderator:

James McGann

Director,
Think Tanks & Civil Societies Program,
University of Pennsylvania



Luncheon Speaker:

Ana Saldarriaga

Supervisory Board Member & Former
President, AIESEC International

Background

In September 2000, world leaders came together at the UN Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Declaration pledged nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and set out a series of 8 time-bound goals, with the deadline of 2015, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The concerted efforts of national governments, international community, civil society, and private sector helped expand opportunities for people around the world by aiming to achieve the 8 goals. Yet job still remains for millions of people to go the last mile for ending hunger, achieving full gender equality, improving health care services and getting every child into school. Towards that end, the world needs to move into a sustainable path.

In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This gave rise to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, which are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs build on the successes of the MDGs, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected; often key to success on one goal involves tackling issues more commonly associated with another. As with the MDGs, the SDGs work in the spirit of partnership & pragmatism to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations.

Aligning priority areas of the UN with those of developing economies like Bangladesh and the long-standing relationship of LDCs to the UN, the Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh and IPAG jointly organized the international seminar on ***“Towards Sustainable Development: Lessons From MDGs & Pathway for SDGs”*** on October 10 (Tuesday) 2017 in New York from 9:00 am to 01:30 pm, at the Millennium Hilton Hotel One UN Plaza.

While Bangladesh was highlighted and acclaimed as an exemplary case in the achievement of MDGs among LDCs, the seminar provided a platform for diverse groups of stakeholders to have threadbare discussions on wide ranging issues affecting both MDG-SDG and opportunities and challenges for the community of developing countries as a whole. The participants represented a select group of distinguished policymakers,

development sector specialists, researchers, academia, multilateral and bilateral development agencies, think tanks, and media.

Objectives of the Seminar

- To showcase success of Bangladesh in achieving MDGs in a global platform to the development partners and international stakeholders.
- To map the way forward for achieving SDGs utilizing strengths and resources aligned with national interest.
- To connect underlying correlations between the MDGs and SDGs and setting the context of Bangladesh for the transition phase.

The Seminar & Positive Image of Bangladesh in International Arena

Bangladesh, one of the emerging economies in South Asia, has had remarkable success in achieving targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On September 2015, the final MDG progress report published by the General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh, indicated Bangladesh's remarkable progress in the areas of:

- Poverty alleviation (poverty headcount ratio as at 24.8 %t for 2015 and poverty gap ratio as at 6.5 against a target of 8);
- Ensuring food security, primary school enrolment & gender parity in primary and secondary level education equitable access in education (NER: 97.7 percent);
- Lowering the infant and under-five mortality rate (32 and 41 per 1,000 by 2013) and maternal mortality ratio (rate of reduction as at 3.3 per year), improving immunization coverage; and reducing the incidence of communicable diseases (HIV, malaria and tuberculosis).

However, attaining some of the targets were faced with challenges that include unemployment, underemployment, nutrition of children under 5, drop-out rate & quality of education, universal access to reproductive health and resource constraints.

- Bangladesh's reaching many of MDG targets before time, set a benchmark for developing nations across the world.

- Cross country comparisons in the 2015 progress report indicate remarkable success of Bangladesh in reducing poverty and achieving other MDG targets in comparison to most other comparable countries in South and South-East Asia.
- With these achievements, Bangladesh along with the rest of the world emerged into the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 17 long term goals and 169 targets to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDGs are structured in a way that builds on the pillars of the MDGs, making the progresses sustainable in the long run.

The MDGs and SDGs are pillars of development agenda and framework of activities under broader categories which are adopted by national policies and priorities, and also by development partners. In the context of Bangladesh, having a holistic idea of the performance of the country in achieving MDGs, the factors that led to the progress, and the opportunities for achieving SDGs along with the accompanying challenges is crucial. As Bangladesh embarks onto the journey of achieving the SDGs in 2017, it is important to build on the successes of MDGs.

Thematic Sessions during the Seminar

1. MDGs & SDGs: Connecting the dotted lines
2. MDGs & Bangladesh: Key Achievements and Lessons Learned
3. SDGs: The Opportunities & Challenges for Developing Countries
4. Role of Developed Economies in Facilitating SDGs

Taking it Forward

The speakers, participants, and all other guests at the seminar highly appreciated the initiative and found the deliberations, discussions, and exchanges effective and engaging. They opined that the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and well reputed think tanks should continue to organize these international platforms more frequently as it helps boost positive image of the country in the international development community. The attendees agreed that Bangladesh is an exemplar in the achievement of MDGs and has a steady pathway for attaining the SDGs, and they believe the lessons from Bangladesh's experiences need to be disseminated.

The Book on SDG-MDG

On this occasion, IPAG published a book titled *'Towards Sustainable Development: Lessons from MDGs & Pathway for SDGs'* unveiled by the Honorable Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith in New York on October 10, 2017. This book is expected to be a milestone in the field of development economics, reaching a broad spectrum of stakeholders. The book comprises of but is not limited to the following topics:

1. Thematic areas of SDG, covering the 17 goals.
2. Challenges in achieving the SDGs.
3. Learnings from the MDGs and implications for the SDG implementation.
4. Any regional or country specific analysis and perspective.
5. Cross-country comparative studies.

The contributors of articles for this book includes major national and global development practitioners, such as policymakers, academicians, thought leaders, government officials, and development funders. The authors are from several countries such as US, Canada, UK, India etc. which represent the universality of SDGs.

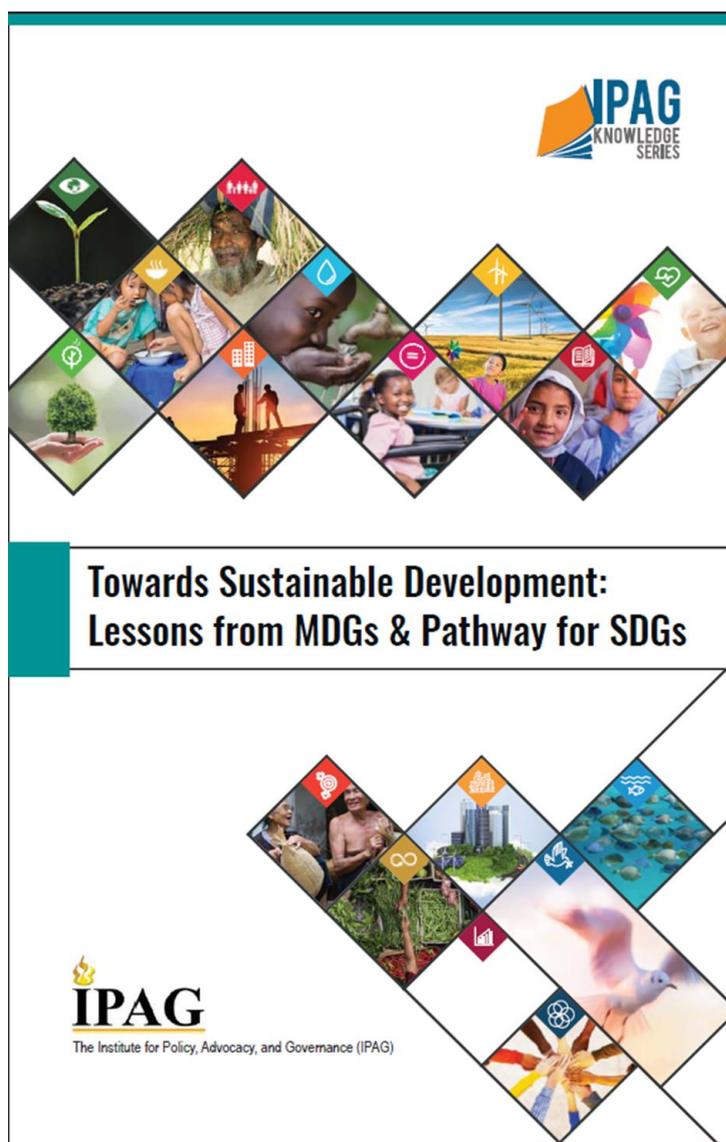


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The Seminar

The seminar commenced with an inaugural ceremony attended by Mr. Abul Maal A. Muhith, Finance Minister, Government of Bangladesh, Magdy Martinez-Soliman, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator & Director Bureau for Policy & Programme Support (BPPS), UNDP, and Prof. Syed Munir Khasru, Chairman, IPAG.

This document collates deliberations and recommendations from the four sessions which will aid the Government of Bangladesh identify areas of reforms, institutional mechanisms, and collaboration required for successful completion of Agenda 2030 targets.

Inaugural Session



Honorable Finance Minister Abul Maal A. Muhith speaking at the Inaugural Session



Magdy Martinez-Soliman, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator & Director, Bureau for Policy & Programme, Support (BPPS), UNDP making his Opening Remarks at the Inaugural Session



Syed Munir Khasru, Chairman, IPAG, making the Welcome Note at the Inaugural Session



Guests during the Inaugural Session



The participants posing for a group photo

Session I: MDGs & SDGs: Connecting the Dotted Lines



Participants engaged in discussions during Session I: MDGs & SDGs: Connecting the Dotted Lines

Keynote Presenter: Sarah Cliffe, Director, Center on International Cooperation, New York University

Moderator: Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar, Research Fellow, Center for Global Liberty & Prosperity, Cato Institute, Washington DC

Panelists:

- **Masud Bin Momen**, Ambassador & Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York
- **Reid Hamel**, Senior Fellow, Global Food Security Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington DC
- **Anit Mukherjee**, Policy Fellow, Center for Global Development, Washington DC
- **Thangavel Palanivel**, Deputy Director, Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

Sarah Cliffe, Director of Center on International Cooperation mentioned Bangladesh's use of ICT to achieve food agenda. Ambassador Masud Bin Momen observed that it is possible for least developed countries to become middle income countries and that the status of Bangladesh will be reviewed next March. There are 3 criteria and he hoped that Bangladesh will be able to meet them as it graduates to becoming a middle-income country from being one of the least developed countries. He also highlighted that the UN development system must reposition itself. External shocks, including environmental and man-made issues, have to be accounted for. It is apparent how vulnerable some countries are (e.g. Caribbean area). Man-made issues also have to be taken account for; for example, migration from Myanmar bears burden for Bangladesh as well.

Ms. Reid Hamel mentioned that in achievement of MDGs, Latin America and Southeast Asia made impressive gains. In Bangladesh, rice production has been tripled. Stunting is still prevalent however. She mentioned that this is not correlated with poverty. Mr. Anit Mukherjee mentioned that challenges are faced in Bangladesh and as the Finance

Minister noted, it is important to prioritize, pick and choose among the SDG targets. He mentioned that it is important to understand what the SDGs are, given the implementation and financing challenges. In the question-answer session, when the issue of monitoring and accountability was brought up, Ambassador Momen stated that earlier this year, Bangladesh including 43 other countries, reported on their respective status of implementation. This is a kind of peer-review. For next year, more than 40 have lined up.

Session II: MDGs & Bangladesh - Key Achievements & Lessons Learned



The panelists engaged in a discussion during Session II: MDGs & Bangladesh: Key Achievements & Lessons Learned

Keynote Presenter: Nik Sekhran, Director, Sustainable Development, United Nations Development Programme, New York, UNDP

Moderator: Lauren Bradford: Director, Global Partnerships, Foundation Center, New York

Panelists:

- **Dr. Shamsul Alam**, Senior Secretary & Member, General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh
- **Subinay Nandy**, Former Director, Asia & Pacific Division, United Nations, New York
- **Jackson Ewing**, Director of Asian Sustainability, Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI), New York
- **John Meyers**, Managing Director, SwissContact - North America, New York

Nik Sekhran mentioned that from 2002-2010, human development investments in Bangladesh were made and foundations were built for future growth. His speech included the issue that it is important to make the challenges of poor and marginalized communities visible and actionable. One big challenge is that we are moving beyond averages. As we pursue exterminating extreme poverty, we need data as a mechanism

for accountability. Data has to be made widely available. For many countries, Bangladesh included, this is a very complex task. He highlighted that these countries need to invest in these statistical apparatuses. This leads to identifying who is “left behind” and what we need to do.

He also mentioned that we should not leave the planet behind. GDPs do not take environment into calculations. We need to find a simultaneous equation: what is the future of growth, how do we catalyze it, how do we make it equitable, and how do we decouple from environmental degradation. This is an equation Bangladesh also needs to solve. He praised Bangladesh in its improvement in human development statistic and healthier and better educated labor market. However, he mentioned that Bangladesh is facing a downturn in investment and that extreme poverty still persists.

Dr. Shamsul Alam mentioned that Bangladesh achieved almost 18 targets. Inclusive growth strategies, economic structural transformation, manufacturing, policy improvements, sound macroeconomic management, open trade, making public sector accountable, low cost innovations – these were driving forces that helped achieve MDG targets. He is hopeful that Bangladesh will be one of the achievers of SDGs. Bangladesh achieved 18 of MDG targets. Robust growth in GDP, structural change of economy, consistent policy and committed leadership, open trade and market economy, making the public sector accountable and low cost innovation for combatting deadly diseases.

Jackson Ewing mentioned that millions of refugees are coming into Bangladesh and that there is economic deprivation and environmental problems. He discussed that in Bangladesh we see sea-level rise and that there is deprivation due to this. Changes in precipitation according to him make agriculture less predictable. He questioned whether the SDGs are enough to combat environmental degradation.

John Meyers mentioned that Bangladesh is known as the birth place of microfinance however it is not the only answer to solving poverty. Remittances account for \$1.5 billion transferred annually, and there are ways to tie this to the financial inclusion dialogues. He also highlighted that there have been improvements in Bangladesh since Asian Development Bank has contributed to skills development and Swiss Contact has worked with Chevron to build skills.

Session III: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries



The panelists engaged in a discussion during session III: SDGs: The Opportunities & Challenges for Developing Countries

Keynote Presenter: Dr. Ruth DeFries, Sustainability Development Professor
Columbia University, New York

Moderator: Karolina Mzyk Callias: Global Team Leader, SDG Philanthropy Platform,
UNDP, Istanbul, Turkey

Panelists:

- **Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury**, Secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh
- **Heather Grady**, Vice President, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, New York
- **Ajit Zacharias**, Senior Scholar, Levy Economics Institute, Bard College, New York
- **Jenny Perlman Robinson**, Fellow, Center for Universal Education, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC

Session 3 began with a keynote presentation from Dr. Ruth DeFries, Sustainability Development Professor; Columbia University. Her presentation highlighted the importance of accommodating wildlife movement and ecosystem services amidst infrastructure expansion. According to her, the hurdles are not technical but require decision-making across administrative boundaries. Also, it is important to breakdown multi-sector decision making.

While maintaining the existence of the Bengal Tiger is important for the SDGs, it can be done while achieving the other goals. Integrating accommodation for ecosystems is a small segment in overall budgets for infrastructure projects. SDGs value non-human life, planet and environment. According to Ruth, it takes planning and thought to accommodate the survival of the Bengal tiger. We can create synergies among the different actors involved.

Mr. Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury highlighted that financing is required to meet the SDGs. As far as Bangladesh is concerned, these goals have been factored in the seven five-year plans. Projects have also been already identified, such as the power projects, climate change programs, etc. Heather Grady stressed on the fact that we cannot approach SDGs from a purely technical approach. MDGs did not include much talk about systems-thinking however SDGs are perfect frameworks to incorporate these practices. She highlighted that systems-thinking experts are embracing SDGs.

Session IV: Role of Developed Economies in Facilitating SDGs



The panelists engaged in a discussion during session IV: Role of Developed Economies in Facilitating SDGs

Keynote Presenter: Anthony F. Pipa, Senior Fellow - Global Economy and Development, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC

Moderator: Björn Gillsäter: Manager and Special Representative to the United Nations, New York Office at World Bank Group

Panelists:

- **Shafiqul Azam**, Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh
- **Frank A. Wolak**, Director, Program on Energy and Sustainable Development, Department of Economics, Stanford University, California
- **Ronak D. Desai**, India and South Asia Program, Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School, Boston
- **Sundaa Bridgett-Jones**, Senior Associate Director, The Rockefeller Foundation, New York

The session began with a keynote presentation from Anthony Pipa, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institutions. He highlighted the role of developed economies in facilitating SDGs. The role of international cooperation was also discussed. He stressed on the importance of promoting global governance. Although, this might be at odds with the populist trends around the globe, regardless, policymakers should not conflate national interests with a zero-sum thinking. He mentioned that certain issues are cross-

territorial and cut across national borders. Another issue he commented on was that, rather than running away from multilateral platforms or letting them wither, the first response should be to improve them. While US is inflammatory these days, and putting out unilateral agenda, we should remind ourselves that US was at the forefront of proposing the UN system.

Mr. Shofiqul Azam highlighted that Bangladesh did well in achieving MDGs. The secret was integrating the goals into five-year plans. The government has taken several initiatives to implement it. It has planned to work with NGOs, private sector and media by approaching it from a whole-society perspective - \$928 billion will be needed. The sources of financing will be: Private sector (43%), Public (35%), PPP (5.59%), NGOs (1.41%) and Foreign (15%). Out of the 15%, 10% will come from FDI and the remaining 5% will be ODA (grants and loans). Bangladesh will soon graduate soon so it will no longer be receiving conditional funding. He mentioned that Bangladesh is utilizing full capacity from World Bank.

Strategy Session: Multi-level Stakeholder Consultation

There was a stakeholder consultation strategy session attended by some of the important stakeholders of the SDG platform present during the seminar. This session took advantage of the opportunity of having such a diverse group comprising of policymakers, development practitioners, multilateral development agencies, think tanks, academia, and opinion leaders come together. The discussions allowed attendees to exchange opinions and ideas on how best to drive forward the SDG agenda in the coming years. The participants explored the following strategic areas which are vital for the efficiency and timeliness in SDG implementation:

1. Importance & Significance of multi-stakeholder partnerships & strategy for achieving the SDGs;
2. Strategies for effective Business-CSO collaboration; identifying synergies and avoiding duplications.
3. Partnerships in MDGs - what worked and what didn't and why; learning implications for SDGs
4. Exploiting the ICT and Social Media; strategies for optimizing global outreach and ownership of SDG;
5. Defining the platforms, global & regional, online & offline; strategies for continued consultation & interaction among stakeholders;
6. Strategies for "Voice of the Voiceless": activating participative channels of communication for the premium SDG stakeholders i.e. poor, marginalized, and disconnected.

7. Strategies for effective advocacy platform; how can diverse stakeholders support and complement each other.
8. Data & Decision: Stakeholder engagement for real time, reliable data for supporting evidence based policy decisions.
9. SDG Indexing, national and global; period, parameters, and publications.
10. Insights and takeaways regarding the future of multi-stakeholder partnership in SDGs.

The multi-stakeholder consultation was held against the backdrop that:

- Participation and integrated effort is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda
- Challenge is in mobilizing multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) for achieving SDGs
- Multi-stakeholder Platform refers to cooperative endeavors based on common goals but separate governance

Conclusion

The participants and speakers at the seminar unanimously concurred that given the universality of SDGs, the targets would be impossible to achieve without support from all sectors of society – governments, civil society, academia, and private sector. Another key aspect of conversation is the financing of SDGs. Since the SDGs are significantly broader in scope and scale than the MDGs, these goals cannot be achieved solely through development assistance. Bangladesh was repeatedly acclaimed for its remarkable achievements in the MDGs and was cited as an exemplar for other developing nations. In this regard, Honorable Finance Minister's opening speech shed much needed light on how countries like Bangladesh can incorporate SDGs into their national development plans. Particularly, his emphasis on the need for countries to customize their development agenda to be compatible with their unique ground realities was much appreciated by the diverse stakeholders attending the event.

Finally, the event was attended by eminent experts and institutions represented by multilateral development partners (UNDP, World Bank, IFC), think tanks (Brookings, Center for Global Development, Asia Society Policy Institute, Center for Strategic & International Studies), academia (Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, University of Pennsylvania, New York University). A large number of well-respected international policymakers and development practitioners on sustainable development and the Global Agenda 2030 also attended the seminar. The participants congratulated both the Government of Bangladesh and IPAG for successfully undertaking this timely and important event which has helped in boosting a positive image of Bangladesh to the international community. They also remarked that it sets a good example for other developing countries on fruitful cooperation between the Government and civil society think tanks in furthering the development agenda both within and outside their country.