

Sustainable Development Goals Implementations in Bangladesh: National Security and Growth.

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It is a real pleasure to be here this afternoon. I am sorry I was not able to join with the session due to some technical difficulties, but it is a real pleasure to be in here this afternoon at the KDU International Research Conference. My sincere appreciation to the University for inviting me I am glad that although we are not able to present physically, technology has made possible for us to be there virtually. My sincere appreciation to Professor Amal Jayawardena for kind introduction. I am really delighted that he is chairing this session. What I intend to do Ladies and Gentlemen this afternoon is to talk to you about the issues of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how it relates to the national security.

So, what do we mean by Sustainable Development Goals? The United Nations (UN) Member States formally adopted the SDGs agenda on September 25, 2015. The 17 SDGs, and its associated 169 targets with 232 indicators, aim to end poverty, hunger and inequality; act on climate change and the environment; improve access to health and education; care for people and the planet; and build strong institutions and partnerships. What I intend to answer in this power point presentation is how far is Bangladesh into achieving these goals and what can we do about its proper implementation? In this presentation I will talk about what is meant by SDGs, how these SDGs relate to Least Developed Countries, how SDGs can be implemented for National Security and Growth, SDGs and Bangladesh, and how SDGs can be prioritised for developing South Asian Countries Like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, what the COVID 19 pandemic needs for SDGs implementation, and the way forward.

Previous speakers very rightly said today's understanding on national security. We talk about national security today as no longer about territorial integrity, and military security and all although they are very important. We now look at comprehensive national security. And when we talk about comprehensive national security, development is a key component and that is why SDGs play a very critical role. As I said earlier these SDGs are a follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000 and completed in 2015. SDGs want to ensure that 'No One is Left Behind'. The new goals have been envisioned to enable countries to utilize their own financial resources and capacity and seek assistance from developed countries on areas where they fall short. SDGs also focus on quality rather than just quantity. The SDGs envisaged itself as integrated, indivisible, multi-dimensional global set of objectives and endorsed the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), within its purview.

This graphic represents 17 goals of SDGs.



And this graphic represents five fundamentals of SDGs.

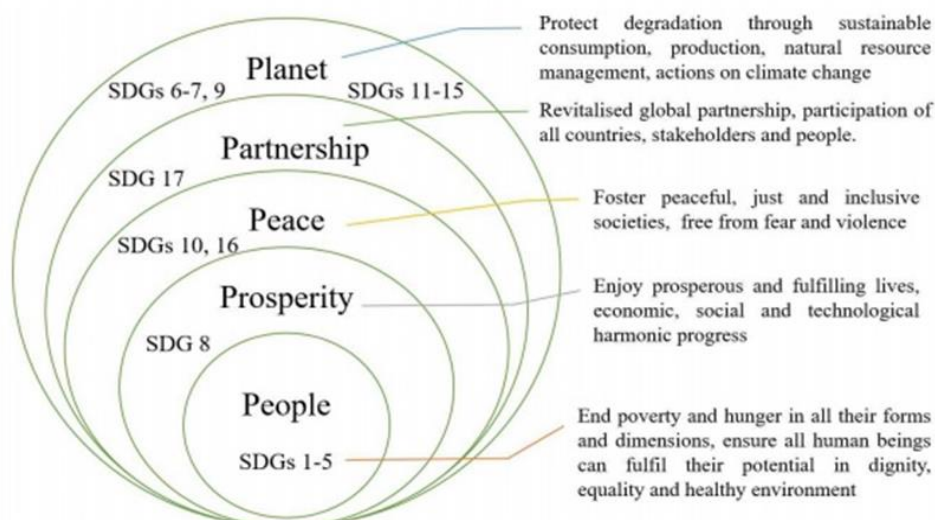


Fig. 2: Five fundamentals of SDGs.

So, what does SDGs mean for Least Developed Countries? There are currently 47 least developed countries (LDCs). They host just over 1 billion people, approximately 13 per cent of the world's population, but account for only 1.2 per cent of global gross domestic product according to UNCTAD. Almost half of the population of LDCs still lives in extreme poverty. At the same time LDCs have the world's fastest population growth rate in the world. At least eighteen of the 169 Sustainable Development Goal targets refer explicitly to the least developed countries, and

dozens more are of central importance to their development success. According to the International Institute for Environment and Development, National SDG implementation processes could all too easily get bogged down in endless debates over bureaucratic procedures of target-setting, delivery and monitoring, and fail to achieve change. So this is the issue that we need to consider how implementation can be bogged down due to procedure issues and could be the case of proper implementation.

The SDGs promote sustained economic growth, higher levels of productivity and technological innovation. Apart from ensuring sustainable fulfillment of basic human needs for all. Encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation are key to this, as are effective measures to eradicate forced labour, slavery and human trafficking. With these targets in mind, the goal is to achieve full and productive employment, and decent work, for all women and men by 2030. All the SDGs ensure national growth from the roots, calling for a holistic and integrated approach that reverberates in ensuring a stable and structured National security policy and implementation.

Let's look at Bangladesh and its development in SDGs. For us the integration of SDG plans with the national growth is a challenge as well as an opportunity. A big problem in achieving the SDGs is the relative lack of integration of these goals into the national planning process. The country has at least 14 national plans, policies, and strategies, including The 7th Five Year Plan, The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) 2015, The National Education; the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP III) 2011-16 (extended to June 2017), The National Women's Development Policy (NWDP) 2011, The Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2009. Out of the 17 SDGs, Bangladesh has made considerable progress on reducing extreme poverty (Goal-1) measured by \$1.90 a day or by national poverty line. In 2018, the proportion of population living below the international poverty line (absolute poverty) was 11.3 per cent compared to 19.6 per cent in 2010. Ladies and Gentlemen, as you will agree with me within 8 years there is a considerable achievement for a country which has a large population. On the other hand, the proportion of population living below the national poverty line was 21.6 per cent in 2018 as opposed to 31.5 per cent in 2010. Similarly, the progress on expanding coverage of social protection and proportion of government expenditure on services as share of total government expenditure has been remarkable during the last decade. The trends of coverage of social safety net programme rose to 58.1 per cent (nationally) in 2019

compared to 24.6 per cent in 2010. Bangladesh is moving steadfastly towards ensuring access of 100 per cent of poor household (by 2021) to electricity (Goal-7) well ahead of the target time in 2025; it reached to 92.2 per cent in 2019 which was only 55.26 per cent in 2010.

Bangladesh has made an upward shift in the average annual growth rate (Goal-8) to 7.0 per cent plus in the recent years (FY2015-FY2018), attained 7.86 per cent in FY 2018 and estimated to attain 8.13 per cent in FY 2019. Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 like all economies we are facing some challenges specially ----- [unclear] is very high. Bangladesh has also made good progress in SDG-5 in recent times. The proportion of female members in the Parliament has been slowly increasing over time reaching 20.88 per cent in 2019 which was 12.42 per cent in 2001. In SDG-9, the share of manufacturing value added in GDP in the country has been increasing significantly - exceeding the 2020 milestone in FY2017. The share of manufacturing employment in total employment increased up to 2013 and then leveled off in the last two years. It has been noticed by the policymakers of the country that, of the 17 SDGs - eight Goals are better integrated with the existing national prioritization processes, and about 20 percent of the targets are not currently reflected in national priorities.

SDGs that need prioritizing for developing South Asian countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Accelerated economic development in the least developed countries (LDCs) is at the centre of efforts to achieve the SDGs. Not only is the incidence of poverty and malnutrition the greatest in this group of countries, but the selection and implementation of effective policies to overcome these problems are also the most challenging there. SDGs implemented for National Security and Growth is important for countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to consider. International cooperation can be strengthened in South Asian region as the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation in international development cooperation has grown significantly in recent times. Some SDGs are important

reference points for the design of national development strategies for LDCs. These are:

- End poverty everywhere (SDG 1);
- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (SDG 2);
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG 7);
- Promote sustained and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG 8);
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (SDG 9);
- Reduce inequality within and among countries (SDG 10);
- Combat climate change (SDG 13);
- Strengthen the means of implementation (SDG 17).

Now today no conversation is complete without COVID-19. Now let's look at what challenges does it offer us. COVID-19 has especially affected the achievement of the SDGs, and has produced many negative short-term impacts on most SDGs. In 2020 alone, millions (estimates range from around 35 to 60 million) could be pushed into extreme poverty, reversing the declining global trend of the last twenty-plus years according to the United Nations. Some 1.6 billion people working in the informal sector including the gig economy are estimated to be at risk of losing their livelihoods. Global GDP is expected to contract sharply in 2020 – estimates range from 3.2 percent to 5.2 per cent- potentially the largest contraction in economic activity since the Great Depression, and far worse than the 2008-2009 global financial crisis.

This graphic shows how COVID 19 has impacted on implementation of SDGs.

Other Challenges are more complex, which have existed well before the pandemic had hit.

- Effective coordination among ministries/divisions is needed for expediting implementation of the SDGs action plan.
- Resource mobilisation, particularly from external sources, remains a big challenge.
- The National Social Security requires substantial increase in resources and streamlined efforts for implementation.
- Capacity of the National Statistical Organisation has to be accelerated to generate data required for tracking SDG progresses.
- Eradication of violence against women, prevention of child marriage and addressing gender digital divide.
- Energy pricing and subsidies present a challenge to the economy.
- Inconsistency between skills in demand and supply, high cost of migration etc.
- Highly educated women face high unemployment rates.
- The net FDI flow has been low and concentrated on a few sectors.
- Recent influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar is putting pressure on forests in Teknaf-Cox's Bazar range. Already 6000 acres of forest land have been allotted for temporary housing of the refugees.
- LDC graduation may pose additional challenges in future in terms of losing international trade preferences and support mechanism.
- Skill issue with potential migrant workers requires substantial attention.

Now let's look at the way forward. Accelerated investment in agricultural research for development of stress tolerant crop varieties and technological innovation is necessary (Tk 1.0 billion or 100 crore was earmarked in the last budget). Encouraging private investment through infrastructure development and promoting Special Economic Zones. Expanding social protection programmes and microfinance programmes. The government is introducing highly efficient power plants to the national power grid. Eligible single cycle power plants are being upgraded to combined cycle power plants. All the upcoming coal power plants are being equipped

with latest ultra-supercritical technology, flue gas desulphurization and electrostatic precipitator to minimize the impact on environment.

In case of regional cooperation, the following recommendations could be considered:

- Establishment of regional platform for exchanging implementation experiences of SDGs and best practices by the countries.
- Collaboration among the countries for attaining regional commitment for addressing the
- Exploring opportunities for creating regional financing support to achieve SDGs.
- Challenges faced in implementation of SDGs.

We also need to look at reinforcing the SDGs through Crisis Response and Recovery considering the Pandemic:

- Maintain past progress made towards eradicating basic deprivations.
- Accelerate the universal provision of quality essential services.
- Reverse course on the degradation of nature.

With that I would like to finish my presentation. I would like to welcome your questions latter. Once

again, my sincere thanks to KDU for inviting me to this conference.

Ayubowan!

Thank you.

Author Biography



Mr Shafqat Munir is a Research Fellow and Head of Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research (BCTR).

He recently completed Fellowship on Indo Pacific Security Studies (FIPSS) at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. As part of the FIPSS fellowship, Mr. Munir completed the Advanced Security Cooperation (ASC 18-2) course at the DKI APCSS. ASC 18-2 brought together over one hundred participants from across South Asia, South East Asia, Northeast Asia, Oceania and the Americas to look at the intricacies of Security Cooperation.