Photo : UNRCO & IFAD Bangladesh

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK 2022-2026

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

UNITED NATIONS BANGLADESH

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK (UNSDCF) BANGLADESH 2022-2026

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

8FYP	Eighth Five Year Plan.
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
BB	Bangladesh Bank
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCA	Basic Cooperation Agreement
BDP	Bangladesh Delta Plan
BEF	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
BEZA	Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority
BFD	Bangladesh Forest Department
BIDA	Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
BP	Bangladesh Police
BSCIC	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CMSMEs	Cottage, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAE	Department of Agriculture Extension
DCCI	Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry
DDM	Department of Disaster Management
DGHS	Directorate General of Health Services
DOE	Department of Environment
ERD	Economic Relations Division
FACE	Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBCCI	Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FD	Finance Division
FID	Financial Institutions Division
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	General Economics Division
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRD	Internal Resources Division
ITC	International Trade Centre
JRP	Joint Response Plan
JSC	Joint Government of Bangladesh-United Nations Steering Committee
LASI	Learning Assessment of Secondary Institutions
LCG	Local Consultative Group
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LGD	Local Government Division
LGIs	Local Government Institutions
LJD	Law and Justice Division
LSD	Local Storage Depot
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoFood	Ministry of Food
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Industry
MoLJPA	Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
NPDM	National Plan for Disaster Management
NSDA	National Skill Development Authority
NSIS	National Social Insurance Scheme
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PKSF	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation
PPPA	Public Private Partnership Authority
RRF	Results and Reporting Framework
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SID	Statistics Informatics Division
SOD	Standing Orders on Disaster
SSC	South-South Cooperation
SSD	Security Services Division
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDs	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	UNDRR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VAT	Value-Added Tax
VAW	Violence Against Women
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

JOINT STATEMENT

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026 for Bangladesh is signed by the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) at a pivotal moment in the country's development journey. The United Nations is proud to have been a trusted partner of the Government and the people of Bangladesh on this development journey. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence. This year, Bangladesh also qualified ¬for LDC Graduation effective from 2026. The Government's 8th Five Year Plan articulates the country's development aspirations and its medium-term strategy to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals building on past successes, and to create a sustainable trajectory towards a developed economy status by 2041.

The 8th Five Year Plan mainstreams climate action through a broad range of sectoral plans. The Delta Plan 2100 is a unique pathway to provide the techno-economic framework for addressing the climate vulnerability of the Bangladesh delta. Bangladesh is also playing a leadership role of cooperation to address global climate change and its impacts through the Climate Vulnerable Forum and south-south cooperation.

In light of these factors, the UNSDCF is the collective strategic response of the United Nations Development System in Bangladesh to the 8th Five Year Plan. Aligned with the priorities of the 8th Five Year Plan and based on the latest situation analysis of the impact of COVID-19, the UNSDCF was developed after multiple rounds of consultations with the Ministries/Divisions/Department/Agencies of the Government from conceptualization through defining the strategic priorities.

Based on the priorities of the Government, the multisectoral nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the UN's comparative advantages, the UNSDCF 2022-2026 articulates five Strategic Priority Areas for engagement: (i) inclusive and sustainable economic development; (ii) equitable human development and well-being; (iii) sustainable, resilient and healthy environment; (iv) transformative, participatory and inclusive governance; and (v) gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence. In addition to identifying it as a Strategic Priority, gender equality is also mainstreamed in each of the other four Strategic Priorities.

Twenty-four UN agencies are signatories to this Cooperation Framework. The UNCT will also draw on the capacities of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Statistics Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and Pacific and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

UN Development System reforms were initiated across the United Nations development system globally in 2018. In the context of these reforms, the real value of this cooperation framework will rest on its joint implementation to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

The joined approach to implementation will be operationalized through a Joint Work Plan. Further, the country programmes, strategies, and work plans of the United Nations agencies in Bangladesh must derive from this UNSDCF. With the signature of this document, we collectively commit to working together to deliver better, and in a more transparent and accountable manner for the people of Bangladesh.

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Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bangladesh is at a pivotal moment on its development pathway. While it has made remarkable progress in economic development and poverty reduction, some of the consequences of growth such as local environmental degradation on account of soil, water, and air pollution, together with the impact and heightened risk of climate-related disasters, have slowed progress. Further, rapid economic growth has been accompanied by growing inequality, as noted in the 8th Five Year Plan (8FYP). The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated these factors. Despite this, the country is uniquely positioned to affect transformative change in its institutions to bring administration, decision-making and services closer to its people. There are large pockets of potential among children, youth, women, and marginalized groups. The right levels of investment and more efficient, targeted, and risk-informed interventions can unleash this potential to fuel a more equitable, sustainable development in the country.

This potential is recognized in the country's Strategic Vision 2041, which clearly outlines the overarching national goals and approaches for Bangladesh's development, including its aspirations to be a country free of poverty, where economic and social justice prevails, and where there is shared prosperity. The plan for achieving this vision – the Perspective Plan 2021-2041 – defines targets, including achieving Upper-Middle Income Country Status and eliminating extreme poverty by 2031, and eradicating poverty while achieving High-Income Country status by 2041. As part of this trajectory, Bangladesh has fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and embraced the United Nations Secretary-General's call for a "Decade of Action" to accelerate progress toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.[1]

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework ("Cooperation Framework") represents the UN development system's collective response to support Bangladesh in overcoming the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing key development priorities and challenges to the achievement of the objectives of the 8th Five Year Plan leading to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, its SDGs, and the Perspective Plan for 2041. It transforms the way the United Nations development system in Bangladesh undertakes coherent planning and programming cooperation and is the basis for all agency activities, joint and individual, within the country. Considering the impacts of COVID-19 and the potential change in the development finance landscape due to Bangladesh's graduation from Least-Developed-Country (LDC) category in 2026, the UN has placed a particular emphasis on development effectiveness through different instruments in the Cooperation Framework, which will complement the public financial management efforts of different international financial institutions and multilateral development banks.

In response to the changing development requirements of the country, and emanating from widespread consultative and analytical processes, five interrelated, mutually reinforcing and multisectoral Strategic Priorities were identified for the 2022-2026 Cooperation Framework where the United Nations system should concentrate its expertise to support transformational and accelerated progress in sustainable development and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. Through these Strategic Priorities, the United Nations will support the Government and the people in Bangladesh to accelerate evidence-informed approaches to inclusive, equitable, and sustainable human, social, economic, and environmental development. The Cooperation Framework upholds the principles of human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, resilience, and accountability, ensuring that "no one is left behind", the guiding principle for all UN development system programme cooperation.

[1] General Economics Division, Bangladesh Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Bangladesh Voluntary National Reviews (2020): Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways – Realizing the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development, June 2020

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Strategic Priority 1: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development

Outcome 1: By 2026, more people in Bangladesh, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized from all gender and social groups and those from lagging districts benefit from sustainable livelihood and decent work opportunities resulting from responsible, inclusive, sustainable, green, and equitable economic development.

Strategic Priority 2: Equitable Human Development and Well Being

Outcome 2: By 2026, more people, in particular, the most vulnerable and marginalized, have improved access to and utilization of quality, inclusive, gender- and shock-responsive, universal, and resilient social protection, social safety-net and basic social services.

Strategic Priority 3: Sustainable, Healthy and Resilient Environment

Outcome 3: By 2026, ecosystems are healthier, and all people, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized in both rural and urban settings, benefit from and contribute in a gender-responsive manner to a cleaner and more resilient environment, an enriched natural resource base, low carbon development, and are prosperous and more resilient to climate change, shocks and disasters.

Strategic Priority 4: Transformative, Participatory and Inclusive Governance

Outcome 4: By 2026, more people, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from more equitable, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, participatory, accountable governance and justice, in a peaceful and tolerant society governed by the rule of law.

Strategic Priority 5: Gender Equality and Eliminating Gender-Based Violence

Outcome 5: By 2026, more women, girls and sexual minorities benefit from an environment in which they are empowered to exercise their rights, agency and decision-making power over all aspects of their lives and towards a life free from all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful norms and practices.

The implementation of the Cooperation Framework will be coordinated through the Government of Bangladesh-United Nations UNSDCF Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, and the UN Resident Coordinator. During the implementation of the Cooperation Framework, the Steering Committee will meet twice a year to review progress towards the targeted results and recommend strategic adjustments or new opportunities to accelerate action during the subsequent period. The five Strategic Priority Groups, chaired by UN heads of agencies will be established to guide the Cooperation Framework annual joint planning, monitoring, and reporting.

[2] Green economic development refers to a development pathway that seeks to minimize local soil, water, and air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, loss of biodiversity and other negative environmental impacts of productive processes. It also ensures that producers, production processes and supply chains are climate resilient

Photo : UNRCO

CHAPTER 1

COUNTRY PROGRESS TOWARDS **THE 2030 AGENDA**

1.1 **COUNTRY** CONTEXT

As it embarks on a new phase of development with the launch of Vision 2041, Bangladesh embraces many opportunities and challenges. Since its independence, the country has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty, maternal and child mortality, and fertility, whilst making education available to all. The shifts in population structure brought about by this progress have presented Bangladesh with a singular opportunity to rapidly accelerate economic and social development towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 Agenda, attaining developed country status and eradicating poverty by 2041.

Meeting these goals will be challenging. Rapid economic development, urbanization and industrial expansion have brought with them inequality and high levels of pollution of the local air, water, and soil. The COVID-19 pandemic, while slowing progress, reversing some development gains and highlighting pre-existing and new social and economic challenges, has underlined the urgent need to improve the social protection systems, basic social services, and a robust support infrastructure to ensure sustained service provision to achieve universal access to high-quality, affordable health care. Simulations suggest that Bangladesh will need a substantial stimulus package estimated at 11 per cent of GDP - covering public health infrastructure needs, social protection, and economic revival - to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

The demand for such support will only grow as Bangladesh continues to experience the consequences of global climate change.

[3] UNESCAP SSWA (2020). COVID-19 and South Asia: National Strategies and Subregional Cooperation for Accelerating Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Recovery. Available at https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/South%20Asia%20Covid-19%20Paper_5.pdf

Bangladesh will emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic at a pivotal moment in the country's sustainable development path with a valuable but highly time-sensitive opportunity to unleash the untapped potential in children, youth, and women, through investment in the nation's human capabilities. It is uniquely positioned to seize the disruption caused by the pandemic to affect transformative change in the country's institutions to bring administration, decision-making and services closer to the people. Large pockets of potential exist among youth, women, and marginalized groups. The right levels of investment and more efficient, targeted and risk-informed governance interventions, can tap into this potential and unleash a new wave of sustainable development. If empowered to participate actively in the social, political, and economic decisions that affect the country's future, safe in the knowledge that their human rights are protected and promoted, these groups will drive the next phase of Bangladesh's development.

Bangladesh is an active member of the Human Rights Council (HRC) taking the lead on various issues like climate change. In the last Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Bangladesh, the country accepted 178 recommendations and is currently working on an action plan to implement them. Several of these recommendations are aligned with various priorities identified in the UNSDCF.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened pre-existing social, economic, and political vulnerabilities globally. In Bangladesh, as elsewhere, this has created new challenges for social cohesion and sustainable peace. The potential for climate change to exacerbate these risks is significant, as its cumulative impacts increasingly compromise livelihoods, drive displacement and migration, and heighten resource scarcity. Transboundary tensions over religious and ethnic identities is also a concern.

Currently Bangladesh is hosting over 884,000 Rohingya refugees.[4] United Nations agencies have been working closely with the Government of Bangladesh and non-governmental organizations to provide necessary assistance to both the refugee and the host community populations while the UN at the global level has been working to help realize the conditions that enable voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. The objectives, strategies, funding, and actions associated with this assistance are detailed in the Joint Response Plan (JRP)[5] on the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis which is issued on an annual basis.[6]

[4] The Government of Bangladesh refers to the Rohingya as "Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN)." The UN system refers to this population as Rohingya refugees, in line with the applicable international framework.

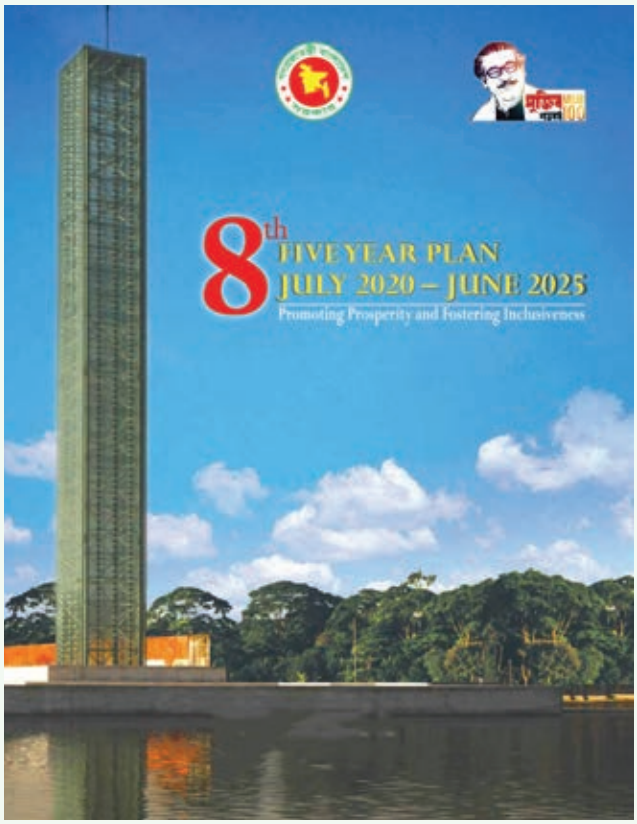
[5] 2021 Joint Response Plan: Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/2021_jrp_with_annexes.pdf

[6] The JRP seeks to support over 880,000 Rohingya refugees and 472,000 vulnerable Bangladeshis in Cox's Bazar district.

1.2 NATIONAL VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As the UNSDCF begins, alongside the immediacy of the drive towards recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, a fresh, strategic Vision 2041 clearly outlines the overarching national goals and approach for Bangladesh's development, aspiring to be a country that is free of poverty, where economic and social justice prevails and where there is shared prosperity. The plan for achieving this vision – the Perspective Plan 2021-2041 – defines targets: achieving Upper-Middle Income Country Status and eliminating extreme poverty by 2031, and eradicating poverty altogether while achieving High-Income Country status by 2041. As part of this trajectory, Bangladesh has fully committed to achieving the SDGs, and embraced the Secretary-General's call for a "Decade of Action" to accelerate progress toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.[7]

Over the next five years, progress towards this ambitious political, economic, and social development vision will be delivered through the 8th Five Year Plan. This medium-term development strategy comes at a time when Bangladesh looks to promote a strong and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, sustain and build on its economic growth, and put the country on track to achieve the SDGs, Middle Income Country Status, and the elimination of extreme poverty by 2030/31. Building on the successes and lessons of the 7th Five Year Plan, the 8th Five Year Plan seeks to sustain Bangladesh's economic growth while expanding the distribution of the benefits of this growth to all. It acknowledges that a "performance gap" has emerged in realizing the full potential of the national economy due to the ongoing needs for reforms to strengthen tax revenue, improve the private investment climate, enhance job creation and diversify exports, all of which will be critical to meeting targets for the financing of the SDGs. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted gaps between the country's strong legal and policy frameworks in health, education and protection, and the realities on the ground in terms of adequate, accessible facilities and staff that help to deliver quality, gender-responsive services in these sectors. As noted in the 8th Five Year Plan, the slow progress of reforms in the National Social Security System (NSSS), exclusion and inclusion errors in targeting, and social protection programming have limited the impact of the Government's emergency and non-emergency support to the poor and vulnerable, including in response to the effects of COVID-19 and the increased growth elasticity of poverty.



[7] General Economics Division, Bangladesh Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Bangladesh Voluntary National Reviews (2020): Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways – Realizing the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development, June 2020

In this context, the 8th Five Year Plan has six core themes. First, the Plan prioritizes a rapid recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to restore health services and economic activity. This will be particularly important during the first year of the Plan's implementation and will underline the Government's capacity to rapidly accelerate the implementation of the rest of the plan. Second, the Plan foresees a quick return to GDP growth acceleration, employment generation and poverty reduction initiatives, with the aim of reaching a GDP growth rate of 8.5 per cent by the 2025 financial year. Third, the Plan lays out a broad strategy for inclusiveness in Bangladesh's development, whereby every person can participate fully, and the poor and vulnerable receive more of the benefits of development directly. Fourth, the Plan seeks to lay out a pathway to sustainable development, ensuring the responsible use of natural resources, and the management of urbanization while increasing resilience to disasters and climate change. Fifth, and in line with the four pillars of the Perspective Plan, the 8th Five Year Plan focuses on the strengthening of key institutions, acknowledging the critical role of economic and political institutions in maintaining long-term growth. Sixth, the 8th Five Year Plan updates the country's plans for attaining certain SDG targets and sets out several strategies for coping with the impact of graduation out of least developed country status. It identifies 15 top priority areas for accelerating development progress, each of which corresponds directly to one or more SDGs.

8th FYP Priorities

These priorities include four macroeconomic goals, namely inclusive economic growth through macroeconomic stability (SDG 8); reducing poverty and inequality (SDGs 1 and 10); employment (SDG 8); and international cooperation and partnership (SDG 17). The Plan further identifies 11 sectoral priority goals in the areas of health and wellbeing (SDG 3); quality education (SDG 4); agriculture and food security (SDG 2); clean water and sanitation (SDG 6); transport and communications (SDG 9); power, energy and mineral resources (SDG 7); gender and social inequality (SDGs 5 and 10); environment, climate change and disaster management (SDGs 13, 14, and 15); information and communications technology (SDG 9); urban development (SDG 11); and governance (SDG 16). The Plan foresees a strengthened, results-based, monitoring and evaluation framework for measuring progress against the SDGs that is driven by systematic data generation on 104 indicators.[8]

Six Key Interventions

In line with its second macroeconomic priority and responding to some of the key vulnerabilities that emerged during the previous Plan, the 8th Five Year Plan is heavily focused on reducing inequality. It identifies six key interventions designed to directly address the immediate drivers of inequality, including early childhood development and nutrition interventions, attaining universal health coverage and access to quality education, cash transfer and progressive taxation, and expanding rural infrastructures such as roads and electrification. More broadly, the Plan lays out a long-term, pro-poor and inclusive growth strategy that promotes labour-intensive, export-oriented manufacturing-led growth and agricultural diversification, gender balance in the workforce, invigorates micro and small enterprises, strengthens a more modern services sector while expanding exports of non-factor services, and increases overseas employment. Across these areas, the Plan emphasized the importance of protecting and promoting the human rights of its population, particularly by ensuring the rights of vulnerable populations including, among others, the urban and working poor, those working in the informal sector, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and women and girls.

[8] General Economics Division, Bangladesh Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh 8th Five- Year Plan, FY20201-FY 2025: "Promoting Prosperity and Fostering Inclusiveness", December 2020, p. 140.

The 8th Five Year Plan also commits to Bangladesh adopting a strategy of green growth. The strategies, policies and institutional reforms leading to green growth include (a) Integrating environmental costs into the Macroeconomic Framework; (b) Implementing the Delta Plan to build resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change; (c) Reduce air and water pollution; (d) Removal of fuel subsidies; (e) Adoption of green tax on fossil fuel consumption; (f) Taxation of emission from industrial units; and (g) Prevention of surface water pollution.[9]

Bangladesh is a State Party to eight out of nine core UN human rights conventions and that it has been cooperating with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) through three cycles. In the third Cycle of UPR in 2018, Bangladesh supported 178 recommendations out of a total of 251. In the first workshop, participants reviewed a selected list of 57 supported recommendations and in the second, participants discussed 40 recommendations. In 2020, the UN system came together to provide coordinated support to the Government on the implementation of UPR recommendations. Bangladesh's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights is also enunciated in its 8th Five-Year Plan.

In response to the risks posed by climate change to Bangladesh, the country's National Economic Council approved the "Delta Plan 2100" in 2018, a multi-sectoral strategy to secure the country's water resources and mitigate the effects of climate change. The plan includes initiatives to increase flood management capacity; foster sustainability in agriculture[10] and freshwater use, including in terms of equality in the right to access, availability and quality of water; strengthen resilient infrastructure in coastal zones; and improve governance and trans-boundary cooperation around water resources. The Plan foresees the adoption of a "blue economy" approach to the management and preservation of the country's use of marine and water resources.

Photo : IFAD Bangladesh

The implementation of the 8th Five-Year Plan will be monitored through a development results framework (DRF) that incorporates the monitoring and evaluation regime for the SDGs. It builds on the Government's continuously improving capacities in results-based management and data-driven, evidence-based decision making. A mid-term review of implementation progress is planned at the end of the financial year (FY) 2023, while a final implementation review will be done at the end of FY 2025, i.e., after the completion of the plan. The Government intends to improve information systems that collect data at the point of service delivery and connect to local administrative systems; make data more available to decision-makers and hold them accountable for its use; and clarify roles and responsibilities across both government and development partners to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

[9] 8th Five Year Plan, Page lii (Executive Summary)

[10] National Agriculture Policy 2019 and COVID-19 Action Plan initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture in response to the COVID 19 pandemic lay out the roadmap for sustainable agriculture in the medium and short term, respectively.

1.3 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SDGS

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (impact of COVID-19 elaborated in section 1.4), Bangladesh was making tangible but uneven progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, with the strongest performance in the areas of poverty reduction, water and sanitation, and social protection. According to the **Sustainable Development Report 2021** published by the University of Cambridge, Bangladesh has improved most on the SDG Index since 2015. The country scores 63.5 in the SDG Index.

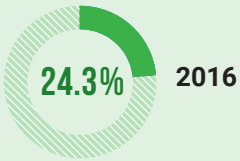
SDG Progress in Bangladesh, 2020

Source: Source: Sustainable Development Report 2021, University of Cambridge
https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/chapters/part-2-the-sdg-index-and-dashboards

Poverty Rate

In 2016 the poverty rate declined to 24.3 per cent, and extreme poverty fell from 18.5 per cent in 2010 to 13.8 per cent in 2016. While the pace of poverty reduction had slowed significantly over time, in principle this progress put the country within reach of achieving the first SDG and Perspective Plan target of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have reversed some of this progress, at least temporarily, especially among those employed in the informal sector and urban areas, with additional 16 million 'new poor'[11] estimated to have fallen into poverty due to the pandemic. Moreover, regional disparities across Bangladesh's 64 districts remain, with a 68 percentage-point disparity in poverty between the poorest district of the country and the least poor one. While there is a disproportionate concentration of the poorest districts in western Bangladesh and the Chittagong Hill Tracts area, several districts across the country are lagging in the country's development progress.[12]

POVERTY RATE DECLINED



EXTREME POVERTY

[11] Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies 2020. Poverty in the time of Corona: Trends, Drivers, Vulnerability and Policy Responses in Bangladesh
[12] General Economics Division, Bangladesh Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh 8th Five- Year Plan, FY20201-FY 2025: "Promoting Prosperity and Fostering Inclusiveness", December 2020, p. 106.

Human Development in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made considerable progress in reducing hunger and malnutrition in the country, with progress in reducing child undernutrition on track and well-sustained over time. Improvements in nutrition have been driven in part by healthy growth in Bangladesh's agriculture, fisheries, and livestock sectors and in improved access to and utilization of essential nutrition services and also ensuring safe food.[13] The health sector in Bangladesh has achieved significant progress against multiple SDG targets in the last three decades, as improvements in medical care, including improved access to and utilization of health facilities, combined with fertility reduction, higher education levels in women and girls, and increased per capita income have helped to reduce the maternal mortality rate from **478 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 165 in 2019, according to the country's 2020** Voluntary National Review[14]. Significant progress has also been achieved in increasing enrolment rates at all levels of education, with primary school enrolment increasing to near-universal rates. Access to proper sanitation and drinking water has improved against multiple indicators over the last two decades, though achieving further and more equitable progress has proved difficult. These achievements were instrumental in Bangladesh fulfilling all three criteria for graduation out of the LDC status, with enduring gains in the human assets index.

PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS DEATH 1990-2019

478 deaths 1990

165 deaths 2019

Strong political commitments to achieve gender equality, and to protect and promote the rights of women and girls are reflected in a significant number of laws, policies, and action plans, creating a solid basis for action. Millions of women have entered the labour force in recent years, and the country has witnessed impressive improvements in bringing girls into education, with gender parity having been reached in primary schools. Secondary school dropout rates, however, are higher for girls. Women's formal participation in political decision-making processes at local levels has improved slowly in recent years, with the last electoral cycle showing incremental progress in the representation of women in legislatures and as councillors. In 2020 Bangladesh ranked 50th out of 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index aided by its strong performance on the Political Empowerment subindex (score of 54.5%), where it ranks 7th globally due to the number of years of having a female head of state. However, it ranks below 100 in the three other categories: economic participation; education; and health. Rights of third gender people have also benefited from high profile political support, though systemic human rights protection, and equal access to services remains to be ensured.[15]

Bangladesh's industrial sector, particularly manufacturing, has been a key driver of growth. While the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the manufacturing sector hard – especially cottage, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (CMSMEs) – opportunities to significantly scale up foreign direct investment and improvement in ease of doing business could present great potential during the 8th Five-Year Plan.

[13] Multi-year initiatives of the Ministries of Agriculture and Food contain the roadmaps for these achievements.

[14] General Economics Division, Bangladesh Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, "Bangladesh Voluntary National Reviews: Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways: Realizing the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development", June 2020, p. 46

[15] The latest budget provides incentives for employing persons of the third gender as well as persons with disabilities.

1.4 GAPS AND CHALLENGES

The growing inequality that accompanied Bangladesh's rapid economic growth under the Seventh Five-Year Plan has highlighted and exacerbated patterns of marginalization, exclusion and discrimination that have left many vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind on the country's path to development. These include, among others, ethnic minorities, women, children, adolescents and youth, the urban and working poor, persons with disabilities, and people living in hard-to-reach areas, many of whom have been subjected to generational cycles of poverty, and cultural, economic, political, and social exclusion. Despite their central role in Bangladesh's growth and development plans, youth (aged 15-35) lack appropriate livelihood and life skills due to an education system that needs revamping to prepare the young for skills relevant to the 21st century, perform poorly on many development indicators, and have limited opportunities to participate constructively in political decision making. Unequal access to basic social services has caused progress on key SDG targets to slow or plateau. For example, national progress in reducing malnutrition has slowed and shows considerable inequalities across geographic and economic groups, with 4.5 million children still suffering from stunting. The environmental costs of the country's growth path are having tangible secondary effects on a broad range of development indicators, ranging from health and nutrition, employment productivity, to biodiversity and ocean health.

Efforts to address the drivers of inequality and vulnerability have been unfulfilled by some systemic issues in Bangladesh's social security system, which faces problems of fragmentation, preference of wider coverage over providing substantial or required amounts to the poor, information management and, above all, targeting those in need, especially in urban areas. It also can improve on the active participation from rights holders.

Photo : UN Women Bangladesh

These challenges have emphasized the importance of transformative change in administrative decentralization, addressing corruption, and Government data collection and management. The potential rise of violent extremism remains an ongoing concern. These issues became even more acute as the social safety net served as a key vector for the distribution of emergency response programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has reversed some of the country's development gains, at least temporarily, while heightening these challenges.

It is estimated that 12.37 million people in Bangladesh might lose jobs because of lockdowns and other restrictions on economic activity and 11.7 million[16] people may be pushed into extreme poverty as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, public health emergency measures taken during the pandemic have further exposed vulnerable groups to economic and social challenges. The protracted closure of schools, for example, will have multiple and profoundly negative effects on children's development and safety, with immediate, long-term and inter-generational impacts on learning, drop-out, early marriage, child labour, food security, violence against children, and cycles of poverty and economic productivity.

Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the pattern of vulnerabilities in Bangladesh in ways that are not fully quantified yet. For instance, the new poor – a group just above the poverty line who have fallen into poverty in the wake of the pandemic – are a highly vulnerable group on a variety of measures. Millions of school children who have been out of school for over a year are seeing their education and prospects decimated before their eyes. Prolonged stay of the forcibly displaced Rohingya people with delayed repatriation to Myanmar has further intensified challenges of the Government of Bangladesh. Further, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers – still the drivers of Bangladesh's robust remittance flows – are now back in the country jobless and destitute.

More broadly, current levels of investment in Bangladesh's basic social service need to be significantly increased to ensure the country's chances of fully enjoying the benefits of its development progress to date. Demographic transitions in the country have created a unique opportunity to reap a boost in economic productivity and drive rapid economic and social development – a "demographic dividend." These benefits depend, however, on adequate and time-sensitive investments in education, health, nutrition, and decent work opportunities, with an underlying emphasis on removing gender-discriminatory social norms and structural barriers and promoting women's and girls' empowerment. Spending priorities of the Government in these sectors need to be adjusted to ensure that the benefits of the demographic dividend are fully realized. As Bangladesh recovers from the economic effects of the pandemic, changes in some of the fundamentals of its economy as a result of its graduation from the Least Developed Country status, including the loss of preferential export market access and shifts in the nature of development away from aid and towards trade, will challenge the country to maintain continuity and strengthen investment in these critical areas.

Photo : WHO Bangladesh

[16] UNESCAP SSWA (2020). COVID-19 and South Asia: National Strategies and Subregional Cooperation for Accelerating Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Recovery.
Available at https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/South%20Asia%20Covid-19%20Paper_5.pdf

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

As **natural climate change and economic transformation** push millions of people in Bangladesh towards urban centres, unplanned and unmanaged urbanization has emerged as a principal threat to Bangladesh's future development progress. Urban poverty has become a leading challenge to food and nutrition security, and in social safety net programmes often under-serve or are inadequately tailored to urban households.[17] These trends are holding back the country's progress on ensuring a decent standard of living for all, as conditions in urban slums move towards crisis levels, as urban migrants are exposed to new multidimensional poverty challenges, including meeting nutrition needs, finding decent work and accessing health, nutrition, education, protection and water and sanitation services. The rapid influx of migrants has severely strained infrastructure such as urban water and sanitation services, leading to poor hygiene environments, the disadvantages of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. The links between multidimensional, multigenerational poverty and vulnerability on the impact of disasters, including those linked to climate change, has emphasized the importance of more anticipatory interventions at the nexus of development and humanitarian programming to sustainably build resilience and address the underlying causes of vulnerability, while reinforcing national systems and capacities.

[17] World Bank Group, "Contextualizing Urban Social Protection in Bangladesh", Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, June 2020. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR..pdf

Despite strong national policy frameworks and significant progress on the ground, **myriad challenges to gender equality remain**. Women's labour force participation continues to stagnate at around 36%, as acknowledged in the 8th Five Year Plan, due to gender bias and discrimination in the labour market. Women's engagement predominantly in informal employment and unregistered cottage, micro and small enterprises with minimal savings and social safety-net support has meant also that they were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Many female returnee migrant and domestic workers, sex workers and third gender persons lost their income and had limited to no access to relief measures and social safety nets. The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work continue to fall on women due to gender discriminatory social norms. Although strong political commitments have been made to end child marriage, Bangladesh ranks among the 10 countries in the world with the highest levels of this harmful practice.[18] The closure of schools and other public safety measures imposed during the pandemic has increased girls' and boys' exposure to early and forced marriage, and gender-based violence. Protection issues for adolescent girls and children, which have worsened globally during the pandemic include psychological distress, increased exposure to online exploitation, domestic violence, psychological abuse, and violent practices. Progress in reducing the maternal mortality rate has stagnated as persistent barriers to universal access to sexual and reproductive health remain. In addition, malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among adolescent girls and women remain high, early marriage and early pregnancies are associated with poor maternal nutrition, poor birth outcomes and increased risk of maternal mortality further impacting on maternal health. Improving access to quality maternal health and family planning services is vital, requiring concerted efforts.

Bangladesh has demonstrated **strong leadership in acknowledging the risks posed by climate change.** While investments in disaster preparedness and response have been prioritized, the wide-reaching impacts of climate change and disasters threaten to exacerbate social, political, and economic vulnerabilities. They also act as a key barrier to the enjoyment of human rights and realization of human security, drive displacement and internal migration, and impair vital economic and social infrastructures. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will heighten these risks, further complicating the achievement of other environment-related SDG indicators, especially those related to sustainable consumption and production. Moreover, if left unmitigated, the cumulative impacts of climate change could hamper progress on the 2030 Agenda more broadly. However, the disruption of the moment also presents an opportunity to accelerate the move toward an environmentally friendly and inclusive green economy.

[18] MICS 2019 (BBS) and UNICEF, Ending Child Marriage: A Profile of Progress in Bangladesh (2020)

Greater investment in climate mitigation and in equitable, locally led and owned adaptation interventions and enhanced access to climate service and finance is needed, while more integrated, climate-risk informed programming across the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding pillars will be critical in mitigating the wide-reaching impacts that climate change poses to the country.

Globally the COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges to social cohesion. Against the backdrop of a rapid increase in internet users, online incitement to hatred and growing radicalisation through various channels, including those used by violent extremist groups, is also being reported, with particular concerns about incitement to racial hatred and attendant violations of freedom of religion.[19] This is a challenge that Bangladesh too must contend with. Bangladesh must also deal with several regional and cross-border challenges, including maximum utilization of existing and new international labour markets for Bangladesh's skilled and unskilled migrant workers, and trade negotiations in the context of LDC graduation.

All these could have a significant impact on Bangladesh's economic and social development agenda if not managed and negotiated properly. Bangladesh government is working with neighbouring countries, important trade partners, and potential destination countries for migrant workers towards addressing these challenges. It would therefore be important to develop sustainable trade and integration strategies which can support inter alia, upgrading to higher value-added products and services, and climate-friendly export production, and diversification of export products and markets. A pro-active regional integration strategy to diversify trade partners and offset the loss of non-reciprocal trade preferences is required for sustainable graduation. The Government will need to accelerate actions related to migrant workers, trade agreements, and formulating trade policies.

Unequivocal commitment to the rule of law, protection of human rights and delivering on these commitments are essential for the achievement of each of the 17 SDGs. Protecting, respecting, and fulfilling the human rights of every group and individual in Bangladesh is critical for the country to break the system of structural and multidimensional inequalities. Local government institutions need capacity, resources, and oversight to positively affect the quality of social protection services and other governance outcomes to achieve the SDGs at local levels. The independence and capacity of the judiciary need to be beyond question, and breach of international human rights standards need to be rigorously monitored and redressed.

[19] Report by UNDP that highlights the various security elements stemming from COVID 19 including hate speech
https://www.undp.org/press-releases/covid-19-eroding-social-cohesion-and-triggering-rise-civil-unrest-crisis-affected

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

CHAPTER 2

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO **THE 2030 AGENDA**

The Cooperation Framework

The Cooperation Framework represents the UN development system's collective offer to support Bangladesh to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and address key development priorities and challenges to the achievement of the objectives of the 8th Five Year Plan leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda, its SDGs and the Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041.

In line with the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, rights at the core of sustainable development, together with gender equality and equal rights of women, public participation and civic space, and rights of future generations including their right to development, and climate justice, will be at the centre of this Cooperation Framework.

The Cooperation Framework is mutually owned, and anchored in national development priorities, the 2030 Agenda and the principles of the UN Charter. It outlines the UN development system's contributions sought by national stakeholders to reach the SDGs in an integrated manner, with a commitment to leave no one behind, and to human rights, gender equality and other international standards and obligations. The Cooperation Framework serves as a core accountability tool between the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the host Government,[20] as well as between and among UNCT members for collectively owned development results and shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country. United Nations entity-specific country programmes are derived from the Cooperation Framework.

Based on the UN development system's policy expertise and its comparative advantages, its normative agenda, and its ability to leverage, influence and unlock a broad range of resources for development, the Cooperation Framework reflects:

- **A** an agreed theory of change towards the achievement of the SDGs;
- **B** the expectations of national stakeholders from the UN development system's contribution to national development;
- **C** a shared agreement of the strategic priorities and contributions of the United Nations, derived from the theory of change
- **D** the strategic partnerships with whom the UN system will work in pursuit of development effectiveness.

[20] UNSDCF Guidance 2019. Page 5.
https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf

2.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

The high level Theory of Change outlines the pathway that will enable the country to accelerate actions to the desired state where ***the people in Bangladesh - especially the most vulnerable and marginalized - contribute to and benefit equitably from integrated social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable and inclusive development under the 8th Five-Year Plan leading to achievement of the 2030 Agenda, its SDGs and the country's Perspective Plan for 2021-2041.***

For this vision of change to be achieved, Bangladesh will need to ensure that:

- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth is accelerated, with increased and equitable opportunities for decent jobs, and opportunities to improve employability and entrepreneurship particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized.
- Quality inclusive and gender- and shock-responsive social services are more available and equitably utilised; empowering and enabling people - especially the most vulnerable and marginalized - to develop to their full potential and lead their lives with respect and dignity.
- Bangladesh's institutions, eco-systems, and all people – especially the most vulnerable and marginalized – are more resilient to disasters, climate change and other shocks and stresses.
- A strengthened, and more coordinated, inclusive, and accountable governance system is in place at the national and local levels enabling all people to be empowered, engaged, and enjoy human rights, peace, justice, and security.
- Progress towards gender equality, eliminating gender-based discrimination and eradicating violence against women and girls is accelerated.

In the short-term, Bangladesh will need to grasp the opportunity of a rapid, coordinated, and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 to build better basic social services, employment, income, and economic activities and enhance social cohesion.

To ensure sustainability of the change pathway, a common set of structural and organizational change conditions is required. These include the following (for details see figure 1):

- Discriminatory social norms (gender, class, age) and intolerance are reduced.
- Greater respect for human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalised.
- A more enabling environment to incentivize green investment, and political will to monitor and ensure that such investments take place.
- Macro-economic and development policies, strategies and plans are evidence-informed, pro-poor, pro-environment, gender-responsive and risk-informed.
- The Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus is addressed.
- The poor and most vulnerable are empowered to participate, exercise their rights and benefit from the development process.
- The digital divide is comprehensively addressed.
- Financial resources (domestic and external) are mobilized and used efficiently and in an accountable manner to achieve the national vision and the SDGs.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

FIGURE 1: THEORY OF CHANGE

VISION OF CHANGE

The people in & Bangladesh- especially the most vulnerable & marginalized- contribute to and benefit equitably from integrated social, environmental & economic dimensions of sustainable & development under 8th Five-year Plan leading to achivement of the 2030 Agenda,its SDGs & PP 2041

PRE-CONDITIONS

sustainable & inclusive economic growth accelerated, with incresed & equitable opportunities for decent jobs, particularly for most vulnerable & marginalized

Quality inclusive & gender-responsive social services available & equitatably utilized; empowering & enabling people- especially the most vulnerable & marginnalized- to develop to their full potential & lead their lives with respect and dignity.

Its institutions, eco-system & all people, especially the most vulnerable & marginalized more resilent to disaster, climate change & other shocks & stresses

Strengthened & more coordinated, incusive & accountable governace system at the national & local levels enabling all people to be empowered, engaged & enjoy human rights, peace, justice & security

Ensure gender equality, eliminating gender-based discrimination and eradicating violence against women and girls

NEXT LEVEL PRE-CONDITIONS

- Diversified & resilient economy
- Pro-poor & inclusive economic growth promoted Accelerated investment & productivity
- Enhanced & improved infrastructure to support economic growth
- Increased tax- GDP ratio & fiscal revenue earning
- Reformed financial system for private & foreign investment
- 4th industrial revolution to render green, sustainable production & consumption
- Green growth opportunities accelerated
- Resilient, competitive & engaged private sector
- Resilient & engaged Employer's & Worker's organizations
- Improved access to legal, social protection & support services
- Labour & workplace rights & standards are applied
- Informal sector & vulnerable groups have improved access to legal, social protection & support services
- Relevant education & learning for 21st century employment
- Women's voice/ representation & gender parity in formal sector
- Digital connectivity promoted

- Inclusive, green and geder-responsive infrastructure and social services
- Investments in basic public services
- Enhanced demand for,access to and useof basic public social services
- Rights holders voices are listened to and accountability of duty bears are ensured
- Expanded, universal and prioritized social protection
- Strengthened regulatory frameworks,policies & programmes
- Quality disaggregated data for desiicion making.
- Accountable and effective PPP
- Expanded civic space, social movements and community mobilisation on gender equality Addressed digital gender gap

- Environment-friendly & risk-informed urban transition managed
- Gender-responsive polices & plans implemented
- Standing Order of Disaster implemented
- Communities participated in greener economy transition
- Sustainable natural resource base in place
- Sustainable industrial production using responsible & accountable practices
- Better protection of biodiversity & natural habitats including NRM
- Expanded corporate social responsity strategies to limit negative impact of infrastructure development
- Increased optional land use planning
- Sustainable use and protection of water resources
- Sustainable livelihood options, including good agricultural, fishing, and livestock practices
- Stronger use of technology and nature- based solutions for renewable energy
- Strengthened institutional capacity and governance mechanisms enviromenta law enforcement

- Accountable, transparent, responsible & participatory public services administration
- Meaningful & representative participation of all rights holders
- Accelerated decentralization of responsibilities & accountabilities
- Gender-responsive, equity-focused, non-discriminatory & human rights' respectful policies & practices for all
- Follw up on human rights violations allegations & those responsible held to accunt
- Improved rule of law & access to non-discriminatory justice
- Effective & functional anti-corruption institutions and measures
- A peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive society is promoted

- Reduced discriminatory social norms (gender, class,age) & intolerance
- Greator respect for human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable & marginalised
- Enabling environment & enhanced political will
- Macro-economic & all development policies, strategies & plans are evidence-informed, pro-poor,pro-environment,gender,- responsive & risk-informed
- Addressed Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus
- Poor & most vulnerable are empowered to participate, exercise their rights & benefit from the development process
- Digital divide is comprehensively addressed
- Financial resources (domestic and external) mobilized and used efficiently and in an accountable manner to achieve the national vision and the SDGs

2.2 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The 2022-2026 Cooperation Framework is structured around **five Strategic Priorities** identified from the analysis of the overarching Theory of Change as pillars where the UN system should concentrate its expertise to support Bangladesh to make transformational and accelerated progress in the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The Strategic Priorities are interrelated, mutually reinforcing and multisectoral: together offering the opportunity to accelerate development progress and contribute to achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

Under each of these Strategic Priority areas are a set of Outcomes, which are underpinned by a theory of change that articulates the pathway to overcome the key challenges and bottlenecks identified in the Common Country Analysis.

2.3 INTENDED DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

This Cooperation Framework is designed to directly respond to the sustainable development plan of the Government of Bangladesh, as outlined in the 8th Five-Year Plan towards the advancement of the 2030 Agenda in the country, and ultimately Vision 2041 and its Perspective Plan.

The Cooperation Framework priorities and intended results are aligned with recommendations from the 2018 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Bangladesh and will contribute to the implementation of many of the 178 supported recommendations related to the legal and general framework of implementation, universal and cross-cutting issues, civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, women's rights, and rights of other vulnerable groups and persons.

Photo : UNICEF Bangladesh

The Cooperation Framework is based on the United Nations' core programming principles and promotes an inclusive approach to development that underpins promotion and protection of human rights, building the resilience of national and local institutions, communities, and individuals, with a commitment to leave no one behind, gender equality and non-discrimination and other international standards and obligations.[21] A primary objective of the Cooperation Framework is to support and capacitate different levels of the government to fulfill the needs and aspirations of the people and to be accountable to them.

Recognizing their interrelated and mutually reinforcing nature, UN support will be provided under the five Strategic Priorities of the Cooperation Framework, through contributing to the achievement of a core set of time-bound Outcomes, as described in section 2.4 below.

[21] The United Nations' core programming principles are leaving no one behind, human rights-based approach to development, gender equality and women's empowerment, resilience, sustainability and accountability.

FIGURE 2: ALIGNMENT OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES WITH 8TH FIVE YEAR PLAN, SDGS AND PERSPECTIVE PLAN 2021-2041 STRATEGICS

Cooperation Framework Priorities	Strategic Priority 1: Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development	Strategic Priority 2: Equitable Human Development and Well-Being	Strategic Priority 3: Sustainable, Healthy and Resilient Environment	Strategic Priority 4: Transformative, Participatory and Inclusive Governance	Strategic Priority 5: Gender Equality and Reducing Gender-Based Violence: Empowering Women and Girls
8th FiveYear Plan Themes	✓Rapid recovery for COVID-19 to restore human health, confidence, employment, income, and economic activities. ✓GDP growth acceleration, employment generation and rapid poverty reduction. ✓A broad-based strategy of inclusiveness with a view to empowering every citizen to participate in full and benefit from the development process; and helping the poor and vulnerable with social protection- based income transfers.	✓Rapid recovery for COVID-19 to restore human health, confidence, employment, income, and economic activities. ✓A broad-based strategy of inclusiveness with a view to empowering every citizen to participate in full and benefit from the development process; and helping the poor and vulnerable with social protection- based income transfers. ✓Harnessing demographic dividend through evidence-based and relevant population policies surrounding well-being, namely health. ✓GDP growth acceleration, employment generation and rapid poverty reduction. ✓A sustainable development pathway that is resilient to disaster and climate change; entails sustainable use of natural resources; and successfully manages the inevitable urbanization transition ✓Human potentials unlocked with expanding access to quality, inclusive, resilient education, and skills development services.	✓A sustainable development pathway that is resilient to disaster and climate change; entails sustainable use of natural resources; and successfully manages the inevitable urbanization transition.	✓Rapid recovery for COVID-19 to restore human health, confidence, employment, income, and economic activities. ✓GDP growth acceleration, employment generation and rapid poverty reduction. ✓A broad-based strategy of inclusiveness with a view to empowering every citizen to participate in full and benefit from the development process; and helping the poor and vulnerable with social protection- based income transfers. ✓A sustainable development pathway that is resilient to disaster and climate change; entails sustainable use of natural resources; and successfully manages the inevitable urbanization transition. ✓Development and improvement of critical institutions necessary to lead the economy to UMIC status.	✓Rapid recovery for COVID-19 to restore human health, confidence, employment, income, and economic activities. ✓GDP growth acceleration, employment generation and rapid poverty reduction. ✓A broad-based strategy of inclusiveness with a view to empowering every citizen to participate in full and benefit from the development process; and helping the poor and vulnerable with social protection- based income transfers.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 17	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 17	2, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17	4, 5, 10, 16, 17
Perspective Plan 2021-2041 Strategies	✓A country with zero poverty. ✓Sustainable agriculture for food security and rural development in a high-income country. ✓Industrialization, export diversification, and employment generation in a futuristic world order. ✓Managing the urban transition to a high-income economy	✓Human development through quality education, universal health care and harnessing the demographic dividend. ✓Food Safety, nutrition and sustainable agriculture for food security and rural development in a high-income country. ✓Managing the urban transition to a high-income economy.	✓Sustainable power and energy for a high-income country. ✓Managing the urban transition to a high-income economy. ✓Ensuring sustainable environment, creating a climate resilient nation in a dynamic delta, and unlocking the potential of a blue economy.	✓A country with zero poverty. ✓Human development through quality education and harnessing the demographic dividend. ✓Sustainable agriculture for food security and rural development in a high-income country. ✓Industrialization, export diversification, and employment generation in a futuristic world order. ✓Sustainable power and energy for a high-income country. ✓Creating an innovation economy for Bangladesh through fostering ICT and scientific research. ✓Building transport and communication infrastructure for sustained rapid growth. ✓Managing the urban transition to a high-income economy. ✓Ensuring sustainable environment, creating a climate resilient nation in a dynamic delta, and unlocking the potential of a blue economy.	✓Human development through quality education and harnessing the demographic dividend (focus includes reducing gender gap in tertiary education, facilitating women's participation in technical education and skills training) ✓Industrialization, export diversification, and employment generation. ✓Enhancing women employment and bringing more women into the labour force a combination of measures

Photo : Farmer Tanjila Akter in her vegetable Garden in Patuakhali

2.4. COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Under each of the five Strategic Priorities, measurable Outcome results have been defined. The United Nations system will contribute to the achievement of these outcomes through partnerships with the Government ministries and agencies, State-owned enterprises, banks and financial institutions, actors in the CMSME ecosystem, business associations, individual business houses, workers organizations, technical and vocational training institutions, non-government, and community-based organizations, along with bilateral and multilateral agencies and other development actors. A special premium would be placed on South-South Cooperation (SSC) based partnerships, as the Government of Bangladesh attaches high importance to SSC as an effective mechanism for development cooperation among the southern countries. [22]

Photo : IFAD Bangladesh

[22] South-South Cooperation - Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations. (2021). Retrieved 7 April 2021, from https://bdun.org/bangladesh-priorities-at-the-un/south-south-cooperation

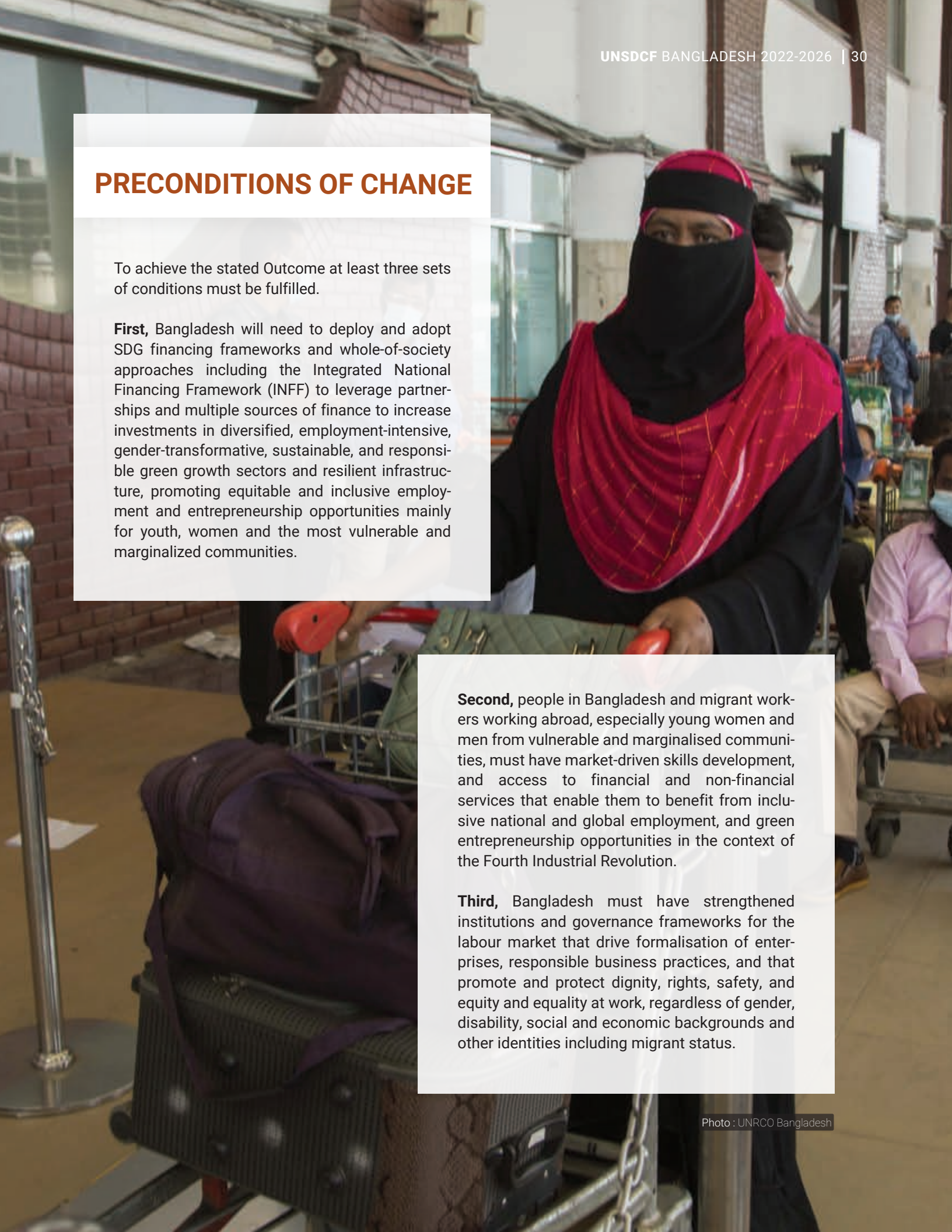
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:
INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OUTCOME 1: By 2026, more people in Bangladesh, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized from all gender and social groups, and those from lagging districts benefit from sustainable livelihood and decent work opportunities resulting from responsible, inclusive, sustainable, green[23] , and equitable economic development.

Bangladesh's Perspective Plan 2021 -2041 defines a long-term vision of a poverty-free, inclusive, and prosperous Bangladesh, with economic growth, decent employment, and livelihoods fundamental to this objective. The Government has also stated its ambition of reaching gender parity in the labour force by 2041. To achieve this vision, the 8th Five-Year Plan must ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is inclusive, gender- responsive and environmentally friendly, and that it creates more green and decent jobs. To do so, it must reverse the current trend of lower employment growth in comparison to economic growth and enhance economic opportunities for women. Of particular concern are the manufacturing and construction sectors where employment growth has further slowed down or stagnated on top of overall low labour productivity, despite growing value added. Second, the concentration of jobs in the informal sector will need to be reversed with greater formalization of the economy, expansion of opportunities for decent work, and greater protection of the informal labour force with more youth, women, persons with disabilities, and people from marginalised communities. Third, clean production and consumption will need to be entrenched in the country's growth strategy. Fourth, the skills training system must be rendered market oriented. A comprehensive and robust database, and monitoring and evaluation system for the country's economic performance and employment indicators will bring enormous benefits.

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

[23] Green economic development is aligned with the concept of green growth as detailed in the 8th Five Year Plan. It includes (a) Integrating environmental costs into the Macroeconomic Framework; (b) Implementing the Delta Plan to build resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change; (c) Reduce air and water pollution; (d) Removal of fuel subsidies; (e) Adoption of green tax on fossil fuel consumption; (f) Taxation of emission from industrial units; and (g) Prevention of surface water pollution. 8th Five Year Plan, Page lii (Executive Summary)



PRECONDITIONS OF CHANGE

To achieve the stated Outcome at least three sets of conditions must be fulfilled.

First, Bangladesh will need to deploy and adopt SDG financing frameworks and whole-of-society approaches including the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) to leverage partnerships and multiple sources of finance to increase investments in diversified, employment-intensive, gender-transformative, sustainable, and responsible green growth sectors and resilient infrastructure, promoting equitable and inclusive employment and entrepreneurship opportunities mainly for youth, women and the most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Second, people in Bangladesh and migrant workers working abroad, especially young women and men from vulnerable and marginalised communities, must have market-driven skills development, and access to financial and non-financial services that enable them to benefit from inclusive national and global employment, and green entrepreneurship opportunities in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Third, Bangladesh must have strengthened institutions and governance frameworks for the labour market that drive formalisation of enterprises, responsible business practices, and that promote and protect dignity, rights, safety, and equity and equality at work, regardless of gender, disability, social and economic backgrounds and other identities including migrant status.

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

To contribute to the promotion of investment in inclusive, employment-intensive and environment- friendly green growth opportunities for all, the UN will support the Government in the formulation and implementation of policies and enabling environment, along with institutional strengthening, to mobilize domestic and foreign investment in the Bangladesh economy including through progressive taxation addressing post-COVID and LDC graduation challenges. To support these efforts, in cooperation with international financial institutions and other key development actors, assistance will also be provided to the Government by the UN for establishing and implementing an SDG financing governance mechanism including both public and private stakeholders, which pays specific attention to leaving no-one behind and gender equality in line with the 8th Five-Year Plan and its 'whole of society' approach. This will include an Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF) which will provide the framework to mobilize both public and private resources for specific development priorities. The approach will be twofold: on one hand there will be support to strengthen and coordinate a high level governance mechanism, assessment of suitability of existing financing instruments and related policy advocacy; on the other one there will be technical support and transparent knowledge management to expand and codify a broader pipeline of SDG-aligned investments that can expand the selection of projects eligible for SDG-aligned financing products by existing ecosystem players such as International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The instruments through which the process will be initiated will be the update of the Development Finance Assessment and of the Financing Strategy.

In order to achieve gender parity in the labour force by 2041, multiple policy measures need to be put into place. These include ensuring legal protection and reforming discriminatory laws and regulations; furthering women's financial inclusion and access to property and other productive resources; promoting women's entrepreneurship through leveraging e-commerce and digital marketing; accelerating training in employability skills for women; addressing women's unpaid care work burden; strengthening collective voice and representation of women and others. Support will, therefore, be provided to the Government to develop and implement a national strategy in line with the INFF and the strong emphasis of the 8th Five- Year Plan on increasing women's participation in the workforce.

Photo : ILO Bangladesh

Manufacturing growth averaged 12.3 per cent during the 7th Five Year Plan, making it a principal driver of growth acceleration. Little of this growth can be credited to foreign direct investment, which has averaged less than one per cent of GDP over the last two decades, indicating an opportunity to attract more investment by modernizing manufacturing sectors. The UN will offer technical assistance and guidance for selective foreign direct investment and manufacturing policies to mobilize more foreign investments. Considering that CMSMEs account for 40 per cent of the country's manufacturing outputs, they are a major stakeholder to achieve both SDG financing and decent work aspirations. Hence, the adoption of technologies and innovative business models to improve productivity, resilience, and sustainability of local CMSMEs operating in informal and formal setups will be a priority of the UN.

This will open up new opportunities for the provision of online services, promote export diversification, boost efficiency and growth in manufacturing, improve competition in the financial sector, increase access to market-relevant information, and increase market access for CMSMEs. Special emphasis will be given to the formalisation of informal enterprises owned by women and youth. This will include support to strengthen the functional institutional structures and processes to effectively implement the Government's Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Policy 2019 and Industrial Policy 2021 and organize institutionalised training and exposure for the CMSME entrepreneurs on the use of digital technologies in their business systems. Adequate skills training for women and youth will be augmented so that they can effectively respond to business opportunities that may arise. To complement this, support will be provided for capacity building to strengthen the value chain and market linkages for CMSMEs, including those operating informally, enabling them to benefit from the potential cross-border and digital trade facilitation opportunities. Additionally, to boost impact and financing opportunities fintech solutions and digital innovations for local supply chains will be promoted via capacity building, technology innovation piloting and policy reforms.

To ensure the link between policies, coordination mechanisms, and solutions implemented on the ground, the UN will support strengthening of innovative financing and operational modalities along with institutional capacities for selection and adoption of technologies to develop resilient and gender-sensitive infrastructure – particularly digital infrastructure – to reduce the economic impact of shocks and stresses, including climate-induced ones.

Along with this approach for sustainable business development, the UN will support the development of employability skills aligned with inclusive, green, and equitable job creation as well as emerging trends such as the new skills required by technological development and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In this regard, accelerating and expanding opportunities for more people, especially young women, and men from vulnerable and marginalised communities, to access market-driven skills development and financial and non-financial services will be a focus for the UN. This will include support for institutionalised skills training systems, strengthening coordination mechanisms between the private sector and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions to provide inclusive, gender-responsive and market-driven lifelong learning, skills development and on-the-job training, as well as establishing innovative modalities to promote investment in TVET systems and institutions to be able to provide transferable skills relevant for the future of work. Investment in skills development to modernize the agricultural sector, and to incentivize rural youth and women working in the sector will be prioritized. Support will also be provided for the development of a mechanism to assess the skills needed in major destination countries for labour migration and a formalised system for recognition of skills of Bangladeshi workers in these countries.

Photo : ILO Bangladesh

Complementing this approach will be a focus on strategies that allow young people of all genders, social groups, people with disabilities, returnees, migrants, and other vulnerable persons to pursue entrepreneurship and employment. A focus will be on the sectors with the highest potential for green jobs and on capacity building initiatives in digital and financial literacy, worker skills and managerial capabilities, along with promoting business to business linkages and facilitating access to finance and market counselling. To ensure young women's equal access to opportunities, institutional barriers to young women's participation will be identified and addressed. Support will be provided to the Government to design and roll-out employment- intensive investment programmes promoting decent employment opportunities for these population groups. In collaboration with youth-centred community-based organizations, the UN will promote volunteer initiatives for young people that provide exposure to work opportunities and sustainable life and livelihood skills learning. At the same time, the UN will also support initiatives that empower and build the capacity of individuals and organizations - including volunteer-involving organizations - of young people, women, and vulnerable groups to meaningfully participate in policy making related to employment and livelihoods.

With a key strategy to decent work being enterprise formalization, the UN will promote the adoption of financial and non-financial incentives, regulations and institutional innovations, along with awareness-raising on its benefits, with a particular emphasis on enterprises owned by rural women, returnee migrants, people with disabilities, others who are vulnerable including people living in districts lagging behind.

Responsible business promotion and regulation will complement policy innovation, financing mechanisms, MSMEs capacity building, productivity improvement and employability skill development. The UN will collaborate to improve the capacities of public and private sector organizations to promote and regulate responsible business and decent work practices at work both in-country and abroad.

Promoting and supporting the development of an enabling environment for responsible business conduct and decent work practices both in-country and abroad in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and Women's Empowerment Principles will be a focus for UN cooperation. This will include improving institutional capacities of the public and private sector to promote the awareness of both employers and employees on the policies and labour market governance framework, including the rights of employees; offering guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community; as well as strengthening the institutions responsible for labour market inspection to promote effective compliance with policies and legislative provisions for human resource management in enterprises.

PARTNERSHIPS

Towards the shared objective of ensuring that more people, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, benefit from sustainable livelihoods, lifelong learning and decent work opportunities resulting from inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economic growth, the United Nations system will collaborate with a wide range of organizations. These will include Government ministries and agencies, State-owned enterprises, banks and financial institutions, actors in the CMSME ecosystem, business associations, individual business houses, workers organizations, technical and vocational training institutions, non-government, and community-based organizations, along with bilateral and multilateral agencies, and other development actors. It will also engage in South-South cooperation. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:
EQUITABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

Outcome 2: By 2026, more people, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized, have improved access to and utilization of quality, inclusive, gender- and shock-responsive, universal, and resilient social protection, social safety-net and social services.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh witnessed significant gains across all key indicators for social protection and basic social services. Having lifted almost 19 million people out of multidimensional poverty between 2014 and 2019, the country was on track to halve poverty between 2015 and 2030. At the same time, while Bangladesh has a potential window of opportunity to benefit from a "demographic dividend", higher levels of public investment in social services such as education, health, nutrition, protection of children and employment are needed to ensure these benefits are fully realized, particularly for marginalized groups. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the poorest and most vulnerable with the greatest severity. Gender differences of the impact such as the increase of unpaid care and domestic work have also been observed, leaving women, girls worse off. The increased needs that have resulted from the pandemic are to be addressed the current social protection and social services provisions. There are important lessons to be applied in building sustainable and norms-driven social protection floors in Bangladesh based on the principles of universality of protection, sustainability, social solidarity, and social dialogue that would curtail the significant exclusion error seen under the current social protection scheme. The pandemic has demonstrated the criticality of cross-sectoral linkages and the need for an agile and responsive, data-driven social protection system to inform evidence-based policy-analysis/reform and prioritization.

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

PRECONDITIONS OF CHANGE

To achieve the stated Outcome at least three sets of conditions must be fulfilled.

First, actors must have strengthened systems and capacities, and be more accountable to deliver and partner for quality social protection and basic social services (health, nutrition, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and learning, child and youth protection, social protection, and migration) in urban and rural areas and across the lifecycle.

Women, men, children, adolescents, sexual minorities, and persons with disabilities, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized, must be empowered to utilize social protection and basic social services, so that they enjoy lives of respect and dignity.

Policy and regulatory frameworks enabling greater access to and utilization of inclusive, gender-responsive and resilient basic social protection and basic social services must be strengthened.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

Towards empowering people, especially the most vulnerable, to effectively engage, access, and utilize quality social protection, social safety-net and quality basic social services that are universal, gender-responsive and resilient, the UN system will prioritise a range of strategic contributions and partnerships across health, nutrition, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, protection of children and youth, migration services and in comprehensive social protection, while taking into account the lessons learned and consequences of COVID-19 on services and vulnerabilities. To support Bangladesh's effort to make social protection, social safety-nets and basic social services more resilient and shock-responsive, the UN will support inter-sectoral efforts to coordinate whole-of-society approaches, including leveraging existing and strengthening linkages in line with the principles of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

The slow progress in implementing the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS)[24] and the stagnation of funding allocated to social protection-related income transfers to the poor and vulnerable has been recognized by the 8th Five-Year plan as barriers to be rapidly addressed both as a response to offset the negative effects of COVID-19 but also to ensure greater poverty reduction per unit of growth. To support universal access to shock-responsive social protection, the UN will support coordination efforts and advocate for adequate budgetary allocations aligned with the national life-cycle based approach for key social protection sectors' policies (health, food and nutrition, education) primarily focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalized, including children and women from poor families, migrants, persons with disabilities, those discriminated on the basis of their gender, tea garden communities, densely populated urban slum dwellers, ethnic and minority groups, as well as people living with diseases. It will support the generation and integration of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic into the provision of social protection, identifying the 'missing middle' and 'new poor' in urban areas, considering the demographic pattern of urban Bangladesh in the future. Resources and expertise will be provided to generate and manage quality and disaggregated data, focusing on vulnerable groups, along with technical assistance for the integration of climate or disaster-related policies into social protection policy frameworks. This includes an urban social protection strategy focusing on the in-country climate-induced migrating populations.

[24] Government of Bangladesh January 2020: Mid-term Review on Implementation of the National Social Security Strategy

As a key element of building back better, the Government will be supported in developing a single electronic registry of social service beneficiaries based on consensus-driven criteria as well as suitable social insurance measures informed by gender-responsive fiscal space analysis. The UN will partner with civil society and private sector actors to enhance community participation and mechanisms for participatory decision-making, monitoring, and grievance redress, introducing National Social Insurance Scheme (NSIS) with the provision of both contributory and non-contributory social insurance, and reform in the pension system. The UN will pay particular attention to women's, the elderly and migrants and returnees' access to quality social services and social protection. The UN will continue to advocate for other social security benefits for most vulnerable people working in precarious conditions. The UN support will also be positioned within the framework of the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific.

Photo : WHO Bangladesh

The 8th Five Year Plan emphasizes the need for strengthening of the healthcare system, which showed significant performance gaps in physical facilities, access to healthcare and availability of the quality human resources for health. COVID-19 has also dramatically reinforced the need for a universal health coverage system with adequate financial risk protection systems, particularly by increasing public financing for health; strengthening public private partnerships; promoting innovative health financing mechanisms; implementing policy and strategic interventions to harness efficiency gains in health.

In response the UN will strategically focus on a systems-building approach following primary health care principles to support the Government to achieve universal health coverage. This will include assistance for reviewing national strategies and policies aiming to make the system, especially at the primary health care level more resilient and delivering better quality services. The expanded use of digital solutions for health care will be promoted, including the development of an integrated data warehouse for improved decision-making and telemedicine. The UN will advocate for adequate budget allocation and increasing fiscal space for health to ensure universal health coverage for all regardless of gender, age, race, geographic location, social class, or economic status. This would include sexual and reproductive health focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable, women and youth and strengthening of the community health system through evidence-based scale-up of the essential service package combined with a social accountability system, community engagement and demand generation. The UN will also work towards strengthening capacities and coordination on immunization, improving accountability of governing bodies, and enhancing the capacity of government actors at the national and sub-national levels to adopt a human rights-based approach in drug prevention and treatment. Through public private partnerships, the UN will support improving government health facilities at district and lower levels and public, private and NGO facilities located in urban areas.

Photo : UNICEF Bangladesh

To support achieving the national goals and the SDGs on education, the UN will support creating an enabling environment where all children, adolescents and youth have equitable access to early learning, quality education, skills development, school health and nutrition, and lifelong learning opportunities. If requested, it will provide technical advice for policy planning and implementation and conduct periodic surveys, study and research, and evaluation to generate data and evidence supporting decision-making processes at the national level. The focus will be on addressing learning poverty through ensuring access to multiple pathways, developing learning and teaching contents to ensure students are actively engaged and in control of their own learning and teachers are incentivized and equipped with strategies and methods that promote higher-order thinking and skills acquisition, including non-cognitive skills, and have access to skills-based assessment systems. The UN will strengthen and scale up platforms for sustainably partnering with children, adolescents and youth along with their parents or caregivers through innovative communication approaches aimed at ensuring education and learning is safe, promoting cultural peace, non-violence and tolerance, transforming harmful gender social norms and increasing services utilization, including in emergencies.

Ensuring children and youth's well-being and enabling them to reach their full potential will also require strengthening the regulatory framework, increasing access to social services and enhancing its workforce, mainstreaming child protection, within the education system and harnessing the financial and human resources of the health and nutrition sector. The systemic integration of prevention initiatives regarding violence and harmful practices – including gender-based violence and child marriage – will be based on strong inter-sectoral coordination. Behavioural change communication and the engagement of adolescents as agents of change – within the scope of the National Adolescent Strategy – will also aim to shift negative social and gender norms, and harmful practices. The UN will provide children with access to remedy and redress for violations, as well as a continuum of care that includes restorative justice, reintegration and/or alternative care support. The UN will support the expansion of the social welfare system with a focus on strengthening the social service workforce. The UN will also support the education system to ensure child protection policies and procedures are in place in schools to detect and refer cases of abuse and violence. It will invest in child protection training for school counsellors, teachers and other educational staff, and address violence in and around schools through comprehensive local and national social and behavioural change interventions. The early detection and referral of child protection cases to and by health professionals and the delivery of positive parenting programmes within schools and primary health care

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

facilities will be promoted by the UN system. Concurrently, support for legal and policy reforms related to child protection that are harmonized with international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) will be provided. The UN will advocate for increased access to emergency protection services, including shelters and social protection measures, particularly for women, children, youth, the elderly, sexual minorities, the third gender, and persons with disabilities fleeing violence, and work towards strengthening social services to respond to the protection needs. The UN will foster investment in community-based support on mental health and psychosocial support services and carry out awareness-raising campaigns on birth registration and the harmful consequences of violence against women, adolescent youth and children as a harmful practice that has long-term development impacts.

Photo : FAO Bangladesh

To prevent and treat malnutrition in all its forms, including in emergencies, the UN will contribute to ensuring that the availability, access and utilization of quality, gender-responsive, equitable nutrition services, care practices and diets are improved across the life cycle in urban and rural areas. Within this context, the UN will provide technical support to strengthen the policy environment and regulatory framework of nutrition, including provision of essential nutrition services, accessibility and affordability of diversified diets, food safety regulations and nutrition -sensitive social protection, and advocate for adequate financial allocation and multi-sectoral coordination, collaboration and integrative programming. The UN will thereby technically support relevant stakeholders to strengthen their capacity, leadership and accountability to provide quality, equitable services and implement multi-sectoral nutrition programs for the reduction of malnutrition in all its forms at the national and sub-national levels. Generation and harmonization of data and research will be key for evidence-based policymaking. The UN will contribute to ensuring that people, the poor and vulnerable, enjoy greater availability, access and utilization of adequate, equitable, nutrition- specific and multi-sectoral nutrition services and interventions. The UN will provide technical support to scale up coverage, outreach, and quality of nutrition interventions and early childhood and development services. The Government service delivery structures will be linked to a community-based approach to enhance demand for and coverage of nutrition-specific and-sensitive services, including integration of nutrition into Primary Health Care. The UN will ensure to work across sectors by promoting nutrition-sensitive and food security specific social protection, strengthening linkages between nutrition-relevant sectors, fostering private sector partnerships, media relations, and generating evidence to inform advocacy and policy, and strengthening resilience to shocks and

Photo : UN Women Bangladesh

Tackling food insecurity in highly vulnerable populations and underserved areas is a Government priority and will be highlighted through improved social protection and basic service provision through safe and robust supply chains as well as support for agricultural modernization and diversification. Given that women constitute almost 60 per cent of the agricultural labour in Bangladesh, a gender-lens will be applied to support to modernization and diversification of agriculture. Challenges with the targeting of programmes and services continue to negatively affect food security for large numbers of urban and rural poor, with targeting system limitations evident during the Government's COVID-19 emergency relief programming. The UN aims to assist in rapidly building capacity and systems to ensure that food security is addressed as a human right and a basic humanitarian need, and as well into the recovery process for affected communities. Simultaneously, support for sustainable intensification and diversification of agricultural production through agriculture and food system modernization, green production and food fortification will be prioritized. Agriculture remains a main driver of economic growth, however, it continues to be a source of land degradation and the uncontrolled use of toxic chemicals contributes to environmental pollution, posing a health risk to producers and the general population.[25] The UN will employ a systems approach to ensure food remains safe across the supply chain, from field to consumer plates. UN agencies will work with relevant government bodies to introduce green production technologies, good agricultural practices for efficiency and food safety, diversification for improved diets and climate-smart agriculture policies and programmes. The UN will work with a range of partners to promote sustainable food production and leveraging of the private sector's responsibilities in food systems.

[25] A number of notable initiatives by the Ministry of Agriculture are underway to counter these trends. These include developing the Bangladesh Good Agriculture Practices for pesticide and fertilizer usage including the use of Integrated Pest Management and bio pesticides, research on digital pest management systems and bio-engineering and Integrated Cropping Systems.

Improving practices and the quality of WASH services to fully realize health and wellbeing outcomes for the poorest cuts across all elements of the Outcome. The UN's contribution will be through technical assistance to the Government to strengthen the regulatory framework of the sector, institutional reforms, sector wide monitoring including the water quality monitoring system and sustainability service provision through comprehensive need-based capacity building plans. The UN will also provide advice and strengthen capacities to incorporate emerging issues such as climate change adaptation with climate resilient WASH facilities, faecal sludge management, market-based sanitation, gender and disability, and disaster risk reduction into WASH programmes. It will work jointly with the Government to encourage private sector, local entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to participate in the WASH business in line with the revised pro-poor strategy 2020. The UN will also support strategies related to WASH in institutions by continuing the advocacy with the Government for prioritizing WASH services and waste management in health care facilities and the necessary budget allocation for operation and maintenance of WASH in schools' facilities meeting the national standards and monitoring their functionality for the improvement of the learning environment for a gender and equitable access to quality education. In addition, the UN will work with the Government to encourage and support use of new and innovative financing mechanisms including blended financing (involving bilateral grants, loans and other funding sources), south-south financing, microfinance models, trust funds, and the use of cash transfers for WASH to foster the access to affordable and resilient WASH facilities towards SDG 6.

Photo : UNICEF Bangladesh

To improve the access of migrants and returnees, including women and other vulnerable migrants and returnees, to gender responsive, inclusive quality migration and protection services and social protection in migration and upon return. The UN's contribution will focus on providing technical assistance in creating an enabling policy environment which gender-responsive and accountable and work towards strengthening institutional and operational migration and protection service delivery systems through providing capacity enhancement support and direct resource support wherever necessary. In order to create for demand for quality migration and protection services, UN will also contribute in building community mechanisms which create demands for services and also ensure access to services.

The UN will strengthen and expand multi-sectoral social and behavioural change communication initiatives which promote positive and non-discriminatory behaviours in health, food security, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, child protection, early childhood development, aged care, and reduce harmful practices, along with promoting the uptake and utilization of services.

PARTNERSHIPS

Pursuing more equitable human development and wellbeing through ensuring that people, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized, have improved access to and utilization of quality, inclusive, gender- and shock-responsive, universal and resilient social protection and basic services requires the engagement and commitment across all public institutions and sectors, along with the private sector and civil society.

The UN system's contribution to the Outcome will therefore involve partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders including: national and local governments; line Ministries and their departments and directorates along with other government agencies at national and sub-national levels; development partners; professional associations; financial institutions; training institutes and academia; civil society and community-based organizations including those representing rights and views of marginalized groups; grass-root organizations that represent people from the left behind groups; public sector service providers; private sector service providers and producers; national, regional and global issue-based partnership movements; bilateral and multilateral agencies and other development actors; along with individuals, families and communities themselves. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:
SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT

Outcome 3: By 2026, ecosystems are healthier, and all people, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized in both rural and urban settings, benefit from and contribute to, in a gender-responsive manner, a cleaner and more resilient environment, an enriched natural resource base, low carbon development, and are more prosperous and resilient to climate change, shocks and disasters.

At the centre of the country's 2041 Vision, is ensuring a sustainable environment, creating a climate-resilient nation in a dynamic delta, and unlocking the potential of a blue economy. Through the 8th Five Year Plan, the Government has committed to a sustainable development pathway that is resilient to disaster and climate change, sustainable use of natural resources, and successful management of urbanization that is both human- and environmentally friendly. Complementing this are the resources mobilized and strategies implemented under the Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP 2100), the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM 2021-2025) and the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD 2019), the National Action Plan for Clean Cooking (2020 – 2030), the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) 2009-2018, the Climate Change and Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) 2013, that aim to improve long-term vulnerability to disaster and climate change impacts, including water management, water security, and enhance wetland ecosystem conservation.

A wide range of public and private Institutions in Bangladesh play a key role as enablers and have undertaken a long-term process towards improving ecosystem health, climate, and disaster risk management. However, more support is needed for institutions to adopt and implement whole of society, integrated and forward-thinking approaches. At the same time, individuals and communities are powerful agents for changes towards a healthier environment and resilience to climate change and disasters. They need access to resources and opportunities and an enabling environment to create local solutions and adopt positive behaviours.

The post-COVID era presents an opportunity to reset the economy on a path towards green[26] growth. The potential is there for civil society, private sector and government actors to work together to put the country on a path of sustainable and green development by providing efficient oversight functions for environmental policies and legal framework, identifying financing solutions, and prioritizing green investments, including low carbon and circular economic systems, pollution and chemical management and nature-based solutions.

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

[26] Green growth refers to a growth strategy that seeks to minimize local soil, water, and air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, loss of biodiversity and other negative environmental impacts of productive processes. It also ensures that producers, production processes and supply chains are climate resilient.

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

PRECONDITIONS OF CHANGE

To achieve the stated Outcome at least three sets of conditions must be fulfilled.

First, all people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, especially women, children, sexual minorities[27], and persons with disabilities must benefit from healthier ecosystems and living environment, have fair access to necessary resources (resilient infrastructure and basic services, information, finance, climate services, capacity, and technology) and must be empowered to adopt sustainable consumption behaviours and lead in climate action.

Second, institutional capacities for environmental planning, regulation, monitoring and enforcement must be reinforced with more foresight, innovation, evidence, technology, finance, gender-responsiveness, partnerships and whole of society approaches to improve environmental and ecosystem health and manage dynamic risks, such as climate change, disaster, pandemics, and humanitarian crises.

Third, civil society, private sector and government actors must work together to put the country on a path of inclusive, equitable, sustainable and green development by providing efficient oversight functions for environmental policies and legal frameworks, identifying financing solutions, and prioritizing green investments (low carbon and circular economic systems, pollution and chemical management and nature-based solutions).

[27] According to the 8th Five Year Plan sexual minorities include people leaving with HIV/AIDS, female and male sex workers and transgender people. Page 768.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

The UN system will focus on a core set of strategic contributions and partnerships towards protecting and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity losses, stimulating more sustainable consumption and production in Bangladesh and the sustainable management of food production systems, and enhancing resilience to climate change, shocks, and disasters, derived from the Preconditions of Change.

To enable more people to manage ecosystems wisely and pollute less and for those most vulnerable to effectively adapt and respond to climate change and disaster, the UN will provide technical assistance and funding to enhance access of the most marginalised to basic services, resilient infrastructure, information, finance and technology to build local resilience to climate change, shocks and disasters, as well as protection against wildlife and forest crimes. These will complement the interventions outlined in Outcome 2, for strengthening social protection, social safety nets and the WASH sector. The UN will support locally led and forecast-based anticipatory action approaches at the nexus of development and humanitarian programming to sustainably build resilience and address the underlying causes of vulnerability, while reinforcing national systems and capacities. For rural communities, technical support will be provided for on-farm approaches to increase resilience (climate-smart agriculture, agroecology, and sustainable fishing, forestry, and livestock practices). Off-farm approaches such as market driven alternative livelihoods, low cost technology and skills development in disaster and climate hotspots will be promoted. In both on-farm and off-farm interventions most disaster vulnerable groups, especially women, will be prioritised. Additionally, analytical support will be given to understand the impacts of climate-related diseases. The UN will also enable behaviour change towards conservation, preservation and promotion of natural resources and biodiversity including cultural and natural heritages, reducing pollution, and sustainable consumption and production by increasing awareness and facilitating leadership opportunities within communities and government at all levels.

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

To build institutional capacity to improve ecosystem health and better manage dynamic risks, the UN will continue to support government and key non-state actors to coordinate and implement innovative, whole-of-society and gender-responsive initiatives for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and ecosystem health management. Support will be provided to improve disaster risk management to protect development gains, and for building financial and programmatic frameworks and forecast-based readiness actions that enable actors at the local and national levels to prepare for and respond to shocks and minimize disruption of services. With the climate-related disaster risks in Bangladesh such as floods, tropical cyclone, drought, and heatwaves often transboundary in nature, the UN will facilitate regional co-operation, including through two inter-governmental platforms – the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclone and the South Asia Climate Outlook Forum.

Support will be provided for restoring degraded natural resources, including cleaning up polluted air, water, and land. The UN will further provide monitoring data, data models, research analysis, and training for generating evidence to improve decision-making. This includes support for sex, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADDD) and early warning systems that predict and capture the impacts of shocks, disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation. Information systems that monitor displaced populations, natural resources (soil, water, forest), and land use change will be enhanced or developed as needed.

Integrated policy support will be provided to improve the implementation, enforcement, compliance and coherence of both new and existing Government policies, programmes, and strategies. This policy support will include more explicit consideration of the social protection needs of displaced and migrant communities affected by climate change and disasters, especially women and children and others who are vulnerable, including the elderly. The Government will further be supported to improve effectiveness of resettlement and relocation schemes. Normative support will be provided to the country for meeting its SDG's, nationally determined contributions, and other national and international commitments related to environment, climate, and disaster, and for local authorities on conducting Voluntary Local Reviews to enhance vertical integration of policy actions and strengthen reporting against progress towards SDGs. Institutional capacity will be strengthened to access environmental and climate finance opportunities, including co-development of strategies and projects with UN support.

The UN will utilise its convening and knowledge brokering capacities to support civil society, private sector, and the Government to form stronger partnerships, identify finance solutions, and prioritize investments for environmentally sustainable, inclusive, and green development (this will be linked to the INFF under Outcome 1) that are also gender-responsive. The UN will facilitate and promote cleaner energy and environment friendly solutions and investments, and provide technical assistance to leverage innovative financing solutions, policy provisions and support mechanisms across all levels and for multiple stakeholders, including women. This will be complemented by initiatives under Outcome 1 where the UN will promote the development of skills, including for culture and creative industries, that improve the employability, entrepreneurship capacities, and leadership roles of youth and women in the green economy. Additionally, the UN will provide support to the Government and private sector for long-term, low carbon, and resilient urbanization planning that is sensitive to displaced populations and other vulnerable people, especially for pollution reduction, waste management, and land use planning.

Photo : FAO Bangladesh

The UN will co-develop strategies with the Government and the private sector that make ecosystems healthier and mitigate climate change. Specifically, nature-based solutions that improve the country's natural resource capital while also improving ecosystem goods and services, livelihoods and quality of life will be identified and prioritized. Technical support for developing approaches for integrated management of water resources, and forest, riverine and wetland ecosystems will be prioritized. The UN will make available its wide-ranging expertise to support the co-development with the Government and the private sector of climate mitigation strategies and action plans that support the country's efforts to reduce national emissions, including from transport sector, and adapt to the impacts of climate

PARTNERSHIPS

Recognising that a whole-of-society approach is a prerequisite for a sustainable, healthy environment and resilience building to disasters and climate change impacts in Bangladesh, the UN will collaborate with a wide and diverse range of partners to jointly contribute to the achievement of this Outcome. Partners will include government at national, regional and local levels, city corporations, international and national NGOs, CSO's, research institutions, private sector, financial institutions, workers and employers' organizations, education institutions, women and youth-led initiatives and movements, along with other bilateral and multilateral agencies, donors, and South-South Cooperation (SSC) partners. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

In addition, the UN will significantly invest in optimising and leveraging its role as a convener and facilitator of inclusive partnerships between public and private institutions and communities towards the common goals of sustainable use of natural resources, minimising the risks of climate change and enhancing individual and systems resilience to disaster and climate change.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: TRANSFORMATIVE, PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

Outcome 4: By 2026, more people, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from more equitable, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, participatory, accountable governance and justice, in a peaceful and tolerant society governed by the rule of law.

Despite progress, many people in Bangladesh are not yet empowered to meaningfully participate and effectively claim their rights in governance systems, and access gender-responsive, equitable and non-discriminatory justice system and public services. This is recognized in the 8th Five-Year Plan which has as a core theme a broad-based governance strategy of inclusiveness to empower every citizen to participate in full and benefit from the development process with clear priorities to strengthen governance systems. The 8th Five-Year Plan, therefore, seeks to ensure the opportunity for all rights holders to have the space and voice to claim their rights and contribute to local or national development priorities.

Photo : UN Women Bangladesh

PRECONDITIONS OF CHANGE

To achieve the stated Outcome at least three sets of conditions must be fulfilled.

First, people, especially the most vulnerable in the districts of Bangladesh which are lagging behind, must be empowered and benefit from an enabling environment to participate in and claim their rights effectively in governance systems, and to have access to a gender-responsive, equitable, non-discriminatory justice system.

Second, public institutions, local government and other quasi-formal institutions and normative and policy frameworks must be more gender-responsive, accountable, and governed by the rule of law.

Third, civil society organizations at all levels, especially district CSO networks, oversight bodies, institutions, trade unions & employers organizations, and the private sector must be able to participate meaningfully in decision-making and promote, protect, and fulfil human rights, fight against discrimination, prevent violent extremism, incitement to violence, hate speech and misinformation, reinforce structural changes, community engagement and building of resilience.

UN CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOME

To address this, the UN will contribute to empowering rights holders through capacity-strengthening training and by providing and sharing data and information on legal rights, human rights, right to access safe food and water, people-centred advocacy and the promotion of gender equality. This will help women, youth and minorities, particularly in lagging districts, to be aware of their rights and to engage with relevant authorities to voice their grievances, seek redressal, access quality, gender-responsive public services and legal aid, and to identify and combat discrimination and harmful social norms. Furthermore, the UN will use its unique convening and facilitating function - particularly at the national and sub-national level - to inform platforms for strategic dialogue between state-level and civil society actors and to broaden the civic and political space for women, youth and marginalized communities. This will enable rights holders to voice opinions on public policy, to advocate for development priorities in a participatory manner, to participate safely in public life and political processes such as elections, to access quality public services, and to benefit from justice institutions including dispute and redressal mechanisms without fear of discrimination, exclusion or violence.

The UN will provide technical assistance to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in the implementation of its mandate, and to the Supreme Court, legal aid, and justice mechanisms to enhance outreach and coordination. Technical assistance and institutional strengthening programmes in the justice sector will also support the development and deployment of modern, digitalised management and caseload systems and improved dispute resolution capacity. As a result, legal, alternative dispute resolution and redressal mechanisms will be more efficient and accessible to the public, less susceptible to bribery and corruption, and thus more worthy of public trust and support. The UN will also work with a range of national commissions and institutions to strengthen mechanisms to address people's voice in gender-responsive development planning, financing, and evidence-based policy advocacy. This will contribute to building accountable and transparent public institutions for efficient public service delivery and creating an enabling environment for participatory democratic practices at the national and sub-national levels.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

As Bangladesh moves towards achieving upper middle-income country status by 2031, its government institutions at national and sub-national levels face increasing challenges to carry out their mandates including access to justice, including the criminal justice system, labour courts, and delivery of public services in a more accountable, transparent, gender-responsive and inclusive manner. The demand for improved and efficient functioning of government machinery and the 8th Five-Year Plan's central theme of development and improvement of critical institutions calls for improved governance mechanisms to overcome the existing inadequacies of policy and legal frameworks, limited institutional capacities and centralized administrations, bureaucratic entanglement, poor coordination and technical knowledge, as well as discrimination across different sectors of society. Simultaneously, upholding the rule of law and adopting a human rights-based approach across national and sub national levels will be one of the keys to ensure an enabling civic and political space, inclusive decision-making processes, strengthened policy and legal frameworks, an effective justice system, and more efficient service delivery mechanisms

To contribute to this change process, the UN will support the generation of updated data to inform the multi- dimensional and gender-responsive analysis required for strengthening legislation, regulatory reforms, policies, planning and budgeting, grievance, redressal, and monitoring mechanisms. Technical assistance will be provided to filling data and information gaps through enhancing national data management and information systems, and the statistical capacity for SDG monitoring, and the UN will promote initiatives that actively engage people's participation - including through their representative organizations - in dialogue on laws, policies, and legal reforms.

Photo : UNICEF Bangladesh

As part of its normative function, the UN system will support the NHRC and line ministries on treaty body and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reporting and provide technical assistance to improve reporting capacity and policy governance uptake related to UPR recommendations of relevant institutions including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). Aligning the labour market governance system with international labour standards will be another area of focus for the UN

Technical assistance will be provided by the UN system for enhancing institutional accountability and transparency for non-discriminatory and improved public service delivery, addressing various drugs and crime related threats, prevention of violent extremism and counter-terrorism, and for strengthening anti-corruption measures including the enhanced capacity of existing hotline services of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Local government capacity strengthening will be undertaken to enhance their public finance management, participatory planning along with advocacy for mainstreaming social audits in public institutions, particularly at local levels. Capacity building of the Prison Directorate will be undertaken to strengthen non-custodial measures, criminal justice responses, and the treatment of women prisoners in line with UN standards.

The UN will advocate for the enactment of separate laws on the protection of the victims and witnesses during the trial processes and for passing the draft anti-discrimination law, and to establish institutional arrangements to administer the laws. To further strengthen the justice system, support will be provided for the amendment of the Village Courts Act and for scaling up their activation, along with the capacity development of the mediation council and the Union Council Legal Aid Committee. Research-based awareness-raising, advocacy, social mobilization and civic education on human rights issues with a special focus on gender equality and equity, the right to equal protection under the law, and norms and practices that fuel discrimination will be supported by the UN system. Improved outreach and coverage of legal aid services with a focus on digital mediation platforms at national and district legal aid offices, including access to a more transparent justice system will be convened and facilitated through cooperation.

Bangladesh's long traditional and constitutional secularism continues to be challenged by disinformation, divisive narratives, and the spread of extremist ideologies. There are concerns about incitement to racial hatred and attendant violations of religious freedom which underlines intolerance and lack of respect for diversity and cultural commonalities. Women, particularly those that are perceived as non-conforming and violating prevailing gender norms, standards, or customs, are being targeted with hate and misogynistic speech and threats of sexual violence. These challenges are further deepened by shrinking space for civil society and the freedom of expression curbed by the limited participatory opportunities for people to engage, promote and claim their rights.

To address this, the UN will use its normative support function to help review and draft policies and practices in line with international standards to ensure freedom of expression and support awareness-raising and advocacy to prevent and combat growing intolerance, online harm including violent extremism, hate speech, propaganda and disinformation. This includes supporting implementation of the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security to protect women and promote women's role in maintaining peace and social cohesion. It will also provide technical assistance and capacity strengthening training to civil society, including women and youth-based organizations, the private sector, entrepreneurs, community media, and faith-based leaders including grassroots level, to promote digital literacy and digital citizenship which prevents violent extremism, the spread of misinformation and hate speech and which protects and fulfils human rights.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

The UN will also create platforms for strategic dialogue between the state and civil society actors as well as the private sector on all areas of human rights including international labour standard. Special effort will be made to reach out and engage with minority groups and other marginalized groups. This facilitating role will also be used to broaden civic and political space for women, youth, and minority leaders and to enhance outreach and coordination as well as to generate and share knowledge that can further enrich and inform policy formulation.

UN will also provide support in strengthening volunteerism in the society, which has the potential to significantly promote broad- based national ownership and engagement for inclusive participation and sustainability.

PARTNERSHIPS

To contribute to the national vision where institutions at all levels are more gender-responsive, participatory, accountable and ensure equitable access to justice and services to all people in a peaceful and tolerant society, the UN system will collaborate with a broad and diverse range of partners. Amongst others, these will include the full spectrum of Government ministries, agencies and justice sector stakeholders, parliamentarians, local government authorities, the Supreme Court, National Human Rights Commission and the Election Commission, universities and academic institutions, civil society and community-based organizations, NGOs, women's rights organizations and platforms, youth and faith-based organizations, labour organizations, the private sector, and the media and development partners. Details of the key implementing partners are included in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5:
GENDER EQUALITY AND ELIMINATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Outcome 5: By 2026, more women, girls and sexual minorities benefit from an environment in which they are empowered to exercise their rights, agency and decision-making power over all aspects of their lives towards a life are free from all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful norms and practices.

Under the leadership of the Government of Bangladesh, the country has made significant progress toward gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls, particularly in education and access to health care. The country ranked 50th among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report for 2020. Bangladesh has also adopted many laws and policies to promote gender equality and address violence against women starting from the Domestic Violence (Protection and Preservation) Act 2010, the National Women Development Policy 2011, the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012, and the Child Marriage Prevention Act 2017. Furthermore, the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children (2018-2030) and the National Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriage are also in place. However, these laws and policies suffer from weak implementation and women, girls, and sexual minorities in Bangladesh continue to be discriminated against due to their gender and are prevented from enjoying their human rights and fully participating in public and private life.

Photo : UN Women Bangladesh

The gender inequality manifests in gender-based discrimination, restrictive social norms, gaps in policies and legislation, access to and control over resources, barriers to accessing services and to involvement in decision-making processes, sexual harassment and abuse, high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) and continuation of harmful practices such as child marriage. Globally as well as in Bangladesh, gender inequality and GBV have worsened because of COVID-19 and remain significant barriers to the country's sustainable development and achievement of the SDGs. The Government's 8th Five-Year Plan comprehensively identifies and seeks to address many of these prevailing gaps through strategies and actions that not only enhance women's capabilities and access to resources and opportunities but also address structural and institutional barriers and aims at changing social norms and protecting their rights. Harmful gender norms such as child marriage, son preference, men's control and influence over social behaviour and women's mobility outside the home are identified as critical barriers, and appropriate responses to address these including working with men to change stereotypical gender norms and prevent violence against women and advocate for sharing of household responsibilities are outlined in the plan. The Government also commits to remove all discriminatory provisions in laws and policies in line with CEDAW and proposes the enactment of laws for equal inheritance rights of women and legislation on sexual harassment. The 8th FYP also acknowledges that existing institutional mechanism for women' advancement needs to be more effective with accountability, capacity and authority. A gender-equal Bangladesh that is safe for women and girls and all gender-diverse groups can expedite the realization of the SDGs. Gender equality is also smart economics: the success of the Government's COVID-19 recovery, inclusive and sustainable economic growth agenda, and a safe country for all, are contingent on achieving gender equality and the elimination of GBV.

PRECONDITIONS OF CHANGE

To achieve the stated Outcome at least seven sets of conditions must be fulfilled.

First, all national policy instruments must recognize, promote, and protect the rights of women and girls and sexual minorities in compliance with international norms and standards, and these instruments must be implemented, enforced, monitored, and reported on.

Second, a feminist, gender transformative and intersectional approach must be in place across the implementation of legal instruments and development policies to remove structural (cognitive, social, economic, legal, institutional) barriers that prevent women, girls and sexual minorities from exercising their human rights and fully participating in public and private life.

Third, all sections of society, including boys and men as agents of change, must be engaged to transform harmful and discriminatory gender norms, roles and practices that perpetuate and reinforce gender-based violence and gender inequality.

Fourth, duty bearers must be accountable to gender equality commitments and goals set out in the national development policy and legal instruments including the National Women's Development Policy and the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and must be supported by well-coordinated gender-responsive governance mechanisms at local and national levels.

Fifth, women, girls and sexual minority groups' equal access to and control over resources, gender-responsive and targeted services and opportunities must be ensured.

Sixth, gender equality-focused civil society organizations must be able to leverage platforms to drive policy and be supported and capacitated to hold governments accountable with women, girls and sexual minority groups meaningfully participating in and empowered as agents of change.

Seventh, inclusion of the voices of rights holders, and gender parity and meaningful representation of all genders and socio-economic groups in accountability and decision-making processes must be achieved.

To respond to the 8th Five-Year Plan priorities of gender equality and elimination of gender-based violence, the UN will focus on two interrelated strategic approaches: (i) strengthen the capacity and accountability of institutions across public and private sector and government at national and local levels to develop and implement laws, policies and programmes that promote gender equality, eliminate GBV and address structural barriers that prevent women and girls from exercising their human rights across sectors in a coordinated manner and; (ii) support civil society and the women's movement to enjoy expanded political space to effectively represent women and girls, particularly the most marginalized, and drive policy and social change for the promotion of gender equality and elimination of GBV. A specific focus will also be on those who are left farthest behind, such as sexual minorities, sex workers, people with disabilities, married adolescent girls, female migrant workers amongst others, and reducing their vulnerabilities through these strategic means will be prioritized.

Photo : UNRCO _ UNIC Bangladesh

UN will support review and strengthening of institutional mechanisms, capacity and coordination across the government and public institutions to effectively implement the existing gender-responsive legal, policy and programmatic frameworks to promote gender equality and prevent and respond to GBV such as the National Plans of Action to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children (2018-2030), to Prevent Child Marriage (2018-2030) and the National Women Development Policy of 2011 and its Action Plan. Where necessary, it will also support the development of new ones in line with international and national commitments including CEDAW and other human rights treaties and the recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development's (ICPD) Programme of Action, the ILO Convention on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (C190), and Bangladesh's 8th Five-Year Plan.

The UN will engage with senior leadership across Parliament and Government to strengthen political accountability and build ownership of the comprehensive, multi-sectoral and transformative approach needed to accelerate gender equality and prevent GBV. Specific attention will also be paid to promoting gender-responsive and non-discriminatory business practices amongst the private sector in Bangladesh.

Support will be provided for the strengthening of institutional arrangements and enhancing capacity to generate quality, comparable and regular disaggregated gender statistics to address data gaps, support evidence-based policy making and meet reporting commitments under the SDGs, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and national plans. This will include data and statistics related to violence against women, gender distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, and women's leadership and participation, among others. Institutional capacity strengthening will be supported for gender-responsive public finance management and planning through capacity building of line ministries and local governments to make strategic budget allocations through mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in planning and budgeting. Monitoring and measuring the impact of the budget allocation will be strengthened.

The 8th Five Year Plan states that "the legal system should be simplified and faster in case of rape and sexual harassment" (p. 756), that "marital rape should be brought within legal provisions" and that the "accountability mechanism has to be strengthened for the members of law enforcing agencies in addressing VAW" (p. 763). The UN will support the advancement of legal reform to remove these and other gaps in legislation including on women's right to inheritance property.

Working with a wide range of stakeholder, the UN will support development of a National Strategy on Prevention of GBV to accompany the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Children for a multi-pronged and coordinated approach to transforming social norms and preventing violence, building on globally evaluated models. It will expand its efforts to engage the population at large, including boys and men, and other stakeholders such as traditional and faith leaders at community and individual levels as well as media to prevent and transform harmful and discriminatory norms, roles and practices and address gender biases that perpetuate and reinforce gender-based violence and limit women's and girls' access to resource and equal opportunities. The UN will also support adoption and roll out of life skills curriculum across all modes of education, which includes teaching values of gender equality and consent and promotes safe and gender-equitable learning environments.

Photo : Google

Photo : UNRCO Bangladesh

To catalyse a more comprehensive and survivor-centred approach to violence response, the UN will strengthen capacity and accountability and the multisectoral coordination mechanism of essential service providers, including in health, police, justice, and social welfare. The UN will also promote greater resource allocation and explore innovative financing mechanisms to scale up and expand the reach of GBV services which remain limited for women that live in rural areas. The UN rules for treatment of women prisoners and non-custodial measures will be promoted through capacity building and technical assistance.

The UN will focus on enhancing the ability of civil society actors and the women's movement to participate in policy change for the promotion of gender equality and elimination of GBV and ensure accountability of duty bearers. This will include supporting development of a government mechanism where gender equality and women's rights CSOs have a key role in informing policy processes across sectors. The UN will engage and capacitate women, girls, and other rights holders, particularly those that face intersectional discrimination, and women's organizations to participate in national and local consultative and decision-making processes. Using its facilitating role, the UN will support the creation of diverse networks of support for women leaders, working with professional networks, parliamentarians, CSO networks, social media networks, and youth groups.

This targeted, two-pronged approach will contribute to creating an environment in which women, girls and third gender people are equal to men and boys, empowered to exercise their rights, agency and decision-making power over all aspects of their lives, and are free from all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence.

The UN contributions to Outcome 5 will also serve as enablers for all other Cooperation Framework Outcomes, by focusing on strengthening institutions to implement international and national commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, and civil society to promote social accountability.

PARTNERSHIPS

The ambitious objective of contributing to ensuring gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence through a dual-track approach will involve engagement and partnering vertically and horizontally across Government, public and private sectors, including CSOs.

The UN will collaborate with, amongst others, Government ministries, Members of Parliament, local government and administration, senior decision-makers and the Prime Minister's Office, employers and workers organizations, local level administrative authorities, the private sector, transport authorities, police and justice sectors, city corporations, educational institutions, civil society organizations including the women's movement, formal and social media, development partners, along with traditional and faith leaders and other social change agents. Details of the main cooperation partners are indicated in Annex 1 Results Matrix.

Photo : WHO Bangladesh

2.5. SYNERGIES BETWEEN COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Given the synergies among the SDGs, the Strategic Priorities and five Outcomes are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Progress towards the achievement of one Outcome will both contribute to and require progress in other Outcomes.

These synergies manifest in planned UN support to the Government on specific themes that run through multiple strategic priorities. Climate action, for instance is a cross cutting priority that will leverage action across multiple sector to support both adaptation (resilient infrastructure under SP1, climate adapted agriculture in SP3, climate resilient WASH facilities in SP2) and mitigation (renewable energy sources, and sustainable agriculture under SP3, adolescent and youth participation and engagement in climate change issues in SP2), resilience building (resilient livelihoods under SP1 and SP3, integrating climate and disaster related policies with policies for social protection and basic services under SP2, and emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction under SP3). Similarly, youth are targeted through provision of multisectoral support (economic opportunities, access to education and other basic social services, resilience building, and participatory governance across the different strategic priorities).

The inclusion in the Cooperation Framework for Bangladesh of a specific Strategic Priority on Gender Equality, in addition to including gender-based and gender-responsive strategies and objectives within all other Strategic Priorities, further reinforces the interdependence and synergies between the Outcomes. Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all Strategic Priorities and Outcomes of this Cooperation Framework.

As part of its normative role within the Cooperation Framework, the United Nations will continue to support the Government to meet its obligations and commitments as a State party to key human rights instruments at global and regional levels, including the Universal Periodic Review and a wide range of international Conventions, including the Convention on All Forms of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and a wide range of environment-related and labour-related Conventions, amongst others. The human rights recommendations and concluding observations will further inform the planning and implementation of UN programme collaboration across the strategic priority areas.

2.6. SUSTAINABILITY

The 8th Five Year Plan for 2021-2025 provides the initial priorities, strategies, and milestones towards the objectives of Vision 2041. The analytical and consultative processes undertaken in the formulation of the Cooperation Framework considered very closely these medium and long-term development plans, objectives, challenges, and opportunities up to 2041. Hence, the sustainability of the impact of Outcomes beyond 2025 will be ensured through this close alignment of the Cooperation Framework and national development priorities and plans.

In line with the principles of the 2030 Agenda, the Cooperation Framework aims to ensure that sustainable development is owned and led by Bangladesh in the spirit of transparency and mutual respect. The UN will coordinate its work with government, national stakeholders, other multilateral institutions, and the international community, through the Government-led development coordination architecture.

An important element to promote sustainability of the Cooperation Framework results will be the support for development of the INFF as a medium-term to help the Government in establishing and implementing an SDG financing mechanism which pays specific attention to leaving no-one behind and gender equality in line with the 8th Five-Year Plan and its 'whole of society' and 'whole of government' approach.

Complementing a primary strategy of the Cooperation Framework to strengthen the capacities and accountabilities of government institutions at national and sub-national levels, strategic partnerships will be forged with community-based organizations – including civil society organizations, NGOs, and community leaders – towards inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and human rights. A key focus of this dual-track approach is to promote the commitment of all levels of government to reach out to and meaningfully engage with the people.

Photo : ILO Bangladesh

2.7. UN COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND UNCT CONFIGURATION

As Bangladesh celebrates its golden jubilee of independence in 2021, the UN system is seen as a trusted partner of the Government and people in Bangladesh. The UN is an impartial convener for multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership at all levels with strong global networks through which it can mobilize cutting-edge international expertise on advanced development challenges and for humanitarian preparedness and response. The UN also has a unique strength in its distinct approach to development, including its key programming principles, which takes a people-centric approach that places focus on leaving no one behind, a human rights-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental sustainability, transparency and accountability, at its core. The comparative advantage of the UN derives from its long relationship with Bangladesh and its historical ties with both the government and civil society in Bangladesh. The UN has as its implementing partners hundreds of civil society organizations, and as its co-creators in knowledge and evidence most of the best research bodies and think tanks in the country. The UN has also been a long-time supporter and convenor of tripartite dialogue in Bangladesh and had a close relationship with both workers' bodies and employers' associations. Whether through the Model UN system in educational institutions, or adolescent and youth outreach events, the UN has had a finger on the pulse of generations of Bangladeshi young people.

Through its unique role as the custodian of international treaties and conventions, the UN development system brings value in terms of supporting Bangladesh in internalizing international norms and standards and for the fulfilment of its duties and obligations through responding to the recommendations arising from the respective treaties and conventions to which the country is party. The UN is able to draw on a global, regional and national expertise to support Bangladesh across this wide spectrum of international standards, ranging from human rights, education, health, nutrition, justice and rule of law, labour practices, governance and the environment, among many others.

The UNCT will draw on the capacities across the UN system. The UNCT will be configured to include all agencies, both resident and non-resident, to contributing towards at least one of the Cooperation Framework Outcomes. In addition, the UNCT will draw on the technical capacity of a number of agencies which are not signatories to this document.

While the main responsibility for the implementation of the Cooperation Framework will rest with the UNCT members, additional expertise from across the broader UN system, including its regional and global levels will be mobilized to support as necessary. This additional expertise will be essential for the UN to fulfil its role as a provider of cutting-edge advice. Resources from the broader UN system will be utilized on a needs basis, with the UN Resident Coordinator playing a key role in mobilizing expertise.

In light of Bangladesh's graduation from LDC status, and the consequent shift in the nature of development cooperation with a number of its bilateral development partners, the UN in Bangladesh will look to provide support that is fit for purpose and tailored to the new international context as well as emergent challenges within the country. This will entail drawing in capacity from its non-resident agencies – for instance, UNCTAD and UNESCAP on transition strategy for trade and industry, UNIDO on specific sectors within industry, UN-Habitat on the urbanization agenda, including on road-safety, and informing planning and policy, and UNDRR on strengthening resilience to natural hazards and reduce disaster risk. It will also involve engaging with the regional issues-based coalitions for the Asia-Pacific on issues including pollution, and energy transition. The capacity and support from headquarters of resident agencies in Bangladesh will be leveraged to support the Government across a wide spectrum of the priorities of the Cooperation Framework.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

CHAPTER 3

COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

3.1 GOVERNANCE

Evaluation 2017-2021

The Joint Government of Bangladesh-United Nations Steering Committee (JSC) will be the highest governing body of the Cooperation Framework. Twice a year, the JSC will meet to provide oversight and guidance on the implementation of the Cooperation Framework. The Evaluation of the 2017-2021 UNDAF highlighted that the JSC had matured into a strategic level structure able to provide oversight for the new UNSDCF and be a forum for jointly agreed policy dialogue in the future.

United Nations Agencies in Bangladesh

Under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the UNCT will be responsible for the implementation of the Cooperation Framework and provide oversight to the various groups formed thereunder. Five Strategic Priority Groups, chaired by UN heads of agencies to guide Cooperation Framework annual joint planning, monitoring, and reporting will be established. The Strategic Priority Groups will report to the UNCT. At the programmatic level, coordination of cross-priority issues will take place within the Programme Management Team. UNCT members also commit to ensuring that individual UN agency programming documents are derived from, aligned with and in support of the Strategic Priorities and Outcomes of the Cooperation Framework 2022-2026.

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Cooperation Framework will be nationally executed under the overall coordination of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance and will be operationalized through the development of joint workplans **(see section 3.3).**

The Cooperation Framework for Bangladesh contains elements of post-pandemic recovery as well as support for transition out of the LDC status, with the development aspirations of the most vulnerable groups in Bangladesh at the centre. The implementation strategy will consist of two key elements.

Firstly, implementation of the Cooperation Framework will reflect the relationship between the Government and the UN development system in collaborating to achieve the national development priorities and the SDGs. The 2017-2021 UNDAF Evaluation highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Cooperation Framework was co-designed by the Government and the UN to ensure alignment with national priorities and the need for the UN to adapt in order to contribute and remain relevant in the changing development context in the country. At the implementation stage, ongoing discussions with the Government will ensure that the Cooperation Framework remains aligned to national priorities even as the heightened uncertainty associated with the pandemic requires the Government and the UN to operate within a shifting context and changing priorities. As far as possible the engagement with the Government will take place within existing forums and mechanisms such as the working groups of the Local Consultative Group (LCG), bilateral discussions and meetings of the Strategic Priority Groups and their sub-groups.

Secondly, the UN will leverage the entire spectrum of collaborative and cooperative models of work in delivering on the ambitious multisectoral outcomes of the Cooperation Framework. These will include joint projects and programmes where relevant, joint programming, joint advocacy, and communications, coordinated implementation where relevant, as well as different shared funding modalities. These will reduce transaction costs, provide value-for-money, and reap the economies of scale and scope in maximizing impact.

The UN agencies will support the development and implementation of activities within the Cooperation Framework, which may include technical support, policy advice, project implementation – directly or through implementing partners, advocacy, research, and capacity development. Part of the UN entities' support may be provided to non-governmental and civil society organizations as agreed within the framework of the individual workplans and project documents.

Additional support may include access to UN organization-managed global information systems, the network of the UN agencies' country offices and specialized information systems, including rosters of consultants and providers of development services, and access to the support provided by the network of UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes. The UN agencies shall appoint staff and consultants for programme development, programme support, technical assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

Subject to annual reviews and progress in the implementation of the programme, the UN agencies' funds are distributed by calendar year and in accordance with the Cooperation Framework. These budgets will be reviewed and further detailed in the workplans and project documents in consultation with ERD and concerned ministries. By mutual consent between the Government and the UN development system entities, funds not earmarked by donors to UN development system agencies for specific activities may be re-allocated to other programmatically equally worthwhile activities.

The Government will support the UN system agencies' efforts to raise funds required to meet the needs of this Cooperation Framework and will cooperate with the UN agencies including: encouraging potential donor Governments to make available to the UN agencies the funds needed to implement unfunded components of the programme; endorsing the UN agencies' efforts to raise funds for the programme from other sources, including the private sector both internationally and in Bangladesh; and by permitting contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations in Bangladesh to support this programme which will be tax exempt for the donor to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

Allowances for travel, stipends, honoraria, and other costs shall be set at rates commensurate with those applied in the country, but not higher than those applicable to the United Nations system **(as stated in the ICSC circulars).**

3.3 JOINT WORKPLANS

Implementation Joint Workplans

For effective implementation of the Cooperation Framework, the UN agencies in collaboration with Government and other partners will develop, monitor, and report on annual joint workplans. The joint workplans will ensure greater alignment with national priorities, support country capacities to deliver development results and ensure transparency and accountability in their implementation. The joint workplans will help to translate outcomes into concrete, measurable and time-bound outputs that provide clear, normative, operational linkages to enable the attribution of the United Nations contribution to national priorities.

The joint workplans, along with agency-specific workplans and project documents will form an agreement between the UN and each implementing partner as necessary on the use of resources in consultation with Government. Joint workplans for each Cooperation Framework Outcome area will be developed on an annual basis by the Results Group responsible for the Outcome.

To the extent possible, the UN system agencies and partners will use the minimum documents necessary namely the signed Cooperation Framework, signed joint or agency-specific workplans and project documents to implement programmatic initiatives. However, as necessary, and appropriate, project documents can be prepared using, inter alia, the relevant text from the Cooperation Framework and joint or agency-specific workplans and/or project documents.

Photo : UNRCO _ UNIC Bangladesh

Photo : UNDP Bangladesh

CHAPTER 4

MONITORING AND **EVALUATION PLAN**

4.1. MONITORING PLAN

SDG Monitoring Framework

The monitoring plan of the Cooperation Framework is primarily based on the Development Result Framework (DRF) of the 8th Five-Year Plan, 39+1 National Priority Indicators and the SDG monitoring framework. The baseline data are derived from National Statistical Organization/ National Statistical Systems and national SDG trackers as well as the published data of the concerned government agencies. The baseline data and targets in the results framework will be updated where appropriate as new official data become available.

The Evaluation of the UNDAF 2017-2021 highlighted a disconnect between results achieved by individual UN entities and joint programmes with the UNDAF results framework. This challenged the ability to identify and report on the UN's contribution to the achievement of the results outlined in the UNDAF results framework.

To overcome this bottleneck – and in addition to the clear commitment by agencies that programming will be derived from the UNSDCF - in collaboration with UN Data Group, the Monitoring and Evaluation Group (M&E Group) will provide technical support in designing and implementing this Cooperation Framework's Results and Reporting Framework (RRF), data quality assurance, and advice to the Results Groups and the UNCT on evidence-based progress reporting.

The RRF will be uploaded on UNINFO. The M&E Group will support the Results Groups in the quarterly and annual reporting and ensure quality control. In the first meeting of the Joint Steering Committee every year, the UNCT will report on the previous year's development results based on data collected through quarterly reporting.

FIELD LEVEL MONITORING

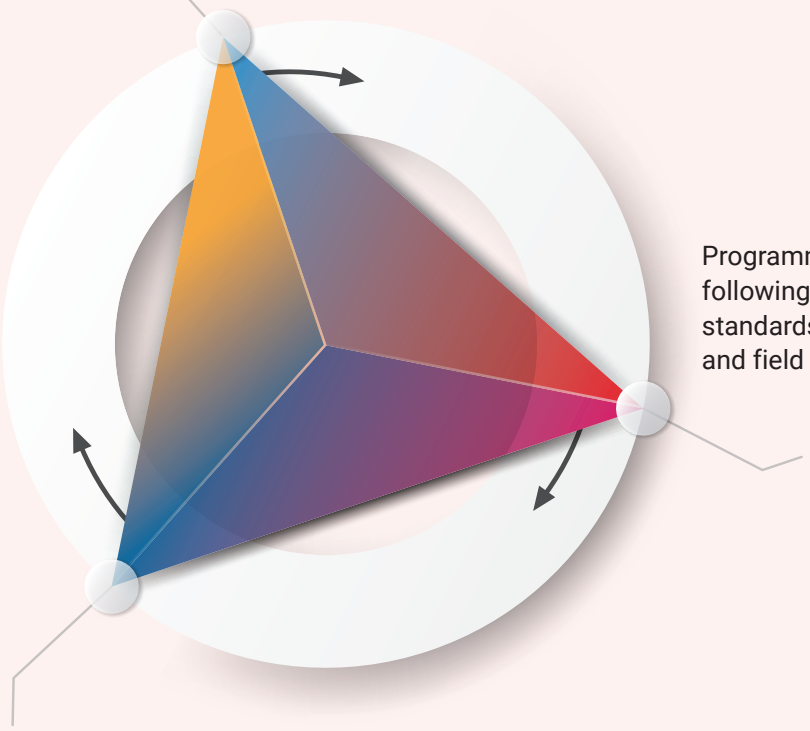
Joint monitoring visits ensuring the representation from concerned implementing partners will be one of the main tools for joint collection of field-level monitoring information (qualitative and quantitative) on results, processes, and activities.

MONITORING OF ACTIVITIES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Implementing Partners agree to cooperate with the UN system agencies in monitoring of all activities supported by cash transfers and facilitate access to relevant financial records and personnel responsible for the administration of cash provided by the UN system agencies. To that effect, Implementing Partners agree to the following:

1

Periodic on-site reviews and spot checks of their financial records by the UN system agencies or their representatives, as appropriate, and as described in specific clauses of their engagement documents/contracts with the UN system agencies.



2

Programmatic monitoring of activities following the UN system agencies' standards and guidance for site visits and field monitoring; and

3

Special or scheduled audits: Each UN agency, in collaboration with other UN system agencies (and in consultation with the respective coordinating ministry), will establish an annual audit plan, giving priority to audits of Implementing Partners to which UN system agencies provide large amounts of cash assistance, and those whose financial management capacity needs strengthening.

4.1.1. RISKS

The COVID-19 pandemic and its global fallout has elevated the risks associated with any medium-to long term plan, and hence with the Cooperation Framework for Bangladesh. There are three risks identified which have a high likelihood of occurring and of slowing down the development trajectory in Bangladesh and the achievement of the planned results of the Cooperation Framework.

Continued pandemic:

The greatest foreseeable risk in the short to medium term is associated with the continuation of the pandemic. Many countries in the world are seeing third and fourth waves of COVID-19 even as vaccination is progressing fast in others. It is not clear yet if the pandemic will have been over by the end of 2021. If it is still raging at the beginning of 2022, the emergency response will continue to dominate recovery programming under the Cooperation Framework. Further, the development strategy will need to contend with continued constraints on movement of people and goods, weakened global demand, and disrupted supply chains. If global production remains depressed, Bangladesh will also have to contend with weak demand for migrant labour and lower inflow of remittances.

Catastrophic climate risk:

Globally, climate-related hazards are growing in frequency and intensity. Bangladesh is among the countries most exposed to these hazards. In 2020, Bangladesh saw the longest lasting floods in two decades. Hundreds of people remain displaced months after the floods. In absence of mitigating measures, a catastrophic event could cause massive human and economic losses, increasing humanitarian need, compromising various forms of human and community security, and ultimately hampering the country's progress on sustainable development.

Investment gap in priority areas:

The current levels of Government expenditure in sectors such as education, health, and decent work, needs to be increased to enable optimal utilization of the benefits of the demographic dividend. In addition, as environmental degradation and natural disaster increasingly become drivers of multidimensional poverty, economic development investments to shift towards a green and blue economy will be essential. Unless pending priorities are adjusted, in times of fiscal constraint, further economic growth may increase inequalities in the country in addition to further environmental degradation.

Photo : WHO Bangladesh

The UN is working closely with the Government to mitigate and manage the adverse economic and health impacts of the COVID pandemic. The Government kept COVID pandemic and LDC graduation at the backdrop of its 8th Five-Year Plan formulation, which ensure the Cooperation Framework's resilience to address the risks pertaining to COVID pandemic. Furthermore, UN is working very closely with the Government to address critical challenges of climate change, such as the anticipatory action to reduce flood and cyclone damages. UN will continue to work closely with the Government under Strategic Priority 3 and 4 to mitigate and manage challenges associated with climate change.

To mitigate the risk, the UN has also placed a very specific emphasis on investment and SDG financing, including innovative finance, under Strategic Priority 1 to manage the changing requirement and landscape of development finance. Within Strategic Priority 2, the UN will promote approaches to ensure adequate financing and investment in basic services including education, health, and social protection; and under Strategic Priorities 1 and 3 on investing in green and inclusive development. The UN has already started and will closely work with Government through existing structures to ensure necessary investments are made to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend.

4.1.2

COOPERATION FRAMEWORK
REVIEW AND REPORTING

The Results Groups and M&E Group, on behalf of the UNCT, will undertake annual reviews of the UN CCA and Cooperation Framework to measure overall progress towards planned results, monitor risks, identify key opportunities and challenges, and reflect on learning to inform decisions and course correction in the evolving context of Bangladesh and the world.

Based on this, the UNCT Country Results Report will be prepared annually and submitted to the Joint Steering Committee, which will provide evidence to explain to the Government and partners any necessary adaptations in UN programming for continued relevance. The report will also generate information to inform the periodic updating of the CCA as necessary and course-correcting the joint workplans to make sure the implementation of the Cooperation Framework remains relevant and effective.

The UN Data Group will support government agencies, including the National Statistical Organization, to strengthen the institutional capacity for quality data generation, and to collect, use, analyze, and disseminate disaggregated data in relation to SDGs monitoring and reporting. The Data Group will support collective initiatives for evidence-based policy advocacy, knowledge sharing/ transfer on innovation, and technology in the process. Under the Cooperation Framework, the Group will facilitate inter-agency dissemination and collaboration on comparable statistics.

EVALUATION PLAN

An evaluation of the Cooperation Framework will be conducted by an independent consultant(s) in the penultimate year of the cycle (2025) in consultation with Government. Prior to the commencement of implementation of the Cooperation Framework, an Evaluability Assessment will be conducted in consultation with Government and with the support of the Regional United Nations Development Coordination Office to determine that the Cooperation Framework's objectives are adequately defined and its results verifiable, and therefore can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.

The evaluation Terms of Reference will ensure an inclusive and participatory approach involving all stakeholders as well as the independence and impartiality of the evaluation team. The Cooperation Framework evaluation will adhere to UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards, follow OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, and utilize a gender equality and human rights-based approach. Each contributing agency will conduct their end of programme evaluation towards the end of the programme cycle and these evaluation findings will also inform the final evaluation of the Cooperation Framework.

ANNEX 1: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK INDICATORS FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Outcome 1: By 2026, more people in Bangladesh, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized from all gender and social groups, and those from lagging districts benefit from sustainable livelihood and decent work opportunities resulting from responsible, inclusive, sustainable, green[28], and equitable economic development.

Contributing UN agencies:

FAO, IFAD, ILO, ITC, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UN-ESCAP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN WOMEN

Key partners:

Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, (MoEWOE), Ministry of Industries (MoI), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Planning (MoP), Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), Bangladesh Bank (BB), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Economic Relations Divisions (ERD), Statistic Informatic Division (SID), General Economic Division (GED), SME Foundation, National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), Local Government Institutes, National Institute of Local Government (NILG), Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), Chamber of Commerce (FBCCI &DCCI) , Business Associations, International Finance Institutions (IFIs), Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), Employers' Organization, Workers' Organizations, CSOs, Industry Skill Councils Think-Tanks and Academia

National Development Priorities under 8FYP

- Inclusive economic growth through macroeconomic stability (conducive macroeconomic environment to promote inclusive growth, supported by trade and private sector development)
- Reducing poverty and inequality (reduction in poverty and inequality across all groups and regions)
- Employment (increased productive and decent employment opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth)

[28] Green economic development is aligned with the concept of green growth as detailed in the 8th Five Year Plan. It includes (a) Integrating environmental costs into the Macroeconomic Framework; (b) Implementing the Delta Plan to build resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change; (c) Reduce air and water pollution; (d) Removal of fuel subsidies; (e) Adoption of green tax on fossil fuel consumption; (f) Taxation of emission from industrial units; and (g) Prevention of surface water pollution. 8th Five Year Plan, Page Iii (Executive Summary)

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 1 No Poverty
Goal 4 Quality Education
Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
Goal 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
Goal 10 Reduced Inequality
Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals

INDICATORS	BASELINE (YEAR)	TARGET (YEAR)	MOV/ SOURCE
Indicator 1.1: Gross national income per capita (DRF 04)	US$2,064 (2020)	US$3,059 (2025)[29]	BBS, SID
Indicator 1.2: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line (DRF 14, SDG 1.2.1)	UPL: 20.5% LPL: 10.5% (2019)	UPL: 15.60% LPL: 7.4% (2025)	BBS, SID CD, GED
Indicator 1.3: Unemployment rate, by sex (DRF 45, SDG 8.5.2, NPI 22)	Female: 6.7% Male: 3.1% (2017)	Female: 2.1% Male: 0.8% (2025)	Population & Housing Census, Bangladesh Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), BBS, SID
Indicator 1.4: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex (DRF 72, SDG 5.4.1)	Female: 23.6% Male: 6.9% (2017)	Female: 20% Male: 10% (2025)	Labour Force Survey (LFS) of BBS, MOWCA
Indicator 1.5: Gross investment (% of GDP) (a) Private investment (% of GDP) (b) Public investment (% of GDP) (c) Foreign Direct Investment (% of GDP) (DRF 03)	31.75% (a) 23.63% (b) 8.12% (c) 0.54% (2019)	36.59% (a) 27.35% (b) 9.24% (c) 3.00% (2025)	BBS, SID, MoI, BIDA, FD, BB, GED

[29] All targets for this indicator and several that follow are for 2025 as given in the Development Results Framework of the 8th Five Year Plan. The targets for 2026, the final year of the UNSDCF will be defined in consultation with the Government in course of the mid-term review.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: BASIC SERVICES AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Outcome 2: By 2026 people, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized, have improved access to and utilization of quality, inclusive, gender- and shock-responsive, universal and resilient social protection, social safety-net and basic social services

Contributing UN agencies:

FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, UNAIDs, UNCDF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN WOMEN, WFP & WHO

Key partners:

Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL), Ministry of Food (MoFood), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives (MoLGRD&C), Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources (MPEMR), Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), , Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED), Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED), Power Division (PD), Health Services Division (HSD), Medical Education and Family Welfare Division (MEFWD), Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), Local Government Division (LGD), Rural Development & Co-operative Division (RDCD), Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), Directorate of Secondary & Higher Education (DSHE), Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU), Workers' Organizations, CSOs, Private Sectors, Think-Tanks and Academia

National Development Priorities under 8FYP

- Reducing poverty and inequality (reduction in poverty and inequality across all groups and regions)
- Health and well-being (sustainable improvements in health sector including reproductive health, family planning, particularly of vulnerable group)
- Clean water & sanitation (ensure availability of safe drinking water and sanitation for all)
- Quality education (quality education for all to reduce poverty and increase economic growth)
- Agriculture & food security (achieving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture for becoming a prosperous country)
- Gender and inequality (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 2 Zero Hunger
Goal 3 Good Health and Well-being
Goal 4 Quality Education
Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation
Goal 10 Reduced Inequality
Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals

INDICATORS	BASELINE (YEAR)	TARGET (YEAR)	MOV/ SOURCE
Indicator 2.1: Prevalence of malnutrition (wasting and overweight) among children under 5 years of age (DRF 24, SDG 2.2.2)	1a. 9.8% (wasting) Female: 9.2% Male: 10.4% 1b.2.4% (overweight) Female: 2.3% Male: 2.6% (2019)	1a. 7% (wasting) Female: 6% Male: 8% 1b. 1% (overweight) Female: 1% Male: 1% (2025)	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), BBS, HSD
Indicator 2.2: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (DRF 33, NPI 17, & SDG 6.1.1)	42.6% (2019)	75% (2025)	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), BBS, SID, LGD
Indicator 2.3: Maternal mortality ratio (DRF 18, NPI 7 & SDG 3.1.1)	165 (2019)	100 (2025)	Sample Vital Registration System (SVRS), BBS
Indicator 2.4: Percentage of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18 (DRF 65, NPI 15 & SDG 5.3.1)	51.4 % (2019)	30% (2025)	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), BBS, MoWCA
Indicator 2.5 Proportion of population covered by social protection (DRF 16, SDG 1.3.1)	28.7% (2016)	35% (2025)	Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), BBS, SID, CD, GED

INDICATORS	BASELINE (YEAR)	TARGET (YEAR)	MOV/ SOURCE
Indicator 2.6: Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3 (b) at the end of primary and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex(SDG 4.1.1)	**a)** In grade 3 (2017) **i) Bangla:** 47% students performed at grade 3 levels Female: 48% Male: 45% **ii) Mathematics:** 34% students performed at grade 3 level Female: 34% Male: 35% (2017) **b)** In grade 5 (2017) **i) Bangla:** 44% students performed at grade 5 levels Female: 45% Male: 44% **ii) Mathematics:** 32% students performed at grade 5 level Female: 34% Male: 32% (2017) **c)** In grade 8 (2015) **i) Bangla:** 22% students performed at band 6 and above in Bangla. Female: 22% Male: 23% **English:** 7% students performed at Band 6 and above in English Female: 6% Male: 9% **ii) Mathematics:** 6% of students performed at band 6 and above in Mathematics Female: 4% Male: 8%	**Bangla:** in grade 3, 60%, **Mathematics:** in grade 3, 50% **(2026)** **Bangla:** in grade 5 -60%, **Mathematics:** in grade 5- 50% **(2026)**	National Student Assessment (NSA) Report, DPE Learning Assessment of Secondary Institutions (LASI) report, DSHE
Indicator 2.7: Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population based on FIES (DRF 50, SDG 2.1.2)	Moderate: 30.5% Severe: 10.2% (2019)	Moderate: 24.2% Severe 6% (2025)	BBS, FPMU, MoFood
Indicator 2.8: Percentage of migrants and returnees including women and other vulnerable migrants have access to quality migration, protection, and reintegration services (Contributes to DRF 10 & SDG 10.7)	Moderate: 30.5% Severe: 10.2% (2019)	**1.** 50% Migrants (at least 10% of which are women migrants) **2.** 50% Returnees (at least 10% of which are women migrants) *3.* 50% of the vulnerable migrants	MoEWOE, BBS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT

Outcome 3: By 2026, ecosystems are healthier, and all people, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized in both rural and urban settings, benefit from and contribute to, in a gender-responsive manner, a cleaner environment, an enriched natural resource base, low carbon development, prosperous and are more prosperous and resilient to climate change, shocks and disasters

Contributing UN agencies:

FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNCDF, UNDP, UNEP, UN-ESCAP, UNFPA, UN HABITAT, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UN WOMEN, WFP

Key partners:

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ministry of Planning (MoP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Department of Environment (DOE), Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), Department of Disaster Management (DDM) Finance Division (FD), Economic Relations Division (ERD), Financial Institutions Division (FID), Internal Resource Division (IRD), Bangladesh Bank (BB), Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), Local Government Division (LGD), Planning Commission, Workers' Organizations, CSOs, Private Sectors, Think-Tanks and Academia

National Development Priorities under 8FYP

- Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management (environment is preserved and prevented from degradation, and a disaster management strategy exists as well as ensuring climate change adaptation and mitigation)
- Power, Energy and Mineral Resources (Ensure sustainability in production, consumption and use of energy and mineral resources)

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
Goal 13 Climate Action
Goal 14 Life Below Water
Goal 15 Life on Land
Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals

INDICATORS	BASELINE (include year)	TARGET – 2026 (include year)	MOV/ SOURCE
Indicator 3.1: Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population (DRF 84, SDG 13.1.1)	Affected Persons: 12,881 (2015) Deaths: 0.2045 (2016)	Affected Persons: 2,000 Deaths:* (2025)	Bangladesh Disaster Related Statistics (BDRS), BBS, DDM, MoDMR
Indicator 3.2: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (DRF 62, SDG 7.2.1)	3.25% (2019) 3.49% (SDF Tracker) (2020)	8.5% 5.00% (SDG tracker) (2025)	PD
Indicator 3.3: Tree-covered land as a percentage of total land area (Contributes to DRF 75 & SDG 13.1.1)	22% (2016)	24% (2026)	BFD, MoEFCC

*To be determined by MoEFCC

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: TRANSFORMATIVE, PARTICIPATORY AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

Outcome 4: By 2026, more people, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from more equitable, non-discriminatory, gender-responsive, participatory, accountable and governance and justice, in a peaceful and tolerant society governed by the rule of law

Contributing UN agencies:

FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, UNCDF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC, UNOPS, UNV, UN WOMEN

National Development Priorities under 8FYP

- Governance (Promoting inclusive, transparent, accountable, and effective democratic governance system & ensuring justice for all)

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Key partners:

Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA), Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division (LPAD), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Public Administration (MoPA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Law and Justice Division (LJD), Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Employers, workers organizations, Security Service Division (SSD), Bangladesh Police (BP), Statistic & Informative Division (SID), Cabinet Division (CD), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Information Commission, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), IFIs, Workers' Organizations, CSOs, Private Sectors, Think-Tanks and Academia

INDICATORS	BASELINE (include year)	TARGET – 2026 (include year)	MOV/ SOURCE
Indicator 4.1: Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services (DRF 102 & SDG 16.6.2)	39.69 % (2018)	60 % (2025)	Citizen Perception Household. Survey (CPHS), BBS, CD, MOPA
Indicator 4.2: Number of queries attended to by the government institutions under right to Information Act (DRF 96 & SDG 16.10.2)	8,000 (2020)	12,500 (2025)	Information Commission

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: GENDER EQUALITY AND ELIMINATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Outcome 5: By 2026, more women, girls and sexual minorities benefit from an environment in which they are empowered to exercise their rights, agency and decision-making power over all aspects of their lives towards a life are free from all forms of discrimination, violence and harmful norms and practices.

Contributing UN agencies:

ILO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UN WOMEN

Key partners:

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives (MoLGRD&C), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National Parliament, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), National Institute of Local Government (NILG), Workers' Organizations, CSOs, Private Sectors, Think-Tanks and Academia

National Development Priorities under 8FYP

- Gender and inequality (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)

Contributing to SDGs:

Goal 4 Quality Education
Goal 5 Gender Equality
Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals

INDICATORS	**BASELINE** (YEAR)	**TARGET** (YEAR)	**MOV/ SOURCE**
Indicator 5.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination based on sex **a)** overarching legal frameworks and public life **b)** violence against women **c)** employment and economic benefits **d)** marriage and family (SDG 5.1.1)	a) 61.5% (2019) b) 75% (2019) c) 20% (2019) d) 63.6% (2019	**	MOWCA
Indicator 5.2 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age (DRF 70, SDG 5.2.1)	54.7% (2015)	20% (2025)	BBS, MOWCA
Indicator 5.3 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence (DRF 71, SDG 5.2.2)	6.2 % (2015)	3.0% (2025)	BBS, MOWCA
Indicator 5.4: Gender budget as percentage of total budget (DRF 67, SDG 5.c.1)	30.82% (2019)	35% (2025)	FD, MoWCA

**To be determined by MOWCA

ANNEX 2: LEGAL ANNEX

Whereas the Government of Bangladesh (hereinafter referred to as the Government") has entered into the following relationships:

a) With the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a basic agreement to govern UNDP's assistance to the country, which was signed by the Government and UNDP (the "Standard Basic Assistance Agreement" or "SBAA"), which is one of the predecessor legal entities of UNDP (the "Basic Agreement") on 25 November 1986. This Cooperation Framework, together with a joint results group work plan specifying UNDP programme activities further to this Cooperation Framework (which shall form part of this Cooperation Framework and is incorporated herein by reference), constitute together a "project document" as referred to in the SBAA. The implementing partner and UNDP will sign a project agreement containing the specific arrangements for each project further to the relevant project document.

b) With the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) the Basic Cooperation Agreement (BCA) concluded between the Government and UNICEF on 2 January 1996.

c) With the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Basic Agreement concluded between the Government and the United Nations Development Programme on 25 November 1986 (the "Basic Agreement") mutatis mutandis applies to the activities and personnel of UNFPA, in accordance with the agreement concluded by an exchange of letters between UNFPA and the Government which entered into force on 15 October 1998. This Cooperation Framework together with any workplan concluded hereunder constitutes the Project Document as referred to in the Basic Agreement.

d) With the World Food Programme (WFP), a Basic Agreement of Assistance which was signed with the Government on 2 October 1974.

e) With the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), an Agreement which was signed with the Government on 16 February 1977.

f) With the International Labour Organisation (ILO), an Agreement which was signed with the Government on 25 June 1973.

G) With the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), a Cooperation Agreement which was signed with the Government on 2 February 1998.

h) With the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), through the SBAA signed by UNDP and the Government on 25 November 1986.

i) With the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), an Agreement which was signed with the Government on 6 November 1995.

j) With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed with the Government on 12 May 1993.

k) With the World Health Organisation (WHO), a Basic Agreement for the Provision of Technical Advisory Assistance which was signed with the Government on 29 June 1972.

l) With the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and the UNEA's approval of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021 and related programmes of work.

m) With the United Nations Women (UN Women), the SBAA concluded between the Government and UNDP on 25 November 1986 mutatis mutandis applies to the activities and personnel of UN Women, in accordance with the agreement concluded by an exchange of letters between UN Women and the Government which entered into force on 9 June 2019. Assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of UN Women's governing structures.

n) With the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) through the SBAA signed by UNDP and the Government on 25 November 1986.

o) For other non-resident and specialized agencies: Assistance to the Government shall be made available and shall be furnished and received in accordance with the relevant and applicable resolutions and decisions of their competent governing structures. Additional agreements to be signed during the new Cooperation Framework cycle will be included when available.

The Cooperation Framework will, in respect of each of the United Nations system agencies signing, be read, interpreted, and implemented in accordance with and in a manner that is consistent with the basic agreement between such United Nations system agency and the Host Government.

The Government will honour its commitments in accordance with the provisions of the cooperation and assistance agreements outlined in paragraph one the Basis of the Relationship.

Without prejudice to these agreements, the Government shall apply the respective provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (the "General Convention") or the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (the "Specialized Agencies Convention") to the Agencies' property, funds, and assets and to their officials and experts on mission.

The Government shall also accord to the Agencies and their officials and to other persons performing services on behalf of the Agencies, the privileges, immunities, and facilities as set out in the cooperation and assistance agreements between the Agencies and the Government. In addition, it is understood that all United Nations Volunteers shall be assimilated to officials of the Agencies, entitled to the privileges and immunities accorded to such officials under the General Convention or the Specialized Agencies Convention. The Government will be responsible for dealing with any claims, which may be brought by third parties against any of the Agencies and their officials, experts on mission or other persons performing services on their behalf and shall hold them harmless in respect of any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is any claims and liabilities resulting from operations under the cooperation and assistance agreements, except where it is mutually agreed by Government and a particular Agency that such claims and liabilities arise from gross negligence or misconduct of that Agency, or its officials, advisors or persons performing services.

Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Government shall insure or indemnify the Agencies from civil liability under the law of the country in respect of vehicles provided by the Agencies but under the control of or use by the Government.

i. Nothing in this Agreement shall imply a waiver by the UN or any of its Agencies or Organizations of any privileges or immunities enjoyed by them or their acceptance of the jurisdiction of the courts of any country over disputes arising of this Agreement.

ii. Nothing in or relating to this document will be deemed a waiver, expressed or implied, of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, including WFP, whether under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13th February 1946, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 21st November 1947, as applicable, and no provisions of this document or any Institutional Contract or any Undertaking will be interpreted or applied in a manner, or to an extent, inconsistent with such privileges and immunities.

ANNEX 2b Further Legal Agreements Relevant to Specific Agencies/Entities

WFP – Commitments of the UN Agency and Government Commitments on contributions to WFP programmes

1. Government will make an in-kind contribution, up to 20,000MT (or equivalent monetary value) annually in support of WFP's school feeding programme for the production of fortified biscuits. The in-kind contribution by Government will be confirmed on an annual basis and is subject to the availability of resources within the Government's approved budget.

Commitments on transportation of UN commodities

2. Government support will include 50 percent contribution of the costs related to the Landside Transport, Storage and Handling (LTSH) of commodities that are transported in accordance with the UN programme. UN will cover the remaining 50 percent of the costs subject to availability of funds.

3. Government will share the detailed expenditures for various LTSH components; port operations, internal transport, storage, and handling but not losses in any form. These expenditures will be taken into account in calculating the LTSH budget and its periodic review for the programme requirements by UN agencies.

4. Government will submit periodic reports to UN agencies with a written request to settle LTSH payments.

Commitments on receiving UN commodities

5. Government, as and when commodities are landed onto the quay or, in the event of lighterage, upon discharging into the lighter, will take delivery of and title to commodities shipped by UN agencies on liner terms. However, when the lighterage is arranged by and/or is the responsibility of ship owners, the delivery will take place upon landing onto the quay from the lighter.

6. In the case of commodities shipped by UN agencies pursuant to a charter party entered into between UN and Owners or Despondent Owners, delivery of and title to commodities shipped shall be taken by the Government in Chittagong in the hold of the ship, or in the case of lighterage, in the hold of the ocean vessel, as the commodities are taken up in the discharging tackle or apparatus.

7. In the case of commodities imported by land transit, delivery of and title to the commodities will be taken by the Government at the agreed point(s) of delivery, in the case of transport by rail at any (local storage depot) LSD near Darshana border and, in case of road transport, at the LSD or (central storage depot) CSD nearest to the border crossing, to be specified by an exchange of letters.

8. The provisions above apply equally to the delivery of non-food resources supplied by UN agencies. However, in case non-food items are imported by air, the Government will take the delivery and title in Dhaka.

9. In all cases, the Government undertakes to ensure the expeditious unloading of the vessel, truck or other conveyance. If so required, the Government will lighter part of the cargo of mother vessels at outer anchorage and the remaining cargo at Chittagong Silo or jetty.

10. From the agreed point of delivery, all expenses, including the cost of import duties, taxes, levies, as well as harbour, wharfage, warehousing, lighterage, landing, sorting, Terminal Handling Charge, documentation processing charges, shipping agent's fees and other charges as applicable for containerised shipments and similar dues, including specifically all formalities and expenses relating to legalisation of shipping documents and other certificates, will be paid or waived by the Government.

11. In the case of discharge of commodities shipped pursuant to a charter party between UN agencies and Owners or Despondent Owners, any demurrage caused by the Government failing to arrange prompt berthing and/or discharge ex-vessel or conveyance, will be for the account of the Government and refundable to UN agencies upon demand. On the other hand, any dispatch earned by a quick turnaround of the charter vessel will be allowed to the Government. Accounts for demurrage/dispatch will be settled on a yearly basis.

12. For Chartered vessels, the discharge rate of 3,000 metric tonne/day for vessels up to 40,000 MT bulk cargo and 5,200 MT/day for vessels carrying more than 40,000 metric tonne bulk cargo will be implemented and be the basis for calculating the demurrage/dispatch. The basis for calculating the demurrage/dispatch set in this clause may be reviewed during the programme duration and be adjusted as /when required upon agreement by both parties.

13. In all other contracts of carriage, damages for detention caused by the Government failing to take prompt delivery will be on the Government's account.

14. If any of the above charges are paid by UN agencies in the first instance, it will subsequently be adjusted against LTSH subsidy payable to Government

15. The Government will arrange a joint survey along with UN-appointed superintendents of the condition of commodities at the time of discharge or unloading at the agreed point of delivery, or as soon as possible thereafter, to determine their condition and the extent of losses and/or damages so that an outturn certificate can be prepared and, if necessary, action can be taken against the carrier or insurance underwriter for such losses and/or damages.

16. Notwithstanding any other terms contained herein, the UN shall have the sole right to pursue all claims against a sea or land carrier in relation to loss of, or damage to, the goods which occurs prior to the passage of title and to pursue, abandon or settle such claims at its discretion and that, if and insofar as property and/or risk may have passed, UN agencies shall do so as agent on behalf of the Government, who shall lend its name to any legal proceedings if WFP so requires. Without prejudice to the definition of 'passage of title' described above, when physical delivery extends beyond the point of passage of title, UN will have the right, at its discretion, to claim on behalf of the Government, for losses sustained between passage of title and physical delivery.

17. In any event, the time and place of passage of title, as stated above, shall not be affected by any endorsement or consignment of the bill of lading. Any such endorsement or consignment will be solely for the administrative convenience of WFP or the recipient authorities

18. In respect of shipments in bulk on chartered vessels, the weights stated in the bill of lading or nonnegotiable cargo receipt are to be considered as final between UN agencies and the recipient Government. On arrival of the vessel, the UN will arrange for a draft survey to ascertain, by close approximation, the quantity of cargo on board. Should the weight on board, as ascertained by the draft survey, indicate a substantial discrepancy between that weight and the Bill of Lading weight the UN will investigate such discrepancy in full co-operation with the Government. Failing a mutually satisfactory resolution, the draft survey shall be the final deciding factor. The stevedore's report cannot be considered to determine the quantity of cargo. On completion of discharge, it is the responsibility of the recipient government to ensure that no cargo is left on board the vessel. If the vessel carries cargo for more than one port (outside Bangladesh), it is the responsibility of the recipient government to ensure that the correct quantities are discharged at Chittagong port. The UN will also arrange a light draft survey after completion of discharge of a vessel when necessar.

19. As regards shipments arriving in containers loaded and carried under Full Container Load (FCL) terms, the recipient government is responsible for the un-stuffing of the entire consignment, including damaged cargo if any. After proper identification/quantification of the damaged quantity in the presence of the UN Cargo Superintendent, necessary arrangements will be made by the recipient authority for disposal/destruction of the damaged quantity following the standard Government and UN system guidelines in the presence of the UN Cargo Superintendent. In the event of programme requirements, UN agencies will handle the commodities including port-clearance, storage and transportation arriving by sea/land through WFP-appointed Cargo & Freight (C&F) agents

20. The UN superintendent should be present at the un-stuffing of the containers in the discharge port, which should take place on unloading 130 from the vessel. Any damage or losses found at that time will be considered to have occurred during the period when UN had title to the cargo. If the un-stuffing of the containers is delayed and/or takes place without UN superintendents being present, any damage or losses will be considered to have occurred after the time which UN has passed title to the recipient government. If the containers are transported from/to port at discharge, unopened, to the project site, for the convenience of the recipient government, UN superintendents will not be requested to travel to the place of un-stuffing and any losses or damages will be for the account of the Government, who will have the right to claim for such losses from the carriers.

It is advisable that cargo carried in FCL containers should not be unstuffed and delivered from inside the port. Containers should be taken to the designated warehouse located outside port and damaged cargo found during un-stuffing should be kept segregated from other cargo and destruction should be done according to standing government procedure. In cases when delivery is taken from inside the port, the damaged cargo should be taken out simultaneously and can be segregated in the designated warehouse, to be disposed-off as per standard procedure.

21. Where food commodities are purchased locally in the country for the programme, the purchase will be undertaken by WFP in accordance with the WFP rules and procedures. The Government will exempt such purchases from all local duties, VAT and taxes. In case of inspection of commodities, UN appointed superintendents at the designated point of delivery will verify the quality and quantities of commodities.

22. Relevant Government line agencies will be responsible for the issuance of customs duty and sales tax/value added tax (CDST/VAT) exemption certificates for food commodities imported for UN assisted activities. Government shall exempt UN from all duties, VAT, and taxes for the goods and services directly purchased and/or contracted by UN agencies for the programme/operations. No further confirmation from the NBR will be required for exemption of duties, TAX and VAT for the procurement of these goods and services.

23. Government, through the Ministry of Food, will be responsible for overall management of cereals imported by UN agencies or purchased locally, including the tracking and delivery through the public food distribution system (PFDS) as required under this agreement. The Government shall ensure that all cereals received under the programme are merged with national stocks on arrival to Bangladesh and will make an equivalent quantity and quality of cereals available as requested by UN agencies from its depots at the nearest location to the programme implementation sites. Moreover, based on donor's preference, Government will also ensure separate storage facilities of UN agencies' cereal commodities ensuring the same wheat is used for its programme.

Photo : SAFE Plus

ANNEX 3: HARMONIZED APPROACH TO CASH TRANSFERS (HACT)

HACT is a common operational framework implemented by some UN Agencies to govern transferring cash to government and non-government implementing partners. There are five agencies in Bangladesh currently implementing HACT: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP..

The management of HACT subscribes to the following principles:

(i) cost-effective management of risks;
(ii) standardized and streamlined inter-agency practices;
(iii) accountability and
(iv) national ownership. It applies to all cash transferred to government and civil society partners

A. CASH TRANSFERS

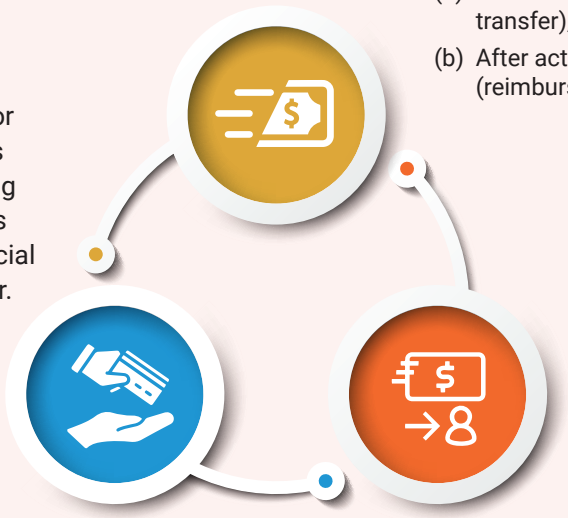
All cash transfers to an Implementing Partner are based on the Workplans agreed between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies.

Cash transfers for activities detailed in workplans can be made by the UN system agencies using the following modalities:

Cash transferred directly to the Implementing Partner:

(a) Prior to the start of activities (direct cash transfer), or
(b) After activities have been completed (reimbursement).

Direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners based on requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner.



Direct payments to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners.

Where cash transfers are made to a national institution, the national institution shall transfer such cash promptly to the Implementing Partner. Direct cash transfers shall be requested and released for programme implementation periods not exceeding three months. Reimbursements of previously authorized expenditures shall be requested and released quarterly or after the completion of activities. The UN system agencies shall not be obligated to reimburse expenditure made by the Implementing Partner over and above the authorized amounts.

Following the completion of any activity, any balance of funds shall be refunded or programmed by mutual agreement between the Implementing Partner and the UN system agencies. Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may depend on the findings of a review of the public financial management capacity in the case of a Government Implementing Partner, and of an assessment of the financial management capacity of the non-UN[30] Implementing Partners.

[30] *For the purposes of these clauses, "the UN" includes the IFIs.

A qualified consultant, such as a public accounting firm, selected by the UN system agencies may conduct such an assessment, in which the Implementing Partner shall participate. The Implementing Partner may participate in the selection of the consultant. Cash transfer modalities, the size of disbursements, and the scope and frequency of assurance activities may be revised during programme implementation based on the findings of programme monitoring, expenditure monitoring and reporting, and audits.

In case of direct cash transfer or reimbursement, the UN system agencies shall notify the Implementing Partner of the amount approved by the UN system agencies and shall disburse funds to the Implementing Partner within the number of days as per UN system agency schedule. In case of direct payment to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the Implementing Partners on the basis of requests signed by the designated official of the Implementing Partner; or to vendors or third parties for obligations incurred by the UN system agencies in support of activities agreed with Implementing Partners, the UN system agencies shall proceed with the payment within the number of days as agreed by the UN system agency.

The UN system agencies shall not have any direct liability under the contractual arrangements concluded between the Implementing Partner and a third-party vendor.

Where one UN system agency and other UN system agencies provide cash to the same Implementing Partner, programme monitoring, financial monitoring and auditing will be undertaken jointly or coordinated with those UN system agencies.

B. AUDITS

The audits will be commissioned by the UN system agencies and undertaken by private audit services.

A standard Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) report, reflecting the activity lines of the workplan (WP), will be used by Implementing Partners to request the release of funds, or to secure the agreement that the UN organization will reimburse or directly pay for planned expenditure. The Implementing Partners will use the FACE to report on the utilization of cash received.

The Implementing Partner shall identify the designated official(s) authorized to provide the account details, request, and certify the use of cash. The FACE will be certified by the designated official(s) of the Implementing Partner. Cash transferred to Implementing Partners should be spent for the purpose of activities and within the timeframe as agreed in the workplans only.

Cash received by the Government and national NGO Implementing Partners shall be used in accordance with established national regulations, policies and procedures consistent with international standards, in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the workplans and ensuring that reports on the utilization of all received cash are submitted to the UN organization within six months after receipt of the funds. Where any of the national regulations, policies and procedures are not consistent with international standards, the UN system agency financial and other related rules and system agency regulations, policies and procedures will apply.

In the case of international NGO/CSO and IGO Implementing Partners cash received shall be used in accordance with international standards in particular ensuring that cash is expended for activities as agreed in the workplans, and ensuring that reports on the full utilization of all received cash are submitted to the UN organization within six months after receipt of the funds. To facilitate scheduled and special audits, each Implementing Partner receiving cash from a UN organization will provide UN system agency or its representative with timely access to:

(i) All financial records which establish the transactional record of the cash transfers provided by the UN system agency, together with relevant documentation.

(ii) All relevant documentation and personnel associated with the functioning of the Implementing Partner's internal control structure through which the cash transfers have passed.

The findings of each audit will be reported to the Implementing Partner and the UN organization. Each Implementing Partner will furthermore:

(i) Receive and review the audit report issued by the auditors.
(ii) Provide a timely statement of the acceptance or rejection of any audit recommendation to the UN organization that provided cash and to the SAI so that the auditors include these statements in their final audit report before submitting it to the UN organization.
(iii) Undertake timely actions to address the accepted audit recommendations. Report on the actions taken to implement accepted recommendations to the UN system agencies and to the SAI, on a quarterly basis (or as locally agreed).

The Supreme Audit Institution may undertake the audits of Government Implementing Partners. If the SAI chooses not to undertake the audits of specific Implementing Partners to the frequency and scope required by the UN system agencies, the UN system agencies will commission the audits to be undertaken by private sector audit services.

ANNEX 4: BUSINESS OPERATIONS STRATEGY

The Business Operations Strategy (BOS) is a results-based framework that focuses on joint business operations to eliminate duplication, leverage the UN's common bargaining power, and maximize economies of scale.

In line with the UN Secretary-General's reform targets, Bangladesh has designed a BOS to support more effective programme delivery on the 2030 Agenda. The Operations Management Team developed the BOS, which focuses on common services that are implemented jointly or delivered by one UN entity on behalf of one or more other UN entities. BOS identified common services for future collaboration in finance, administration services (including common Facilities/Premises), logistics, procurement, human resources, and ICT services. A total of 44 existing common services within the six common service lines were identified during the stock-taking exercise with the recommendation to scale up 23 of these services. During the Opportunity Analysis and Cost-Benefit Analysis exercise, 68 new services that could be carried out collaboratively through the BOS were identified, considering quality enhancements and cost-effectiveness.

UN programmes' impact at the country level relies on the effectiveness, efficiency, and cost of the operations that support them. As the UN system in Bangladesh embarks on implementing the UNSDCF, the BOS implementation will contribute to better quality and lower cost business operations, freeing up more resources for programme delivery and ensuring gender responsive dimensions in operations.

The BOS integrates Disability and Inclusion considerations into all its common service business processes. Training on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Preventive of Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority (PSHAA) for UN personnel and advocacy efforts with contractors and service providers are also included. The BOS also considers environmental sustainability initiatives.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS