

Bangladesh

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**(Draft) Statement by H.E. Mst. Asia Khatun, Commissioner (Enquiry),
Anti-Corruption Commission of Bangladesh under agenda item 1 (f):
'General discussion' at the 10th Session of the Conference of the States
Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Atlanta,
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Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I express sincere appreciation to the USA for hosting the 10th Session of the UNCAC CoSP in this beautiful city of Atlanta. I begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and other members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I also commend UNODC and the Secretariat for the excellent preparation and documentation for this Session.

We congratulate Egypt for their successful and fruitful Presidency as well. While endorsing the statement of the G-77 and China, I would like to like to deliver the following in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

In this historic session, we are not only celebrating the successful completion of two decades of the sole global instrument to combat corruption, the UNCAC, but also reiterating our collective resolve to keep on fighting against corruption, nationally and globally, as would be reflected in the Atlanta Declaration, this year. My delegation appreciates our colleagues for negotiating and finalizing this Declaration aiming to further strengthen international cooperation to fight against corruption, in all its manifests.

Mr. President,

Our Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dreamed a 'Sonar Bangla', or a land full of prosperity for all. Corruption erodes that dream. Bangladesh government therefore has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against corruption as we are constitutionally bound to fight against

corruption according to Article 20 of our Constitution. We believe that combating corruption for sustaining economic growth, achieving Sustainable Development Goals, and creating a better future for next generations.

We have adopted a three-pronged holistic approach to fight and pre-empt corruption:

First, by strengthening national legal architecture and joining regional and global anti-corruption initiatives;

Second, by establishing efficient and effective institutional infrastructure to combat corruption; and

Third, by consistently promoting social awareness against corruption.

We have enacted fourteen national laws and regulations aiming to prevent and combat corruption. Bangladesh has also promulgated the Whistle Blower protection Act in 2011 to protect the information providers.

Mr. President,

Established in 2004, Bangladesh Anti-Corruption Commission is an independent, self-governed, and impartial organization with the mission of preventing and combating corruption. Since its inception, it has been conducting independent inquiries and investigations against allegations of corruption as well as promoting the habit of practicing honesty and integrity in society through public awareness campaign. Besides the ACC, there are 06 (six) other investigating agencies, such as- the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Bangladesh Police, Department of Narcotics Control, Bangladesh Customs, National Board of Revenue, Department of Environment, and the Securities and Exchange Commission – that investigate the predicate offences in Bangladesh with regard to money laundering.

We have also adopted the National Integrity Strategy (NIS) with a set of goals, strategies and action plans to increase accountability, efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness across the public services to improve governance by reducing corruption.

In our pursuit to build up a nation-wide social movement against corruption, the Commission has established 504 citizens' committees named 'Corruption Prevention Committees (CPC)' all over in Bangladesh and launched a 24X7 toll-free hotline to receive allegations. It runs a year-long anti-corruption social campaign. Since 2014, ACC conducted 158 town-hall

meetings against corruption. It has also installed web-based Investigation and Prosecution system to manage the cases. It publishes a quarterly to disseminate the status of cases, charge sheets, judgements, and enforcement operations to the public.

Mr. President,

One of our target audiences for anti-corruption campaign is our youth. ACC has formed more than twenty-five thousand Integrity Units in schools and colleges. Students participating in these Units, discuss, debate, draw, paint, against corruption and motivate peers to hate corruption. There are also almost seven thousand 'Honesty Store' in schools and colleges where there are no salesmen. So, the students learn to remain responsive to their own conscious even when there is no society to watch.

ACC has also signed various MoUs on combating corruption with other public institutions and non-governmental institutions.

Mr. President,

We are firmly committed to UNCAC, and its full and effective implementation. We have volunteered to participate in the 1st and 2nd review cycles. Bangladesh was reviewed and also reviewing other member countries. The process allowed us both to learn as well as to share our experiences, enriching all the countries involved. For effective implementation of the UNCAC, we have also established a comprehensive domestic legal as well as institutional infrastructure. I am pleased to apprise this august gathering that we have just submitted our 2nd cycle review report.

We have been working with all the stakeholders both in Bangladesh and beyond. Bilaterally, ACC has signed anti-corruption cooperation MoUs with India, Bhutan and Russia. It is in the process of entering into Globe network. Regionally, Bangladesh is a party to South Asian Convention on Mutual Assistance and criminal matters.

Under the guidance of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has set precedents for her people to face corruption related investigations and prosecutions.

Mr. President,

Preventing money laundering and returning recovered assets to the country of origin can contribute to effective resource mobilization for those countries. Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit has developed a national strategy paper to combat money laundering and terror financing consisting of eleven strategies and 137 action proposed. Under FATF, we have completed gap analysis in 2011 and 2015 and taken remedies. We also signed MoUs with 81 jurisdictions to fight laundering of corruption proceeds. In fact, Bangladesh is the first in South Asia, to issue a guideline to banks and MFAs to prevent money laundering. In last two years, more than twenty-two thousand STR and SAR were investigated. ACC and BFIU are working hand in hand to make corruption difficult.

We also developed a comprehensive guideline on stolen asset recovery and relevant legal framework. Unfortunately, despite explicit UNCAC provisions, there are increased barriers in the asset recovery process as well as speedy return of the same to countries of origin. We emphasize that the banks and financial institutions of the requested state, should return the recovered assets to the states of origin unconditionally, and should use bank secrecy law or privacy law as tools to not to collaborate.

Mr. President,

There is a growing need for international cooperation; and to strengthen country-led and based, integrated and coordinated technical assistance, especially for developing countries, including material support, capacity-building and training, through bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation; as committed in the UNGASS Political Declaration. In this context, we appreciate the UNODC Strategy 2021-25 for important policy elements on international cooperation, technical assistance, and asset recovery.

Mr. President,

On this occasion of celebrating UNCAC's twenty years, we must promise ourselves that we would redouble our efforts and uproot the underlying factors and enablers of corruption, nationally and globally.

Thank you.