ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR BANGLADESH
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UNDP
UNICEF
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Executive Summary

The vision of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to give priority to and protect the poor and vulnerable remains as relevant today as it was in 2000. However, retaining a sense of the MDGs’ realism and clarity must now also be balanced with a need to be more ambitious in light of major changes that have occurred worldwide, including: (1) the need to reduce inequalities within and among countries; (2) to ensure inclusive growth and employment creation; (3) to tackle climate change and achieve sustainable development; (4) to increase resilience to natural disasters; (5) to improve governance and State capabilities; (6) to respect human rights for all and cultural diversity; (7) to ensure peace and security; (8) to address demographic and epidemiological dynamics; (9) to deal with rapid urban growth; and (10) to consolidate the sharing of knowledge.

These all point to the need for a broader post-2015 development agenda. Interconnectedness of the new goals and targets must be emphasized, as does the recognition of the value of greater reliance on participatory approaches to ensure better implementation and enhance ownership of results.

As we move forward with defining new development goals and targets for the post-2015 agenda, it is important to build on MDG milestones and achievements and address gaps that remain unresolved. In Bangladesh, remarkable progress has been made across many of the MDGs, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction, gender parity in education, maternal mortality, child mortality and combating HIV/AIDS and other major diseases. Despite the positive progress, much work remains to address ongoing challenges in the areas of nutrition, maternal health, environmental sustainability and growing inequalities based on geography, groups, in particular gender. The Post-2015 agenda, anchored around the key principles of equity, sustainability, and human rights for all, offers a good opportunity to galvanize an effective response to these pressing issues.

To set the stage for action, a set of broader development enablers is outlined in the report defining issues and dynamics that are fundamental to Bangladesh’s development. These include for example, population and migration, rapid, unplanned urbanization and important cross-cutting themes such as knowledge and technology as catalysts for development. Similarly, volunteerism and culture-led development are highlighted as tools for achieving greater impact.

As a contribution to the global dialogue on the post-2015 agenda, based on Bangladesh’s experiences, a total of 13 goals have been formulated, with suggested targets and indicators. Critically, this includes a separate nutrition goal, as well as a separate gender goal, to address two of the most pressing development challenges. The proposed goals to be taken forward are:

- **Goal 1:** Secure economic growth that is inclusive, reduces poverty and inequality, creates sufficient numbers of decent jobs and is environmentally sustainable;
- **Goal 2:** Ensure sustainable food security and good nutrition;
- **Goal 3:** Reduce social inequality, particularly among marginalized groups and improve living conditions;
• **Goal 4:** Achieve equality between women and men;

• **Goal 5:** Ensure health for all;

• **Goal 6:** Provide high quality basic education;

• **Goal 7:** Reduce social risks and vulnerabilities;

• **Goal 8:** Ensure inclusive environment and natural resources management that promotes sustainable eco-systems, development and green growth, livelihoods and health;

• **Goal 9:** Reduce risk and build resilience to disasters and climate change with a focus on adaptation;

• **Goal 10:** Improve diversity of, and access to, clean and more efficient sources of energy;

• **Goal 11:** Improve accountability of public institutions for equitable public service provision for all communities;

• **Goal 12:** Ensure equal participation and effective representation of marginalized groups, thereby strengthening inclusive democratic governance;

• **Goal 13:** Strengthen rule of law, access to justice and promotion and protection of human rights.

“Business as usual” cannot be an option. Transformative change that encourages creativity and innovation in the pursuit of inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and development is needed. Strengthening equity, enabling voice and participation, confronting social, environmental and economic challenges simultaneously, managing demographic change, and capitalizing on new partnerships: Bangladesh must move forward boldly on all these development fronts in the post-2015 era. But if it can achieve these considerable ambitions and sustain the momentum – and it is a country with the undeniable potential to do so – then it can realize the future we want for all in Bangladesh.
**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCCSAP</td>
<td>Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan</td>
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<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<td>CHT</td>
<td>Chittagong Hill Tracts</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>EmOC</td>
<td>Emergency Obstetric Care</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>LDC</td>
<td>Least Developed Country</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
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<td>MMR</td>
<td>Maternal Mortality Ratio</td>
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<td>MTBF</td>
<td>Medium-Term Budget Framework</td>
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<td>NCD</td>
<td>Non-Communicable Disease</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organization</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>SAARC</td>
<td>South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCP</td>
<td>Sustainable Consumption and Production</td>
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<td>SE4ALL</td>
<td>Sustainable Energy for All</td>
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<td>UNCT</td>
<td>United Nations Country Team</td>
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<td>UNDAF</td>
<td>United Nations Development Assistance Framework</td>
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<td>UPPR</td>
<td>Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>XDR TB</td>
<td>Extensively Drug Resistant Tuberculosis</td>
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Chapter 1: Context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Bangladesh

I. Introduction: The Global Future We Want for All

In 2000, world leaders set forth a shared vision for development in the form of the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and based on the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that followed have since provided an inspirational vision and time-bound milestones for global and national development efforts, with an overall target date of 2015.

The MDG framework made an historic contribution to providing a common cause to address poverty and put human progress at the forefront of the global development agenda. Consultations around the world indicate that MDG issues—some of the most fundamental causes and manifestations of extreme poverty—still resonate as the essential building blocks of human development.¹

The MDG focus on a limited set of concrete human development goals and targets—simple, realistic and achievable—helped to galvanize development efforts, set global and national priorities, and focus action at all levels, mobilizing a vast array of political, financial, technical and human resources for development. Important progress has been made in most countries, including Bangladesh, particularly toward the goal of eradicating poverty. In addition, globally fewer children are dying, fewer children are underweight, fewer people are contracting HIV, and fewer women die in childbirth each year.

Yet trends have been uneven within and across countries and regions: For example, the number of the world’s poor living on less than US$1.25 a day decreased from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 1.3 billion by 2008—but in absolute terms the reduction was overwhelmingly concentrated in China, while in sub-Saharan Africa the number of poor people increased.³ At the same time, 3 in 4 of the world’s poor now live in what are Middle Income Countries.

Even so, the vision of the MDGs to give priority to and protect the poor and vulnerable remains as relevant today as it was in 2000; the global HIV/AIDS response in particular has pioneered innovative approaches through its principles of inclusion, shared accountability and global solidarity. Retaining a sense of the MDGs’ realism and clarity, however, must now also be balanced with a need to be more ambitious in light of major changes that have occurred worldwide and that point to the need for a broader development agenda. A number of key challenges and new realities have become more pressing since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and did not figure explicitly in the MDG framework. These include:

² Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; ensuring universal access to primary education; reducing child and maternal mortality and improving maternal health; promoting gender equality and empowering women; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development.
³ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General. New York, June 2012.
Reducing inequalities within and among countries, which with few exceptions have widened over the years; for example, the Gini coefficient in Asia as a whole increased from 0.39 in the mid-1990s to 0.46 in the late 2000s. Genuine inclusion of views and voices of the most marginalized populations into social contracts also remains a key measure of inclusiveness as well as a driver of growth with equity.

Ensuring inclusive growth and employment creation

Tackling climate change and achieving sustainable development, amid increased levels of consumption patterns that contribute to this process and threaten to surpass the Earth’s carrying capacity.

Increasing resilience to natural disasters, in part attributable to human-induced climate change.

Improving governance and State capabilities, to address democratic deficits and ensure the legitimacy of development policies while supporting people’s empowerment.

Respecting human rights for all and cultural diversity, the foundation of any agenda for achieving a better life.

Ensuring peace and security, given that at least one-fifth of humanity lives in countries experiencing significant violence, political conflict, and social fragility.

Addressing demographic and epidemiological dynamics, bearing in mind the migration today that affects every region.

Dealing with rapid urban growth, with close to 1 billion people living in inequitable and often life-threatening urban conditions.

Consolidating the sharing of knowledge, including stimulating South-South solutions, to induce transformative changes.

In particular, three more features also will have to be prioritized. First is the need for a greater emphasis on the high degree of interconnectedness of goals and targets so that the relevant synergies can be maximized and national specificities accommodated. Given the limitations of isolated development approaches, many countries appear to be seeking a post-2015 framework that better integrates sectors, simultaneously addressing social, economic, environmental and political determinants. For example, consultations in Bangladesh have emphasized investing in nutrition to improve child and maternal health as being the best investment the society can make.

The second priority feature is to recognize the value of greater reliance on participatory approaches that ensure better implementation and enhance ownership in results, a key lesson emerging from the MDG experience of the global South. Finally, the post-2015 vision should avoid duplicating a critical MDG misstep: while inclusiveness, human rights, equity, dignity and gender equality were ubiquitous in the language around the Goals, they were lost in the translation into the Goals themselves.

Dealing with these challenges in the context of a broader development agenda requires coherent responses that are the responsibility of all countries. In Bangladesh, the post-2015 national

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5United Nations System Task Team, op.cit.
consultations provided opportunities for the country to reflect and draw upon its experiences with the MDG framework, have a say in the new global development goals, and ensure the goals are relevant to Bangladesh. To this end, the Government of Bangladesh committed to lead the national consultative process in an inclusive and participatory manner. The national discourse on post-2015 development goals actually began early in 2012 in Bangladesh, before the historic Rio+20 Conference. The Government organized two High Level Consultations on this important topic, in February and May 2012, with the active participation of leading policymakers, experts, private sector and civil society organization (CSO) representatives, donor agency partners, and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) members.

In addition, at the Rio+20 Conference itself, the Government held an inter-governmental side event with the Government of Viet Nam to showcase the green economy as a win-win opportunity in these two developing countries. It further organized a separate Bangladeshi CSO side event at Rio+20, also on the topic of the green economy. Various other events have taken place post-Rio+20 as well; for example, the Government led a two-day conference on people’s empowerment and development in August 2012.

As a continuation of this process of national discourse, on 10 November 2012 the Government conducted the first de facto post-2015 National Expert Level Consultation Conference, which brought the national consultation process on the post-2015 agenda to the forefront. The aim of this conference was to identify gaps and challenges that exist in relation to sustainable development and to generate ideas on preliminary post-2015 goals, targets and indicators.

The summary report from this national conference has served as the discussion piece for subsequent consultations. Apart from this major national conference, the Government organized nine regional/district-level consultation meetings between November 2012 and April 2013 to ensure the final post-2015 report is robust and reflects the voice of the people. The consultation process culminated in early June 2013 with the concluding National Level Conference, an event that gave final approval to the post-2015 framework as elaborated and proposed by Bangladesh.

The United Nations System has been closely engaged in the consultation process from the onset by providing mainly technical expertise. Further, the United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Funds contributed substantively to preparation of thematic Concept Notes for the National Expert Level Conference. Apart from supporting the national consultation process, the UNCT has prepared this report as its vision for the post-2015 development agenda in the country, complementing Government efforts to achieve transformative change toward ever more inclusive, people-centred development. In so doing, we hope to inspire and assist Bangladesh in determining how best to pursue this vision.

II. Bangladesh’s National Vision and Progress Toward the MDGs

Over the more than four decades since its independence, Bangladesh has achieved remarkable development progress, increasing its real per-capita income by more than 130 percent, reducing its
poverty rate by 60 percent,\(^6\) and becoming well set to achieve most of the MDG targets. Rice production has more than tripled, to 35 million metric tonnes, despite shrinking areas of farmland, and the annual population growth rate has been brought down to 1.1 percent.\(^7\) Economically, the country has undergone a deep structural transformation, as the ready-made garments sector turned into a US$20 billion-plus export powerhouse;\(^8\) the country also has grown more resilient, and is now more capable of handling natural disasters with minimum loss of life.

Nonetheless, Bangladesh remains a Least Developed Country (LDC) with substantial poverty, inequality and deprivation. An estimated 47 million people\(^9\)are still below the poverty line, with a significant proportion living in households in remote areas or consisting of marginalized people; in addition, 43 percent of female-headed households are believed to be very poor.\(^10\) Most of the labour force engages in informal, low-income and low-productivity jobs. Access to secondary and tertiary education is limited, and the quality of education at all levels requires significant further strengthening. Poor people are severely disadvantaged in terms of ownership of assets and have inadequate access to basic services, including quality education, health care, water and sanitation. The poor, among them especially the women and children, are also disproportionately affected by natural disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. Social protection programmes, despite expansion, remain inadequate.

In recognition of the long-term development challenges, the Government has adopted its Vision 2021 and associated Perspective Plan 2010-2021, which have set solid development targets for Bangladesh by the end of this period, with a goal of graduation from LDC to middle-income status. These targets, if achieved, will further transform Bangladesh, so that people enjoy a higher standard of living, will be better educated, will face strengthened social justice, will have a more equitable socioeconomic environment, and will enjoy enhanced protection from climate change and natural disasters. The associated political environment is intended to be based on democratic principles, with an emphasis on human rights, rule of law, freedom of expression, equality of citizens, and equality of opportunities.

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\(^9\) General Economics Division, Planning Commission, op.cit.

Implementation of Vision 2021 is being done through two medium-term development plans, including the current Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan 2011-2015, which focuses on strategies including, among others: (1) reduction of serious income and non-income inequalities, particularly with regard to gender; (2) the further development of a labour-intensive manufacturing sector; (3) expansion of the export of well-trained skilled and semi-skilled human capital to destinations abroad, which in turn will raise inflows of international remittances; (4) an emphasis on girls’ education, female reproductive health, and the slowing of population growth; and (5) raising the productivity of land and increasing the diversification of agricultural production.

In addition, the Sixth Five-Year Plan gives special attention to: (6) tackling acute levels of urbanization, which are placing unsustainable pressure on already-fragile infrastructure; (7) significantly strengthening the social protection system; and (8) pursuing an environmentally sustainable development process, especially focused on conservation of natural resources and on containing the adverse consequences of climate change.

In particular, it also focuses on (9) ensuring good governance, taking into consideration core capacity constraints in public administration, weaknesses in economic management, and issues of corruption. It proposes to tackle this particularly crucial priority through strengthening of the civil service, promoting devolution to local governments, strengthening of public-private partnerships, and reform of planning and budgetary processes.

With regard to the MDGs in Bangladesh, solid progress has been made, particularly on the poverty aspects of MDG1 (Eradicate extreme poverty), MDG4 (Reduce child mortality), MDG6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases), and democratic governance. Strikingly, gender parity has been achieved not only at primary education level, but also at secondary level; moreover, girls are outnumbering boys even at tertiary level. On the demographic front, life expectancy at birth increased 67.2 years in 2009, with slightly higher life expectancy for females, while maternal and infant mortality rates have fallen markedly. Housing conditions have also undergone noticeable changes, with an increase in the proportion of solid constructed homes, declining household sizes and improved sanitation and piped water. Similar improvement has also taken place in sanitation and access to drinking water.

However, major challenges remain, especially with regard to the nutrition aspects of MDG1 (Eradicate extreme hunger); MDG5 (Improve maternal health); MDG7 (Ensure environmental sustainability), which is fully off track and unlikely to be met; and tackling growing geographical, gender- and group-based inequalities. Gender equality in particular, which is addressed specifically in MDG3 but relates to all the MDGs, likewise remains a core challenge in the country.

III. Bangladesh’s Opportunities Post-2015: An Overarching Framework of Equity, Sustainability and Human Rights for All

Bangladesh faces a myriad of development opportunities in the post-2015 period that require not only a holistic vision, but also a broad approach to development, based on social justice, structural transformation, and economic diversification and growth. Much of this is already being supported by
the United Nations System in Bangladesh under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2016 and its seven pillars, which are aligned with national priorities.11

In turn, the values and principles affirmed in the Millennium Declaration and its key objectives remain a solid foundation for addressing today’s and tomorrow’s development challenges. In Bangladesh, as elsewhere around the world, consultations have shown that poverty reduction, access to quality education, health, water and sanitation and equality between women and men are still high on their agenda, as are the need to reduce child undernutrition, address different forms of inequalities, ensure environmental sustainability and foster partnerships at national and international levels. This can be done by building a framework that is based on the three fundamental principles of equity, sustainability and human rights for all, and by orienting key goals along highly interdependent dimensions of inclusive economic development, inclusive social development, environmental sustainability, and inclusive governance.

All this will be fuelled by broad key development enablers that should be effective in supporting the achievement of goals in all dimensions – and in serving as a guide for a high degree of policy coherence at national and sub-national levels alike (see Section IV for more on enablers specific to Bangladesh). Adherence to core values of social justice, structural transformation and policy innovation, as well as mutual and participatory learning, likewise will be necessary. At the same time, this agenda is intended to leave ample space for national policy design and adaptation to the Bangladesh context, but to be guided by the overall vision and its underlying principles.

The three principles constitute the common underlying elements necessary to address and resolve the challenges that people in Bangladesh will face in the post-2015 era, while the core dimensions are consistent with the aspiration of freedom from want for present and future generations, as well as that of freedom from fear.

The reduction of inequities in Bangladesh, as in all societies, is essential to a vision of inclusive, sustainable development.12 Adoption of explicitly inclusive approaches is thus merited not only on ethical grounds, but also from the perspective of development. Such approaches need to give the highest priority to addressing the situation of women, youth, children, and older people, while also reaching groups marginalized by ethnicity, religion or other social classifications. They also need to seek the greatest potential for progress by removing social, cultural, legal, administrative and financial barriers in these groups’ access to services, decent jobs and entrepreneurship, and land and other productive resources. Change will require recognizing and tackling both the gaps that are manifested and their structural causes, including discrimination and exclusion, while also understanding the structural and intersecting nature of inequities.

The values of human rights for all are based on the fundamental values noted in Section I, which also will need to underpin the post-2015 development agenda. Encompassing social and economic rights, as well as civil and political rights and the right to development, these need to be addressed

11 The seven UNDAF pillars are: (1) Democratic Governance and Human Rights; (2) Pro-Poor Growth with Equity; (3) Social Services for Human Development; (4) Food Security and Nutrition; (5) Climate Change, Environment, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Response; (6) Pro-Poor Urban Development; and (7) Gender Equality and Women’s Advancement.
12 While there is no common definition of inclusive development, the term is generally understood to refer to growth coupled with equal opportunities, and has economic, social and institutional dimensions.
simultaneously. Meanwhile, sustainability, broadly defined, must serve as a fundamental principle for all aspects of development. This represents a key challenge that comprises a need for acknowledgement of strong inter-linkages between economic, social and environmental dimensions, to ensure a future world fit for the generations to come.

At the same time, the four dimensions identified will require holistic approaches to national policies. Development will need to involve stable, equitable and inclusive economic growth based on sustainable patterns of production and consumption. To be inclusive will require a macroeconomic approach that is aligned with broader development policies giving rise to adequate generation of productive employment and decent work, including development of a labour-intensive manufacturing sector; reduction of poverty; welfare protection; and green growth.

Under inclusive social development, ensuring people’s rights to education, health, nutrition and human security in Bangladesh is vital and will require adequate investments to realize unmet MDGs, facilitate sustainable employment generation, and close the gaps that perpetuate inequity and poverty. In environmental sustainability, immediate priorities include ensuring a more stable climate, improving scientific understanding and knowledge sharing on Disaster Risk Reduction, preventing land degradation, protecting the natural resource base, and transitioning to low-carbon energy sources while promoting energy-efficient technologies. Lastly, inclusive governance will need to focus on enabling policies in critical governance areas, including effective governance of systems for social development and quality service delivery that is affordable to even the poorest groups. It also will make wide use of fundamental human rights enablers such as participation, accountability, empowerment and rule of law, all of which provide a strengthened foundation for inclusive development paths.

In all, the UNCT has attempted to reach consensus on the contours of a post-2015 agenda that helps to adequately identify the development needs of present and future generations in Bangladesh. It has crystallized these priorities into clear development goals with a timeframe of 2030 that can help guide policy action, with a continued overarching goal of reducing poverty. While sets of goals and suggested targets and data indicators to track progress have been designed with Bangladesh’s characteristics in mind, the UNCT also believes these proposals may have some use in similar developing-country contexts.

IV. Key Development Enablers in Bangladesh Post-2015

4a. Population Dynamics and Human Mobility

With an estimated population of 152 million in 2012, Bangladesh is the seventh most-populous nation on Earth, and with the highest population density at 960 people per square kilometre. All this occurs in a relatively small land area and amid difficult and complex hydrology at the confluence of two of the world’s largest rivers. Despite a relative decline in fertility, the population is expected to reach 165 to 170 million by 2020. Access to reproductive health and protection of reproductive rights thereby continue to represent a critical challenge for achieving dignified human development and well-being for all.

Yet current population challenges are not only about numbers, but also about polarization of abundance and deprivation – in other words, inequalities. Thus, demography presents a particularly complex challenge in the post-2015 framework. Many developing countries, including Bangladesh,
face the challenge of a “youth bulge,”¹³ which can nonetheless serve as a demographic window of opportunity: If youth find sufficient productive employment and are given priority investments in education and health, the youth bulge translates into a demographic dividend. An investment in adolescent girls in particular could make a significant and lasting contribution to reducing gender inequalities, help to break intergenerational cycles of deprivation and poor health, and support achievement of national priorities. On the other hand, a failure to invest in youth may reinforce inequalities and can become a major source of social instability.¹⁴

At the same time, the population aged 60 and older is expected to double from 2015 onward, which will need to entail the promotion of healthy ageing and economic well-being in old age as well as a supportive environment where older persons are integrated into the development process as an asset.

Critically, Bangladesh is also rapidly urbanizing, with a tremendous bearing on macro social and economic development processes and outcomes.¹⁵ At an annual growth rate of 3.7 percent, urban population growth in the country has been higher than in all other countries of South Asia except Nepal.¹⁶ Projections show a possible urban population of nearly 100 million by 2030. Even so, the shift toward a dominantly urban existence is not simply a demographic phenomenon characterized by change from one locale to another. Rather, it is a galvanizing momentum permeating many aspects of national development.

Urbanization also is a dynamic which, if effectively steered, can potentially serve as a force for enabling Bangladesh to overcome some of its current and future challenges: Poverty will be compounded by the rise of the “new poor,” particularly in urban areas, although it will be important to remember that differences between poor settlements can be as significant as their commonalities. The environmental agenda will need to be recast when the urbanization dimension is factored in, given that cities contribute the majority of total greenhouse gas emissions. Rising inequalities may generate tension whose locus will be in cities and towns. Yet cities also are the places where new ideas form, technological and artistic innovation happen, and creative solutions to problems emerge—all providing huge opportunities for investment and employment, as well as increased productivity and competitiveness.

Nevertheless, major challenges must be addressed, including the provision of sufficient and quality urban social services. The vast majority of this urban population will be migrants, and most likely living in settlements of the poor. By 2009, as many as 84 percent of Dhaka residents already were migrants, a trend also confirmed in the population census of 2011.¹⁷ Significantly, some of these migrants may be moving not only for reasons of perceived economic opportunity but also in response to climate and/or environmental change (see also Chapter 4). In Dhaka and Chittagong, a striking new development is the privatization of poor settlements: The urban poor have come to constitute a lucrative housing market for unscrupulous land grabbers or corrupt officials who establish informal housing settlements on often-disputed public land. Urban poor thus often suffer

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¹³ Justin Yifu Lin. “Youth Bulge: A Demographic Dividend or a Demographic Bomb in Developing Countries?,” available on Let’s Talk Development, blog hosted by World Bank Chief Economist. 2012.
¹⁷ Hossain Zillur Rahman et al., op.cit.
from a reality of being “illegal citizens” within the urban scenario, with greater burdens of insecurity and social marginalization.

In addition, Bangladeshis form an ever-rising component of the estimated 214 million international migrants worldwide, a figure representing 3 percent of the total global population.\(^\text{18}\) While the numbers of internal migrants are difficult to assess, Government sources say that currently more than 8 million Bangladeshis are working abroad.\(^\text{19}\) One set of factors is often regarded as being of singular importance in underpinning this mobility: social, economic and demographic inequalities, whether experienced in terms of employment opportunities, education, resources or human rights.

Remittance flows from migrants make a huge contribution to the national economy, bringing in more than 14 billion Taka in 2012. In addition, a growing body of research suggests that remittances, which are often invested in education, health and housing, can help to achieve internationally agreed development goals, a process likely to accelerate in the post-2015 agenda.

At the same time, migration comes with some risks. The Government has made efforts to streamline migration management, addressing issues for migrant workers at national, sub-regional, regional and international levels. While efforts to make the formal channels safer, especially for aspirant women workers, have been a priority for some stakeholders involved in the process, there are risks of abuse and exploitation for both men and women, due to the lack of adequate protection mechanisms in the informal sectors in destination countries. Migration is also not without other risks, as mobility has been linked to behaviours and practices that have health and HIV implications; HIV infection rates are higher among migrant workers than the general population, and half of all new HIV infections in the country in 2011 were among migrant workers.

4b. Capturing Other Crosscutting Issues in the Bangladesh Context

Numerous crosscutting issues have a key role to play in the post-2015 development agenda in Bangladesh. Harnessing the power of knowledge, technology and innovation, for example, can advance national ambitions on robust economic growth, environment, food security, health and a variety of other public policies. There also is a clear linkage to wider social policies, in particular education, which is critical to developing the knowledge-intensive skills on which productivity, job creation and competitiveness depend. Creating systems and platforms through which knowledge can be shared, through which centres of learning can access and add to the stock of human knowledge, and through which people can learn about the frontiers of technology will need to be a growing priority.

Another relevant factor to take into consideration is the need to improve access to technologies, in particular, to information and communication technologies (ICTs). It has been estimated that a 10 percent increase in the penetration of high-speed Internet broadband networks contributes to a 1.8 percent increase in GDP.\(^\text{20}\) This clearly indicates why promoting access to these networks through improved public policies and regulations can become a vehicle for promoting development overall.

Meanwhile, improved agricultural technology and knowledge need to be developed and made available to farmers, while traditional and indigenous knowledge that support the selection and

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\(^{18}\) United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010.

\(^{19}\) Star Business, 6 May 2013.

utilization of crop varieties that best respond to extreme climate events will need to be further recognized. Technology and innovation also can introduce significant improvement and services into health services; one of the best examples in this regard is the use of ICTs to introduce telemedicine services and to improve the management of health records.

The international community, including the United Nations System, also has recognized the importance of meeting the information and communication needs of marginalized people as an essential tool for making development “people-centric” and to achieve more equitable and sustainable development. For example, using Communication for Development (C4D) approaches to empower families with knowledge and skills for local emergency preparedness and response can strengthen the effectiveness of all disaster risk reduction components.

In addition, volunteerism is a very old tradition, even as it also is a novel, and potentially fruitful, approach when thinking about national development policy. Volunteerism has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/57/106) as “an important component of any strategy aimed at ... poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management, and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination.” In all, by empowering people to participate in their own development and that of their community, volunteerism fosters ownership and broad-based, inclusive and sustainable development that contributes to the achievement of several goals simultaneously.

By purposefully creating ways of participation, volunteerism can help to enhance the integration into society of marginalized groups such as the poor, people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, women, people with disabilities and youth as well as older people. Equally important, it can be a means to improve democratic governance, serving as the basis for a vibrant civil society, which in turn is a crucial part of sound democratic structures. Moreover, it makes significant contributions to inclusive economic development, enhancing the employability of people and leading to the creation of new jobs by developing services, a benefit of particular importance to women and young people. In Bangladesh, nearly 16.6 million people serve as volunteers. A total of 1.9 billion hours of volunteering hours were recorded in 2010, with an estimated value of 117.7 billion Taka.\footnote{Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.\textit{Survey on Volunteerism in Bangladesh}.Dhaka, 2010.}

Particularly noteworthy is the mobilization and training of more than 60,000 volunteers affiliated with national non-Government organizations (NGOs) such as the Bangladesh Scouts; this has built the country’s human capital in disaster management and underlines the importance of volunteerism as a means to build and sustain national capacity, including for achievement of the goal of environmental sustainability. An encouraging recent development is the emergence of two national civil society groups focused on advocacy for and capacity building in nutrition. These groups are aligning themselves with the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement to build public awareness and demand for a higher priority for tackling the persisting challenges of undernutrition in the country.

Lastly, culture also can be a powerful driver for development, with community-wide social, economic and environmental impacts. Of particular relevance is the cultural sector’s contribution to the economy and poverty reduction. Cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, sustainable
cultural tourism, and cultural infrastructure can serve as strategic tools for revenue generation, particularly in a country such as Bangladesh, given its rich cultural heritage and substantial labour force. They also can serve as powerful economic sub-sectors that generate decent employment, stimulate local development and foster entrepreneurship. Promoting cultural and creative industries requires limited capital investment, involves low entry barriers and can have a direct impact on women and marginalized populations. It also has proven an excellent means for revitalizing urban economies, attracting visitors as well as investments.

Culture-led development also encompasses a range of non-monetized benefits, including greater social inclusiveness and rootedness, resilience, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship for individuals and communities, and the use of local resources, skills and knowledge. Cultural actors also influence lifestyles, individual behaviour, consumption patterns, values related to environmental stewardship, and interactions with the environment.

4c. Developing New Metrics to Monitor Performance

The MDGs were remarkably successful around the world, galvanizing widespread international support across the spectrum of stakeholders with their simplicity, comprehensible objectives, quantitative targets and laudable intentions. At the same time, they said little about how the Goals were to be achieved – about what kind of development model would drive the results. In some respects, the outcome was diffuse: The MDGs incorporated eight Goals, 21 quantifiable targets and 60 indicators, leading to some duplications and overlaps, as well as difficulties in monitoring overall progress. Objectives also were specified in many different ways, with some set out in proportional terms, others in terms of completion, and others as statements of intent. Nevertheless, the MDGs did establish criteria of success and failure.

Some have argued that this simple approach assumed a “onesizefitsall” model that seemed to take little account of the complexities of development or differences in national circumstances. A growing number of others are advocating for a broader approach to measuring human progress, arguing for the need to complement standard economic measures with a range of indicators covering other dimensions of people’s well-being and happiness. Some countries, such as Bangladesh, have not only adopted the Goals, but also adapted them to meet local needs; for example, Bangladesh set new targets and indicators for promoting women in local government bodies, as well as separate goals and targets on access to reproductive health services.

But in general, the MDG emphasis has been on outcomes; the overall post-2015 framework, in addition to being based on the three pillars of sustainable development, likely will need to be more specific about the means, and in particular, about how the necessary financial resources can be mobilized. One way to do this will be to move away from the “one size fits all” approach and acknowledge the specific drivers of national development plans. This means considering for each country the root causes of poverty, inequality and marginalization, something that the UNCT has attempted to do in this report for Bangladesh. It also may mean specifying global goals, with targets being set at national and local levels; some indicators could focus on specific groups who are marginalized. The aim should be to retain the simplicity of clear goals while addressing specific risks and vulnerabilities.
It will be useful to assign differentiated responsibilities for achieving the post-2015 goals, at global, regional and national and sub-national levels, and including civil society and the private sector. For example, at global level the basis for a new approach could be the nascent Global Partnership for Development Effectiveness, a key output from the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011, held in Busan, Republic of Korea.

Successful regional cooperation also would be particularly important across Asia and the Pacific, improving regional competitiveness while also increasing markets for regional goods, and embracing social concerns such as improved intra-regional flows of workers, exchange of technical knowledge, and improved surveillance and control of communicable diseases. Major regional environmental gains can be obtained through better sharing of water and other scarce natural resources, as well as preventing the trade in endangered species. Differentiated responsibility also will need to include reassessing patterns of consumption: In Bangladesh as elsewhere, the poor will need to consume more to improve their living standards, while the middle class and rich will need to make more efficient choices and change patterns of consumption toward low-carbon pathways.

Furthermore, it will be essential to track progress of the post-2015 goals in a reliable, timely and comparable way. One particularly important objective must be to capture social inequities in data collection – based on gender or ethnicity, for example, or geographical location. The use of averages and aggregates as the main measures or tracking progress on most MDG indicators has served to mask the series of major, persistent and often widening inequalities noted above. Advancements in the measurement of inequalities include the Multidimensional Poverty Indices, which show deprivations that a household or a child experiences simultaneously, highlighting the depth of marginalization among the poorest populations. Progress also has been made in the measurement of sustainable development, although capacity gaps remain.

Thus, statistics are no longer static; they must account for mobile populations and economic risks. Complementing an upgrade of traditional data, new efforts could take advantage of advances in Internet and mobile technology, which could significantly reduce transactions costs and increase efficiency. This can involve new and interactive forms of data collection and feedback mechanisms such as “crowdsourcing,” a method of collecting data directly from populations. In all, there is much for Bangladesh, and other countries, to consider in moving forward.

Chapter 2: Inclusive Economic Development in Bangladesh for the Post-2015 Agenda

V. Background
Securing economic progress continues to lie at the heart of the development challenges faced in Bangladesh and in other low-income countries. In addition to expanding and improving livelihoods and lifestyle changes, securing sustained growth has a direct relationship with the reduction of...
poverty and the elimination of hunger, while enabling governments to deliver key public services. Yet development thinking has advanced considerably from narrow growth-only strategies. In addition to being sensitive to distributional outcomes, modern development strategies also seek to ensure the environmental sustainability of production, and combat the drivers of climate change. Growth with equity – between income levels, genders, ethnic and other groups, localities and generations – are the hallmarks of genuinely inclusive development.

Defining inclusive economic development is no simple matter. Very broadly, it can be said that it is a process of sustainable growth and longer-term economic structural change that allows people to participate in, and contribute to, the economy regardless of their circumstances or location, and to benefit equitably from the distribution of economic gains. It is important that the majority, and especially the poor and women, have access to work and to productive assets like education and health. It also is critical not to lose sight of the importance of inter-generational equity, and hence, the sustainability of economic growth.

All this is of special resonance in Bangladesh as it enters a new stage of its development journey. The process of lasting structural change, from a predominantly agricultural economy to an emergent industrial power, is well underway. As the country reaches towards middle-income status, the fundamental economic forces this transition involves will reshape the pattern of production both sectorally and geographically. Inevitably, this too will affect the distribution of income and human development outcomes, while placing huge strains on the environment.

VI. Trends in National Economic Growth

In spite of enormous challenges, Bangladesh has made remarkable economic progress over the past few decades. Foremost, it has succeeded in expanding its economy and income levels well beyond subsistence levels. Per-capita incomes have risen from only US$110 in 1974 to about US$780 in 2012. This correlates with substantial poverty reduction, with the national headcount virtually halving, from 56.6 per cent in 1991 to 31.5 per cent in 2010. Underpinning this has been sound economic growth averaging 6 percent per annum in recent years. This has accompanied and contributed to rapid improvements in human development dimensions, including life expectancy, child survival and educational attainment. It has also been matched by a more capable State and a high level of public service coverage.

In addition, economic expansion has been accompanied by structural change in the economy, with decreases in the relative share of agriculture from around 32 percent in 1981 to 19 percent in 2010, and increases in the share of industry from 19 percent in 1981 to 29 percent in 2010. In addition, a striking feature of Bangladesh’s growth performance in the last decade has been the services sector. During the period from 1981 to 2010, the services sector contributed around 50 percent of the

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country’s GDP. This bodes well for the future and implies a positive dynamic is in place – that the growth process is grounded in a deeper economic transition.

In the external sector, the composition of the export basket has improved with the decline of primary products (natural fibers and agriculture) and growth in modern manufacturing (apparel, shoes, furniture, pharmaceuticals, shipbuilding). Dramatically rising remittances from internal and external migrant workers are playing a positive role in redistributing income, driving capital inflows and supporting domestic demand alongside family incomes.

The overall labour force participation rate has progressively increased and is now close to 60 percent of the eligible population; moreover, a larger increase in the female participation rate has taken place, albeit from a low base. Growth in Bangladesh, like its economic model, has generally been labour-intensive, and therefore socially inclusive, benefiting the poor and marginalized groups. A tight labour market and the skills profile of the leading export industry, ready-made garments, have particularly advanced women’s employment. At the same time, mass rural-urban migration, although difficult to manage and a driver of major social and environmental dislocations, has been economically positive; the same is also true of overseas migration.

Notwithstanding impressive MDG progress, poverty remains comparatively high, and estimates of multidimensional poverty are still higher, with a Multidimensional Poverty Headcount Ratio of 58 percent. As Table 1 shows, poverty measured using the US$1-a-day rate has seen a far slower decline than the national estimates.

Table 1: Poverty and Inequality Data Based on the HIES 2010

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Poverty Headcount (%)</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollar-a-Day Poverty Headcount (%)</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption Gini (Index 0 low – 1 high inequality)</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>0.321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Yet while Bangladesh has performed well in ensuring an economic transition rooted in labour-intensive industries, there is much evidence that this has not been achieved with sufficient structural transformation, and that insufficient regard has been given to the quality of jobs. Similarly, the reduction in incidence of poverty has not, however, been accompanied by matching reductions in vulnerability and a large proportion of the population still subsists close to the poverty line. Most people are estimated to have consumption below a threshold of the poverty line plus 10 percent. In addition, some specific groups – including youth, women, ethnic minorities, female-headed households, and people with disabilities – face particular challenges such as inadequate support and opportunities to participate in the labour market. Furthermore, the level of informality in the labour market remains high and has actually worsened over time, with the ratio of informal to formal employed workers close to 7 to 1 in 2010.

While these informal-sector jobs offer opportunities for the poor, working conditions are difficult and protections largely absent. Progress in decent working hours has been slow, with increasing numbers

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working excessive hours (more than 48 hours per week). While national law recognizes freedom of association and collective bargaining, application and enforcement of these fundamental principles remains a challenge, with labour law an important issue to be addressed. On a more positive note, child labour, including its most hazardous forms, has declined in the country in recent years, although millions of Bangladeshi children still work (see also Chapters 3 and 5). Decent work also needs to encompass oversight, protection and assistance to migrants, as it relates to the work they perform while overseas. Thus, Bangladesh is some way from meeting a commitment to ensure working life is productive alongside being safe and secure. Equally, while participation rates have improved, high levels of underemployment make employment creation for the existing unemployed, as well as for new entrants, very difficult. In addition, young people face additional barriers to entry, and hence suffer from dramatically higher rates of under- and unemployment.

Most problematically, the positive trends and data reported above rely on averages, and while there has been genuine progress, it is also possible to find weaknesses in Bangladesh’s socioeconomic model. These specifically relate to the extent of economic inclusiveness and the economy’s ability to ensure equity during a time of major transition. Over the long term, income inequality in the country has worsened, with the Gini coefficient showing an overall deterioration of 21 percent between 1991 and 2010. Moreover, recent stabilization has been driven by improvements in the upper part of the income distribution relative to a line representing complete equality. Additional data suggest that spatial inequality (the portion driven purely by location) continues to grow. The dramatic structural change taking place therefore will have major implications for the inclusiveness of the future economy.

**Figure 2: Districts with Poverty**

The relationship between geographical patterns and economic inequality is a powerful one: where you live often shapes your economic opportunities. Bangladesh is no exception to this; geographical inequities in economic opportunities and poverty in the country are substantial. As Figure 2, which offers a poverty mapping based on 2005 data, shows, Bangladesh is divided into leading and lagging regions. Overlaying this is a divide between urban (industrial-dominated) areas and rural (agricultural) areas. While there have been improvements in farm productivity, rural value added inevitably has not kept pace with the growth in urban areas. The largest spatial divide remains the rural/urban one; considerably more of the poor remain outside the towns and cities.25

Microdata and qualitative evidence, such as that offered by the Government/UNDP Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR) project and UNICEF’s Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data, suggest that this regional pattern is underlain by a complex “leopard skin” of highly localized deprivations, whereby severe pockets of poverty often exist alongside relative

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25 According to the HIES 2010, poverty incidence in rural areas stood at 35.2 percent compared to 21.3 percent in urban areas, which implies that about 38 million poor out of a total of 47 million live in rural areas. The difference is even more striking in terms of extreme poverty: almost 23 million extreme poor live in rural areas, out of a total of 26 million.
affluence. This is found within rural areas, in localities with challenging environmental conditions (chars, haors, and areas of coastal erosion and saline incursion), and in new and existing poor settlements within cities and towns. Yet without action, the rapid transition toward industrialization as well as the mass movement of people, it is likely that the core cities as engines of growth will further pull away from the rest of Bangladesh.

Environmental degradation associated with high population densities and movements, combined with the ongoing threat of climate change, serves to further exacerbate the inclusive economic development challenge. Indeed, the rapid and unfettered industrialization model, fed by population movements, has been highly prejudicial to environmental sustainability. As MDG and other data reveal, policy responses to these key questions remain (see also Chapter 4), with some negative impacts (pollution, congestion) becoming so severe as to directly limit the growth model itself.

Clearly, tradeoffs will exist between maximizing growth and minimizing environmental impacts. However, there also exist complementarities to be exploited, greening the growth trajectory while targeting poverty and inclusion objectives. Bangladesh will need to increasingly pursue green economy policies and strategies; already, it has adopted some policies that promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems and regeneration of natural resources. These will need to be further strengthened and their implementation ensured. In addition, the Bangladesh Bank has undertaken an initiative that encourages banks to finance green activities and projects. Because this will raise production costs and make people’s living conditions costlier, Bangladesh will need to request development partners to promote access to and development, transfer and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to the country on favourable terms.

6a. Drivers of Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Two sets of factors shape the nature of economic development, and in turn, its inclusiveness. First is the level of growth itself, and second its distributional dimensions.

It is evident that the mainstream growth process has a positive welfare impact independent of its distributional dimensions. This is most clearly seen in relation to poverty reduction, but greater prosperity also is strongly correlated with wider human development outcomes and, albeit to a lesser extent, with social cohesion. Growth’s immediate drivers are not in doubt; they include capital accumulation and formation; labour supply and its quality; and the efficiency with which the two factors of production are combined.

Yet the policy questions that underpin these drivers remain highly contested. Debated policy issues include the private investment climate; the level and ease of foreign direct investment (FDI); the cost of capital; public investment (especially in infrastructure); the quality of education (see also Chapter 3); labour mobility; technology transfer; research and development; and the quality of social and institutional capital, including questions of governance (see also Chapter 5). In common with other

26 New land formed by the accretion of soils on the coast and in river deltas.
27 Large tracts of low-lying land submerged under water during the rainy season, which causes flooding every year.
LDCs, Bangladesh faces numerous challenges on these questions. Most notable are its relatively low savings ratio, FDI scarcity, constrained public investment and infrastructure, and still-limited policy capacities.

The role of trade and exports as an engine of growth merits special consideration as a defining feature of LDC success. As noted above, Bangladesh’s growth acceleration of recent years is primarily anchored around the export of light manufactures (predominantly ready-made garments), rooted in core comparative advantages in labour supply and low wage costs; underpinning this has been rural-urban migration. These two processes, along with industrialization, have become symbiotic, with underemployed rural labour drawn progressively into the cities. As noted above, however, critical questions remain over the quality of jobs, movement through the value chain, and the role of domestic demand. These points also are pertinent to the development of other LDCs enjoying a trade expansion, which, it should be noted, requires increased investment in quality infrastructure and meeting of international standards.

Second, a country’s economic environment remains a very significant factor in policy issues, and the consensus has coalesced around two important features. The first is macroeconomic stability, in essence, low inflation and balance of payments equilibrium. This is a cornerstone of economic activity and central to the sustained expansion of productive activity and jobs. Rapid price inflation distorts markets and resource allocation signals, and serves to undermine confidence and prosperity. Yet it is also important to emphasize that macrostability, while necessary for growth, is not sufficient. In addition, there are dangers in pursuing too strong a policy response. The second issue is the quality of the regulatory environment and of wider economic governance. Red tape, corruption, and the difficulties of doing business are key challenges facing LDCs, and Bangladesh specifically (see also Chapter 5). These weaknesses directly harm competitiveness, distort investment decisions, and deter FDI.

Third, and directly pertinent to inclusiveness, is the extent to which production is labour-intensive and the economy is able to absorb unemployed and underemployed workers. This relates very strongly to the sectoral composition of the economy. Securing the full employment of a large population is major policy issue, but also one which requires a difficult balancing act in maintaining competitiveness and the vibrancy of the informal sector, while also striving toward greater employment protection and decent work. This is a major challenge for Bangladesh. While its export orientation, based on low-cost wages, has ensured widespread productive employment, again questions loom large over the quality of work, working conditions and health and safety.

Fourth, as noted, the nature of the economy – notably the type of industries and the technologies employed – can have enormous implications for the environment. Issues include the correct pricing of energy and other carbon-heavy inputs, the ease and costs of technology transfer and knowhow, and the management of the industrialization process, including mediating large population influxes into urban areas. Innovative thinking on green growth has increasingly come to challenge the standard paradigm that dirty industrialization based on low-cost, and high-carbon, inputs is a necessary and inevitable stage of a country’s economic development. This is an area of some controversy, yet nevertheless, a series of win-winmeasures is available to secure greener and
cleaner development trajectories while maintaining growth levels, as noted above. Again, these questions are especially pertinent to Bangladesh.

Turning to the second driver of growth, inequality and its dynamics, it is again worth underlining that for a country like Bangladesh – standing on the cusp of middle-income status – the growth of inequality as the economy undergoes structural transformation is a major concern. To a great extent, growth and inequality outcomes are jointly determined, and there is much interplay between the two, with each having both negative and positive impacts on the other.

Existing patterns of asset ownership in Bangladesh remain a key issue in this regard, particularly since prior saving (existing wealth) is a primary driver of investment and capital markets remain weak. Meanwhile, to address challenges regarding the labour intensity of production, a matching process is required favouring staged industrialization, absorbing labour and generating higher productivity and improved working conditions; associated considerations include the need to recognize the continuing importance of agriculture as a major determinant of employment of the poor, and for formalization of the large informal sector to be phased and well-managed.

A further near-term issue is the overall level of inflation and the pattern of price changes. It is well-established that rapidly rising prices can have a strong distributional effect, transferring purchasing power away from creditors to debtors, from those who hold cash savings to those who do not, and from those without access to index-linked incomes to those with such access. The incidence of inflation between types of goods and services also matters, with the poorest spending a disproportionate share of their incomes on basic staples.

Macroeconomic stability is therefore important for equity as well as growth, as rising prices often hurt the poorest most. In this regard, Bangladesh’s policy stance has proven effective on the whole; monetary policy has been prudent and adopted a growth-supporting form of stability. As a next step, a regional policy to address east-west differences and support the Chittagong Hill Tracts, along with targeted regeneration and poverty reduction schemes for highly challenged areas, may be needed. Fiscal decentralization and equalization between areas and local governments also will be a vital means for redistributing growth and responding directly to spatial inequities.

Group-based economic inequalities also can be significant; a special focus on marginalized groups is therefore required to offer special targeted assistance. Of all groups (marginalized ethnic groups, people with disabilities, other minorities), gender inequality emerges as a special priority in most LDCs. Bangladesh’s data for employment bear this out very strongly: Women’s labour force participation rates, especially in non-farm employment, lag substantially behind men, at 36 percent versus 82.5 percent. Yet again, the drivers underpinning this run deep. Although limited, the literature on intra-household income and consumption allocations emphasizes the importance of social norms and conventions, and it is likely that gendered social phenomena have an economic impact, with women’s purchasing power often severely falling behind that of men. On the other hand, given the “youth bulge” discussed in Chapter 1, focusing on adolescent girls as members of

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the community and future workers has the potential to significantly improve women’s labour force participation and economic status.

Some policy measures might meaningfully affect the redistribution of incomes, and therefore directly right inequalities that emerge as a result of economic processes. Foremost here are fiscal policies. While setting aside complex tax-based redistribution and burdensome welfare measures, much can be done via the national budget to ensure more equitable outcomes. Public provisioning itself is an instrument of redistribution, and it is made more effective when focused on the social sectors, primarily education and health, and in taking a “bottomofthe pyramid” approach; by this is meant the prioritization of services that benefit those at the lower end of income distribution and those that are most likely to be excluded. A distinct and still more direct consideration is the quality and scope of social protection (see also Chapter 3). Welfare transfers and basic safety nets will need to be strengthened going forward, since they offer a means of equalizing income/consumption differences, re-channelling the benefits of growth, and reducing poverty.

Lastly, a number of regulatory and enabling actions might be taken up. These actions offer supplementary routes forward, and may over time have substantial distributional payoffs. These include, for example, securing women’s equitable access to the labour market; introducing regulatory controls over biases in the supply of services; regulating for better working conditions; freeing up the supply of credit via legal instruments; economic formalization, and specifically, the granting of property rights and land tenure to women and men; and challenging unfavourable social norms and processes. This will be highly dependent on not only the national context and the quality of regulation, but also on the quality of overall governance in Bangladesh (see also Chapter 5).

VII. Recommended Inclusive Economic Development Goals, Targets and Indicators

In the existing MDG framework, issues of inclusive growth are picked up explicitly in three Goals, MDG1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), MDG7 (Ensure environmental sustainability), and MDG 8 (Develop a global partnership for development). In addition, elements of the issues reviewed in the previous sections also are pertinent to the health, education (i.e., human capital) and gender goals (labour market participation and empowerment). In spite of this broad application, it is MDG1 that is most relevant, with its focus on targeting poverty reduction, securing high employment levels and the mitigation of inequities. The environmental goal (MDG7) also provides something of a policy steer in terms of ensuring growth policies are cleaner and greener. Equally, MDG8, with its focus on issues of debt sustainability and technology, provides pointers on major relevant issues.

The proposals in this section for the post-2015 agenda seek to offer a more direct representation of inclusive growth within the development goals framework, but one that is also linked to the core objectives – that of securing equitable increases in livelihoods, with a specific focus on the reduction of poverty and vulnerability, while also ensuring environmental sustainability. Informed by the analysis above, the UNCT in Bangladesh proposes a single goal with five targets and nine indicators. (For details of targets and indicators, see Annex 1.) That goal is:

- **Goal 1**: Secure economic growth that is inclusive, reduces poverty and inequality, creates sufficient numbers of decent jobs, and is environmentally sustainable
Having said this, the UNCT attempts to vary the outcome criteria by a country’s development category, targeting and requiring more of low-income countries and those where inequality is higher. This also implies that developed countries share the burden of this greater ambition and commit elsewhere to a series of measures – in Official Development Aid (ODA), trade, economic and governance relations – to secure these outcomes. The UNCT also has sought to highlight gender considerations within both the targets and indicator data.

Chapter 3: Inclusive Social Development in Bangladesh for the Post-2015 Agenda

VIII. Background
The noted economist Amartya Sen’s fundamental development critique proposed that development should centre on capabilities – on what people can do or be, rather than what they have; on the ends of development, rather than the means; and on taking into account people’s differing abilities to convert resources into outcomes. Such thinking has underpinned the human development approach to development for more than two decades. This broad view suggests that in addition to income, it is important to take into account other outcomes that have both intrinsic and instrumental value. Consequently, social development issues related to health, nutrition, education and gender equality have been at the heart of the MDGs, which reflect this multi-dimensional understanding of poverty.

Moreover, in the years since the adoption of the MDGs, how to translate this understanding of multi-dimensionality into practice has deepened, with the need to include dimensions to obtain a fuller picture of well-being and to measure these dimensions of how people can be enabled to enjoy a better life. A new emphasis on poor people’s experiences of deprivation also provides a way to prioritize the multiple dimensions that matter to well-being and casts light on aspects such as the importance of relationships and of being treated with dignity, as well as the value of trust and social cohesion.

In addition, advances have occurred in measurement to focus on the joint distribution of deprivation, given that people often face multiple dimensions at the same time, and to understand the intra-household distribution of resources, which is particularly critical with regard to social development. Finally, this focus on the social aspects of poverty also highlights the two-way interaction with sustainability: Poor people and marginalized groups are more likely to experience the effects of climate change and environmental degradation on their circumstances and livelihoods, while these processes, in turn, deepen poverty and increase marginalization and vulnerability. All these developments have implications for the post-2015 development framework, including in Bangladesh.

Yet the complexity of the current transformative processes necessitates a re-thinking on the scope of the “social” in the development paradigm. Thus, the concept of inclusive social development is anchored around the idea that balanced, sustainable development can only take place when development includes all groups of people who collectively contribute to identifying and addressing challenges, making decisions and creating opportunities. Overall, the quality of growth must be
gauged by how much marginalized populations are enabled to enjoy effective coverage of key social services that define their rights to live, thrive and be safe from abuse, exploitation and violence.

An important factor underlying the achievements of Bangladesh vis-à-vis the MDGs has been the increase in public expenditures on the social sectors. Budgetary allocations on education nearly doubled – from 8.16 percent to 15.51 percent – between 1980 and 2000 alone, while those on health rose from 5.4 percent to 7.13 percent. In terms of the proportion of GDP, this translated into a rise in combined expenditures on education and health from 1.66 percent to 3.08 percent. The subsequent decade saw further increases in these ratios. Added to these social expenditures are the expenditures on a portfolio of social safety net programmes that currently constitutes around 2.5 percent of GDP.

Two further areas of success include the adoption of social mobilization approaches and the accurate definition of intermediate milestones that contributed to the achievement of goals. Social mobilization approaches that facilitate effective partnerships between government, NGOs and local governments, and that include specific incentives, have brought major success in immunization, reduction of open-space defecation, registering children (including girls) in school, and the expansion of roadside forestry. Social mobilization also may be credited with effectively addressing issues of behavioural norms – for example, handwashing following the use of latrines – and fostering the establishment of women-friendly services and expanded women’s rights to access services, including not only microfinance but also legal aid, livelihood and income generation, social safety nets, and agricultural extension.

Moreover, the pursuit of a well-sequenced strategy of intermediate priorities has, for example, helped Bangladesh to be particularly successful in realizing the sanitation target under the MDGs. In the 1990s, the priority was to engineer an attitudinal shift from use of open space to fixed-point defecation. Following this, the next focus was on transforming fixed points into semi-sanitary latrines through the spread of ring-slab technology. This was a low-threshold technology that also succeeded in engendering a local economic boom in the production of such ring-slabs. Simultaneously, there was the sustained focus on behavioural change related to handwashing noted above. Now, the challenge is to transform the semi-sanitary latrines into fully sanitary water-sealed latrines, even as increasing urbanization is leading to the proliferation of informal poor settlements without proper services, where sanitation represents a fundamental issue, and as access to water of acceptable quality becomes ever more difficult. Handwashing before preparing food and feeding a young child also still need to become behavioural norms.

IX. Trends in National Social Development
In all, the post-2015 framework on inclusive social development needs to be a combination of carried-over goals as well as priority new challenges. Despite the considerable MDG achievements cited in Chapter 1 and elsewhere in this report, formidable challenges remain. On the MDG targets where Bangladesh is off-track, these will need to be key priorities post-2015.

9a. Key Off-Track MDGs and New Challenges

More to Do for Sustainable Food Security and Good Nutrition

One of the most critically off-track MDG targets is that of child undernutrition, which has reduced in Bangladesh in recent decades but remains a considerable concern. Evidence shows that the reduction of the proportion of population living on less than US$1 a day has not been accompanied by a commensurate reduction in the proportion of children suffering from undernutrition and food insecurity. Thus, when compared to progress in other development indicators (education, poverty reduction, fertility, maternal and child mortality, rice production), accelerating the decline in child undernutrition remains an unfinished agenda.

Indeed, even as Bangladesh drives for middle-income status by 2021, it remains the sixth-greatest contributor globally to child stunting (low height for age); the overall stunting prevalence rate of 41 percent represents a high level for public health concern. Moreover, 15 percent of children are severely stunted,\(^{30}\) with 36 percent underweight.\(^{31}\) According to the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey, more than 7.6 million children younger than age 5 years are chronically undernourished, as measured by the indicator for stunting. Even in the highest household wealth quintile, more than 1 out of every 4 children younger than age 5 is stunted.\(^{32}\) Because poverty is not the only reason that children are undernourished, poverty reduction and improvement in income indicators will not necessarily improve nutrition, at least, not in the short term.

Other data also bring out the stark realities of the lack of good nutrition particularly faced by the poor and their children. While Bangladesh has achieved impressive results in increasing rice production, and thereby in promoting access to the main staple food, the problem of ensuring access to adequate caloric intake has not yet been overcome. Although the share of caloric intake from cereals is above the desirable norm, per-capita caloric intakes remain 130kcal below the average normative requirement of 2,436 kcal.\(^{33}\) At the rate of progress recorded over the last 15 years – 4 calories per year – achievement of the average requirements will require 30 more years.

The need to ensure the right to food for all is further complicated by the need to provide a balanced diet. Despite significant progress in recent decades, major dietary shortfalls are reported in consumption of protein- and micronutrient-rich foods such as milk, egg, meat, lentils and vegetables, and intake of vegetables and fruits remains far below recommendations. The per-capita milk intake of the poor is only 27 percent of the intake of the non-poor, and in the case of meat, it is even less,

\(^{31}\)Ibid. This is the officially adopted figure from the BDHS 2011. However, strictly speaking, the prevalence figure should be 38 percent underweight if the age group 6-59 months is used, as per MDG1. The quoted figure of 36 percent is based on a wider age group of 0-59 months.
\(^{32}\)Ibid.
\(^{33}\)Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, HIES 2010, op.cit.
at 22 percent.\textsuperscript{34} Thus, the current challenge in this regard is threefold: to underpin adequate and balanced intake of both macro- and micronutrients through a diversified diet; to improve safety and quality of the food consumed; and to ensure universal access to health, water and sanitation (see also sub-section below) to help maximize nutrient absorption.

Advances across MDGs closely linked with sustainable food security and good nutrition have been stalled by high and volatile food prices, which in turn are being affected by more extreme climate conditions and higher energy costs. Yet the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable food security and good nutrition – from enhancing labour-intensive and land- and water-saving technologies or increased food production to strengthening basic health, hygiene and water and sanitation services, and from enforcing food safety standards to developing a coherent social protection system – can drive action that enables all people, especially the most marginalized, to contribute fully to economic growth, while strengthening resilience to shocks and addressing inequality.

Prioritizing nutrition in the first 1,000 days – from conception to the 2-year-old child – serves as a key window of opportunity because of the lifelong and largely irreversible negative impacts of undernutrition on physical and mental development. In addition, reducing adolescent girls’ childbearing will not only reduce overall maternal mortality and give girls the opportunity to develop their human potential, but it also will make a crucial impact on the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition, as well as on women’s empowerment and their educational attainment. Micronutrient deficiencies and undernutrition also exist among adolescent girls and mothers themselves, and should likewise be urgently addressed; significantly, nearly one-fourth of mothers are undernourished, resulting in 1 in 3 children being of Low Birth Weight.\textsuperscript{35}

Lastly, it will be important to ensure an adequate supply of, and access to, safe and nutritious food and safe drinking water, consistent with the National Food Policy and a recent national debate on food safety. A multi-sectoral approach, including not only health and agriculture, but also hygiene, environmental sanitation, and expanded information and communication, will be essential for a more holistic and effective impact on undernutrition.

In all, a new national emphasis on sustainable food security and good nutrition also will be consistent with the current global agenda that fighting undernutrition should be the top priority for policymakers. Specifically, expert panels of world-renowned economists at the Copenhagen Consensus in 2008 and 2012 have identified undernutrition among preschool children as the most compelling investment for national development. In addition, the World Health Assembly in May 2012 has agreed to commit to reducing the number of stunted children around the world by 40 percent by 2025.

At the policy level, it will be important to differentiate sustainable food security and good nutrition from hunger; the latter is a result of a failure to meet minimum energy needs, which in turn is caused by people having insufficient income or social and economic entitlements to access food. However, undernutrition is not only a consequence of hunger, but also can exist in the absence of hunger, caused by a diet of inadequate quality and diversity and by non-food factors, including basic care of children and women. Undernutrition results from both a critical lack of nutrients in diets and


\textsuperscript{35} Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2011, op.cit.
from a weakened immune system. Today’s challenge in Bangladesh thus is not of hunger per se, but of ensuring sustainable food security and good nutrition for all.

**The Unfinished Health Agenda**

At the same time, good health is central to advancing global prosperity, and progress cannot be achieved without addressing people’s health concerns and needs. Good health is the foundation on which communities and nations can and do flourish. A healthy, educated population is one of the major engines of development, and one of its most universally valued outcomes. Irrespective of where one lives, gender, age or socioeconomic status, being healthy and having access to quality and effective health care services is of fundamental importance for all people; at the same time, healthy populations are essential for the advancement of human development, well-being and economic growth. Significantly, Bangladesh has already achieved MDG4 to reduce the under-5 mortality rate by two-thirds.

Yet the second off-track MDG target of special concern in Bangladesh involves maternal health. Some debate exists about the statistics of the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), in Bangladesh as elsewhere, although in all cases the ratio remains high; meanwhile, the Bangladesh Maternal Mortality Survey 2010 shows only 26.5 percent of births attended by skilled health personnel, with wide disparities between the richest and poorest quintiles. Equally worrisome, the adolescent birth rate in 2009 stood at 118 per 1,000 live births. While there has definitely been progress overall, this debate over data suggests a critical challenge with regard to the scale and speed of improvements.

Current data on the three determinants of improvement in MMR – skilled attendant at delivery, access to emergency obstetric care (EmOC) and an effective referral system to ensure women receive EmOC in case of complications – suggest that Bangladesh will have to exert far more consistent and scaled-up efforts to ensure meeting this crucial target. In addition, challenges remain in achieving universal access to reproductive health, in part because of the persistent unmet need for family planning, especially among unmarried adolescents, and as well as because of further wide regional disparities.

More broadly, the agenda for health is changing in a number of important ways that have a bearing on priorities for development. Gender-based violence, which was not addressed in the MDGs, also is emerging as a basic health issue. Epidemiological and demographic transitions also now impose a complex burden of infectious diseases alongside non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health, injuries and the consequences of violence.

In terms of new health challenges, NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer are particularly increasing and claiming a major place in mortality statistics, requiring much greater focus on common risk factors such as tobacco use, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol, and low consumption of fruits and vegetables. Already 21 percent of deaths among women of reproductive age in Bangladesh are due to cancer, of which cervical and breast cancers constitute nearly half. Globally, the cost of inaction in relation to NCDs – estimated in the trillions of dollars – is now recognized as a risk requiring action in all countries, and one that extends well beyond the health sector alone.
The Government has made solid progress on MDG6 with respect to HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Overall, Bangladesh has succeeded in keeping HIV prevalence at a very low level of around 0.01 percent of the total population, although the number of new infections is still increasing. The HIV/AIDS response in the country has particularly maintained a very “people-centric” approach in addition to addressing the disease itself. Encouragingly, efforts to curb stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV have yielded some success.

Nonetheless, a need to set bold new targets for post-2015 development exists, with realistic indicators addressing each disease and building on progress achieved thus far. For example, progress on reducing the prevalence of malaria has been less impressive and needs further attention, while XDR TB (extensively drug resistant tuberculosis) is a rapidly growing issue.

In particular, efforts to address HIV/AIDS will require an expanded, strategic and sustainable AIDS response in order to reach the new global vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths; integrated health and human rights education may result in more sustainable impact than campaigns focusing on a specific disease. Increasingly, HIV treatment may need to be initiated and delivered through sexual reproductive health and maternal health services. In addition, enabling migrants to enjoy effective coverage of health and social services could especially address new challenges from HIV, TB, malaria and emerging diseases.

While Bangladesh has posted many successes in primary health care, quality gaps and cost burdens pose a larger challenge in the post-2015 framework. One basic statistic that has continued to cast a long shadow over sustainable graduation out of poverty is related to idiosyncratic economic shocks emanating from illness-related expenditures. Catastrophic out-of-pocket health payments – which constitute as much as 60 percent of total health care costs – make the constitutional guarantee of free health care an unrealized promise. Out-of-pocket health care payments can include medical fees, user charges or public care, purchase of medicines, insurance payments, and payments or diagnostic tests, medical equipment, travel and related costs. Such expenses together constitute 5 percent of all household expenditures. The downward poverty pressures of such expenditure burdens have been well-researched; such pressures can occur through asset depletion, injurious debts or health loss through forgoing treatment.

The issue of universal health coverage is a well-understood and debated issue in Bangladesh. Even so, meaningful realization of the goal of universal health coverage has been hampered in the country by three major constraints: i) low utilization and poor performance of existing public health care infrastructure; ii) high and/or irrational diagnostic and other costs; and iii) absence of scalable models of sustainable household health care financing solutions. Over time, the Government has instituted a considerable service delivery infrastructure. There also have been many specific primary health care initiatives such as those on immunization, health awareness, and sanitation.

Not all of these expenses are included in poverty estimates.


More recently, some demand-side financing initiatives – for example, on maternal health – also have been selectively introduced. Micro-insurance solutions to health care costs also have made some appearance, often as a supplementary focus to microcredit operations. However, notwithstanding these efforts, meaningful health care services remain out of easy reach for a large majority of people, many of whom are compelled to incur catastrophic out-of-pocket expenditures for their curative needs. This crosscutting agenda straddles the poverty-health nexus and ultimately can significantly affect health outcomes for most of the population.

**An Accelerating Need for Quality Education**

Historically, education has been the great leader for social mobility for rural dwellers and poor people in Bangladesh. While the achievements on the access indicator of enrolment have rightly been celebrated as illustrative of major strides made toward universal primary schooling, research on outcome indicators is increasingly driving home the point that achievements in access do not necessarily translate into commensurate achievements in quality. The third of the seriously off-track MDGs relates to the primary cycle completion rate (67.2 percent) and low adult literacy rate, with up to 47 percent of adults still illiterate. In addition, an emerging quality divide is rapidly eroding the social mobility potential of education.

The persistence of high dropout rates in mainstream primary schools, especially among children from marginalized communities, is a clear expression of the quality divide and raises equity as a key concern. Unlike enrolment, which constitutes a single-focus target, primary cycle completion requires coordinated and holistic action on a number of factors, including teacher quality, classroom environment, sexual harassment and physical abuse, student interest and after-class support. One of the dilemmas of the target-setting style of the MDGs is that mobilizing and sustaining political will around such multi-focus targets has been difficult, although it will need to be overcome as a matter of priority in the post-2015 framework.

Meanwhile, the quality divide also manifests in the increasingly large differences in achievement indicators between urban and rural schools; in the consolidation of a private-sector elite education stream that is largely unconnected to the national system; and in the proliferation of a sub-stream of religious schools that offer opportunities for poor children but include no national curriculum for basic education. Quality divides are not only fuelling new economic inequalities (see also Chapter 2), but also creating fertile grounds for social conflicts or anti-social behaviour; this can be partially addressed through organized technical and vocational education and training, which can prepare millions of labour migrants, among others, for productive and better-paid work abroad.

While it is unlikely that there will be any slowing down of the private-sector elite education stream, the quality issues within the public education system – particularly between metropolitan centres and rural schools – represent an area for effective policy engagement. A paradoxical barrier to such engagement, however, arises from the continuing emphasis among politicians, administrators and

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40Bangladesh Directorate of Primary Education statistics, 2010.
41National population census, 2011.
the public alike on summary indicators such as enrolment rates. This militates against more holistic engagement on the critical issues noted above, as well as against service ethics, performance monitoring and system development. At the same time, continuing improvements in the education sector will be difficult without coordinated efforts from other sectors, including overall poverty reduction strategies, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, child protection, and agriculture.

**Ensuring Human Security and Overcoming Social Marginalization**

Bangladesh has made great strides under MDG3, achieving the target of gender parity in primary education and secondary school. Women in the country also have won some victories with regard to mobility and visibility but continue to face entrenched barriers and insecurities in their attempts to consolidate their social and economic gains and move up the productivity scale and into the realms of higher decision making. However, much slower progress in increasing women’s participation in tertiary education and non-agricultural waged labour, for example, partially reflects shortcomings of the MDG framework itself.

By not addressing the structural causes of gender inequality or tackling major gender-specific injustices such as violence against women, the MDG framework missed opportunities to further improve the position of women and strengthen their ability to contribute to their communities. For example, the Global Consultation on Inequalities, in which Bangladesh participated, asserted that gender-based discrimination remains the single most widespread driver of inequalities in today’s world. The Government also was well-represented at the High Level Panel meeting and consultation in Bali in March 2013, which recognized that multiple inequalities increase women’s experiences of marginalization, insecurity and gender-based violence. In Bangladesh, a disturbing 60 percent of women reported experiencing domestic and occupational violence in 2011.43

In the post-2015 framework it will be essential to have a stand-alone gender equality goal covering issues of violence against women, increasing women’s voice in all decision-making processes, and increasing women’s capabilities by supporting increased access to tertiary education. Addressing of such issues as increasing women’s access to assets and reducing women’s time poverty also will be important. Gender equality also needs to be mainstreamed across all other goals, by including sex-disaggregated targets and indicators that address gender inequalities specific to that goal.

At the nexus of gender equality and child rights is a complex set of issues that severely limit the rights of adolescent girls. As noted by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Adolescent Girls, adolescent girls are affected by forms of discrimination that leave them “isolated in their communities, voiceless and ‘invisible,’ lacking access to education, health care, jobs and skills development.”44 In Bangladesh the deeply rooted challenge of reducing child marriage demonstrates and reinforces the marginalization and social exclusion of adolescent girls. The country has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with a median age at marriage for girls of 16.7 years, even though 18 is the minimum age allowed by law. Despite numerous Government and non-Government initiatives, up to 1 in 3 girls is believed to become a wife before

43Bangladesh Demographic and Household Survey 2011, op.cit.
45Ibid.
her 15th birthday; 2 in 3 will wed before their 18th birthday – up 2 percentage points from 2009. The socio-cultural practice of the new couple moving to the husband’s house, where the parents-in-law have the greatest say, further reinforces the adolescent girl’s lack of decision making over her own and her children’s lives.

Yet early marriage, often driven by the prospect of reduced dowry payments or fears for girls’ sexual “purity,” remains associated with a host of issues that severely constrain young girls’ right to development, as well as with high rates of maternal mortality and maternal and child undernutrition. As yet, no comprehensive national legislation governs the rights of all children in Bangladesh, nor is there a comprehensive public system to protect children from violence, abuse or exploitation, and many laws predate national adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Lastly, there has been significant demand-driven growth of the social protection agenda in Bangladesh, both as a response to crisis events and a response to new democratic aspirations (see also Chapter 2). Particularly for those entering or already in old age, for the urban poor (see also Chapter 1), for those working in the informal economy, and for socially marginalized groups such as people with disabilities or living with HIV, improved social protection is becoming an imperative. Such marginalized groups, for example, often are denied equitable access to social support networks and formal services, or even access to land, as a result of stigma, making it far more difficult for them to break out of poverty or ill health in the longer term.

In developing its social protection agenda, Bangladesh appears to have pursued a pragmatic path of incremental programme experimentation. From an original straightforward focus on food security, social protection programmes have thus embraced ever more complex goals in their design and reach. Programme growth also has run in parallel to the vulnerability discourse, with a focus on identifying segments of the poor and marginalized who were missing out on existing programme coverage. Even so, current coverage statistics show that the least covered risk category remains the graduation needs of the chronic poor.

Overall, the portfolio of social protection programmes in the country now includes allowances for population groups with special needs, food security and disaster assistance programmes, workfare programmes, and programmes focused on human development and empowerment. Notwithstanding these developments, coverage and household-level impact of these programmes require significant strengthening. (For more on social protection in Bangladesh, see Section 9a, Drivers of Inclusive Social Development.)

**The Threat of Losing Some MDG Gains: Family Planning, Safe Water**

Unlike the challenge of off-track MDGs, a different category of issue is the potential reversing of achievements. For example, while notable success has been recorded in Bangladesh with regard to family planning, concern has been emerging for the last decade on the plateauing of the total

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fertility rate (TFR), particularly among poor people, a development that could potentially reverse achieved gains. Reversibility also has occurred in the area of access to safe water (see also Chapter 4). The near-universal access achieved via the spread of tubewells across the country has come under question as a result of widespread arsenic contamination of groundwater and other factors impinging on water quality. Contentious issues here will require the addressing of the incorporation of the private sector and market pricing, safety nets for the poor, the role of citizen management or oversight, and development of effective regulatory structures and accountability mechanisms. To its advantage, Bangladesh already has embarked on a variety of initiatives to address such issues.

9b. Drivers of Inclusive Social Development
The MDGs did serve to move social rights from the margins toward the centre of the development paradigm. However, the post-2015 vision requires a further paradigm shift: Social development encompasses specific MDG sectors such as education, health, maternal and child nutrition, women’s empowerment and safety nets, all of which have “unfinished business” – but, as importantly, it also encompasses the social determinants of changes in such sectors. Five such issues merit priority attention.

First, inequality has been a constant in human history, but as noted in all Chapters of this report, it has an alarming new resonance today in terms of its scale and entrenched nature. While the drivers of such inequalities emanate in part from specific features of globalization, inequalities also are becoming entrenched due to deepening quality divides in areas such as education.47 Coming to grips with these requires not only major recalibration of the interface of economic and social policy, but also moving beyond the dominant “access” paradigm to focusing on the benefit received by the people, which requires an “access and quality” paradigm.48 At the same time, divergent outcomes on economic and social indicators also present a key challenge; for example, urban residents face economic and social poverty that can be at sharp odds. Between 2005 and 2010, extreme income poverty in urban areas was reduced by 50 percent – but during the same period, the urban literacy rate rose by only 2 percentage points.49 As also noted in Chapter 1, provision of urban social services, including health and nutrition, that reach all strata of society likewise is a major challenge.

Second, as noted in Chapter 1, a crucial issue is how best to leverage the social opportunities of new technologies. The potential dividends are enormous, affecting areas as diverse as health, education, employment, gender equality and sustainable resource use.50 Service delivery mechanisms are becoming increasingly obsolete, and more effective strategies are needed, including the use of unconventional capacities and alternative service delivery models.

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50 Rockefeller Foundation, Top 10 Trends Impacting the Next 100 Years of Global Health: Note for the Global Health Summit. Beijing, January 2013.
Third, the issue of insecurity and freedom from fear has particular bearing on the situation of women and children as well as groups and communities marginalized by ethnicity, geography or other factors. Persistently high levels of violence against women and girls are of special concern (see Section IX below). Overall, insecurity is a compounded outcome of three factors, crime incidence, perception of risk and uncertainty, and confidence in redress (see also Chapter 5). Ensuring freedom from fear requires addressing all three.

Fourth, adolescents and youth represent Bangladesh’s catalyst for the country’s future economic development. Ultimately the importance of building on Bangladesh’s youth bulge (see also Chapter 1) and ensuring opportunities linked to youth-centred development is not only about inclusive social development and optimizing human capital. Although the knowledge and experience for the productive engagement of young women and men in national and international inclusive social development is still evolving, it is clear that it is an important means of building the foundations a healthy, well-nourished future population for a more resilient economy focused on sustainable and equitable growth.

Fifth, the importance of a well-designed system of social safety net programmes within a comprehensive approach to social protection is finding increasing acceptance within national and international policy circles. Ideas such as social protection floors and a net-and-ladder strategy combining protective and advocacy goals are mainstreaming social protection as a key component of the social development agenda, with particular attention to marginalized communities and groups facing social exclusion, including people living with HIV or those most at risk of HIV infection (e.g., sex workers, drug users, sexual minorities). Risk reduction and social protection are important not only in themselves, but also because an unaddressed risk atmosphere can carry negative psychological consequences for the livelihood initiatives of the poor and for community efforts at social cohesion.

In this sense, social protection is important not only for addressing vulnerability but also for tackling entrenched poverty and marginalization as well as persistent undernutrition. For example, a social protection approach that encompasses gender equality concerns, child sensitivity and a life-cycle “lens” reinforces the key principle of inclusive social development from the synergy of a legal framework obligating the right to effective service coverage. Institutions, policies and programmes also are increasingly engaging rights holders in inclusive social development through the promotion of social budgeting.

X. Recommended Inclusive Social Development Goals, Targets and Indicators

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Based on the analysis above, the wide array of inclusive social development challenges that Bangladesh continues to face or is beginning to encounter have been grouped into six suggested post-2015 goals. (For details of targets and indicators, see Annex 1.) These are:

- **Goal 2**: Ensure sustainable food security and good nutrition
- **Goal 3**: Reduce social inequalities, particularly among marginalized groups, and improve living conditions
- **Goal 4**: Achieve equality between women and men
- **Goal 5**: Ensure health for all
- **Goal 6**: Provide high-quality basic education
- **Goal 7**: Reduce social risks and vulnerabilities

Together, all these areas represent a key pillar of the post-2015 development framework, building on social development as the heart of the MDG agenda. Adequate investments in each will be needed not only to realize unmet MDGs and facilitate sustainable economic growth and employment generation, but also to close the gaps in human capabilities that help to perpetuate inequalities and poverty across generations.

**Chapter 4: Environmental Sustainability in Bangladesh for the Post-2015 Agenda**

**XI. Background**

The world today risks exceeding the limits of the Earth’s capacity in several critical dimensions: decreasing availability of fresh water, land degradation, deforestation, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and biodiversity loss. Together, these factors of environmental damage and natural resource scarcity are undermining the health and livelihoods of many people, particularly the poor and marginalized, including in Bangladesh. Yet in the post-2015 development agenda, this threat can be transformed into an unprecedented opportunity.

Critically, environmental sustainability means more than what was discussed when the MDGs were formulated in 2000. No longer does it refer to environment as only a central focus area; rather, environmental sustainability has become more of a cross-sectoral concept, where inclusive social and economic development are also common concerns (see also Section 12a). Clearly, when the natural resource base is destroyed, sustaining social and economic development becomes increasingly difficult, and inter-generational equity is compromised.

While the MDGs had their limitations on environment as well as other issues, MDG7 constitutes a strong starting point for the formulation of a new development agenda focused on environmental sustainability. It included the following targets: *Target 7a: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources; Target 7b: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of loss; Target 7c: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; Target 7d: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.* Thus, MDG7 is related to basic issues such as the quality of air, food, access to water and sanitation, and materials that humanity relies on, as well as their sustainable usage.
However, several critiques of the Goal must be taken into account: It did not address the rapidly emerging priority issues of climate change or disaster risk management. Nor did it address issues of ensuring universal access to sustainable energy, or link basic access to water and sanitation with a broader water agenda including water resources and wastewater management, which are crucial for sustainable development. Overall, most of the MDGs focused on the social dimension of development, and did not fully reflect the interconnectedness with environmental or economic factors. Moreover, in general the achievement of MDG7 lagged behind other MDGs, in part because it did not define the right goals and targets, including provisions for the implementation of relevant policies.

Already, climate change in marginal environments prone to disaster, as in Bangladesh, is exacerbating social inequalities and disproportionately affecting the poor, women, children and marginalized groups such as indigenous populations and the elderly. Particularly among those who are highly dependent on climate-sensitive natural resources, with agricultural labour as their major source of food and income, assets that would enable them to cope with climate-related crises are lacking.

Any post-2015 framework also will need to include other important issues in the environment sector such as air quality and ozone layer depletion, safer sources of water, waste generation, biodiversity, and natural resource management, including forest, fish and energy resources. For example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that the global demand for water will increase by more than 50 percent by 2050, due to the mounting demand from manufacturing, thermal electricity generation and domestic use.

While there has been progress in Bangladesh on the MDG7 target to increase sustainable access to clean drinking water and, especially, improved sanitation (see also Chapter 3), even more urgent now is the key question: Is this water safe to drink? Especially in Bangladesh, a lack of space available for appropriate and adequate water and sanitation facilities in the country poses a considerable challenge. Globally, poor water quality remains the largest cause of health problems;54 groundwater depletion and nutrient pollution already threaten agriculture and urban water supply. In addition, fish stocks are being depleted at a rate never experienced before, mainly due to commercial fishing and overfishing.

In particular, the relationship between environment and migration in Bangladesh is complex and interwoven with the other socioeconomic factors that drive people to move, either voluntarily or by necessity. Worldwide, some estimates have indicated that extreme weather events and environmental degradation, both of which will be exacerbated by climate change, will permanently displace up to 200 million people by 2050. Clearly, migration and human

mobility due to climate change will require robust national policy decisions in the future (see also Section 12a).

Population growth and increased production likewise are predicted to have extremely negative effects on the climate, natural resources and energy provision. Many of Bangladesh’s poor settlements are constructed on already-vulnerable land. In addition, it is predicted that global food production will have to increase by 70 percent by 2050 in order to meet growing demand;\textsuperscript{55} this would require a significant increase in yields or expansion of agricultural land.

Yet in the context of Bangladesh’s rapid urbanization and high population density, such issues have already reached the critical stage. The ever-expanding population and the demand for increased agricultural production have necessitated the cultivation of lands previously deemed impractical. Stresses associated with urbanization – poor sanitation, air pollution, and a plethora of social service pressures (see also Chapter 3) – are becoming acute; again, these burdens have largely fallen on the poor and marginalized. Increasingly, agricultural land is being lost to urban expansion, and will continue to be lost due to rising sea levels and the increased extent and duration of seasonal flooding, all affecting the resource basis for food security (see also Section 12a). Although technological developments could ease the burden of current trends on the environment, both in urban and rural areas, it is unclear whether these will materialize in a country like Bangladesh at a sufficient speed or scale to absorb the growing demand for natural resources.

In all, a realistic development agenda can no longer neglect the links among the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development. In Bangladesh, the inclusive environmental sustainability concept is gaining more attention in the policy arena, along with the beginning of changes in public perceptions. But as envisioned in this report, long-term development in Bangladesh will require further intensive and integrated policymaking, where social equity, economic growth and environmental protection are approached together.

XII. Trends in National Environmental Sustainability

The Government has established important building blocks for environmental sustainability, including adoption of a large number of relevant policies and plans, such as the National Environment Policy, the National Environment Management Action Plan 1997, and inputs to the regional SAARC Development Goals 2011. Even before the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the country realized that many of its poverty reduction and other development issues are intrinsically linked to environmental sustainability, and that emphasis should be given to this. As such, the Ministry of Environment and Forests was formed in 1989 with the objective of addressing environment as one of the three pillars of sustainable development.

At the same time, Bangladesh’s performance with regard to MDG7 remains off-track, making this the only Goal that is unlikely to be met in the country by 2015. All the MDG7 targets are considered as needing attention, as confirmed in the Bangladesh MDG Report 2011; a key further issue is the lack of data reliability.

\textit{Environmental Management}

\textsuperscript{55}Food and Agriculture Organization, 2012.
Overall, in addition to the impact of population dynamics noted in Section XI, a still-high rate of poverty, vulnerability to natural disaster, the aspiration for middle-income country status by 2021, and an economic growth model based in part on intensive agricultural production are taking a high toll on national ecosystems and natural resources. Key environmental management issues also relate to acceptable levels of forest cover, acceptable levels of water and soil quality, acceptable levels of air quality, conservation of biodiversity, wetland conservation, and a ban on dumping of hazardous materials in water bodies.\textsuperscript{56}

Moreover, a number of national environmental policies, although well-designed, have not been supported by necessary actions to implement them,\textsuperscript{57} and also did not involve local-level authorities. Many policy instruments need to be updated and strengthened to address current needs, with laws managing the environment and natural resources management effectively implemented and monitored. For this, however, the Government will need to increase budgetary allocations. In addition, the Department of Environment,\textsuperscript{58} the principal implementing agency, will need to increase the allocation of technical and physical resources in response to its demanding responsibilities. Operational guidelines should be clarified to synchronize actions between institutions in order to achieve desired results and address existing policy gaps.

As noted in Section XI, the situation with regard to access to water and sanitation is exacerbated by issues relating to high water tables, rapid urbanization and water quality issues, with an estimated 32 million people\textsuperscript{59} consuming water with arsenic content in excess of the national drinking water standard. Water also is extensively contaminated with bacteria and highly saline. As a result of population growth and increased living standards and expectations, as well as increased industrial and agricultural output, demands on water resources have significantly increased. So has the volume of solid and liquid waste, with significant health and nutrition impacts.

All these remain highly salient issues for Bangladesh. In addition, however, forward-looking attention to environmental sustainability in the country also must particularly be focused on two of the areas not addressed by the MDGs: climate change and disaster risk management, and sustainable energy for all.

\textit{Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change}

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world because of its physical vulnerability to hazards such as floods, landslides, cyclones, tidal surges, droughts, earthquakes, riverbank erosion, tsunamis and sea level rise. Two-thirds of its land is barely 5 metres above sea level; it has been estimated that a 1-metre rise in sea level would reduce GDP by one-fourth to one-half. All of these issues are exacerbated by the high density of population, topography and climate change. Yet other drivers of risk include poorly managed urbanization, persistent poverty and, critically, issues of governance (see also Chapter 5); at the global level, researchers are calling for

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59}\textit{National Drinking Water Quality Survey 2009} (part of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2009).
more innovative and integrated governance approaches in dealing with complex problems posed by disasters. Here the linkages to early warning systems need to be recognized. Bangladesh has a lot to offer the global experience, but there is also still much to do in the national context.

The country has been affected by many cyclones that have devastated various regions. For example, in 1970 the Cyclone Bhola death toll reached 500,000; even as recently as 2007, the directly attributable costs of Cyclone Sidr were estimated at US$1.7 billion. However, more recent cyclones have had far lower death tolls, measured in the hundreds. This has been achieved through the use of innovative approaches to disaster risk management, implemented over many decades, that include community-based early response structures in partnership with national, sub-national and community-based trained volunteers (see also Chapter 1).

Increased technical capacity of relevant Government Ministries also has helped to propel the image of the country from one at the mercy of constant disasters to one held up as a disaster risk management role model on the global stage. An extensive system of safety net programmes has virtually eliminated post-disaster secondary cycles of death and hunger or undernutrition.

Adoption of a more comprehensive disaster risk management approach is perhaps best reflected by the Disaster Management Act passed in late 2012, which also calls for a Disaster Management Institute and a National Volunteer Corps in both urban and rural settings. Already, the comprehensive approach has laid the foundations to strengthen operational capacities vis-à-vis emergency management and for long-term disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Now, the focus is on facilitating and setting conditions to institutionalize disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in all aspects of development work, as well as to strengthen delivery of risk reduction outcomes for at-risk communities at grassroots level. A key challenge is to move beyond saving lives, while nevertheless important, and into a model that reduces livelihood risks by mitigating against forces that lead to loss of livelihoods.

At the same time, Bangladesh is a country that has taken very seriously the issue of climate change, which is already in the national development agenda. Climate change has moved from a peripheral to a mainstreamed central issue due in part to changes in policies of international donor agencies. Even so, climate change management requires even strong donor commitments as well as incentivization of private investment by the Government. A focus on resilience also could become a powerful common objective – and a key means to manage risk and reduce vulnerability due to climate change.

Overall, evidence of climate change is found particularly along the major river systems of the north and in the southern coastal belt. Over the past decades, these regions – already poor and often marginalized – have experienced more severe and frequent flooding, seasonal changes, and rising river and sea levels. Through climate change effects on food availability and access, consumption and dietary diversity have been reduced, leading to increased food insecurity and displacement. Climate change also serves as a hunger risk multiplier, making populations more susceptible to


infectious disease and compromising women’s ability to provide proper care to infants and children (breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding), again heightening the risk of undernutrition.

Climate change particularly affects women in other ways as well. Losses of harvests and livestock have a disproportionate impact on women, many of whom rely on food processing, household gardens, cattle and chickens for cash income and access to diverse nutritious food for the household. Much of the burden of male migration, which may be accelerated by climate change, also falls on women as they become the sole family breadwinner. Lastly, when fresh water sources become scarce, tasks such as collecting household water, washing household items and bathing children, generally performed by women, are more time-consuming.

In particular, riverbank erosion has become a serious climate change-related issue in Bangladesh affecting millions of people, with water appearing and disappearing, and the land mass both receding and extending into the delta. It is estimated that 1 percent of agricultural land in the country is lost every year due to riverbank erosion alone. Moreover, riverbank erosion is considered one of the most devastating effects of climate change that is having an impact on forced population migration; people of affected areas will need to be made aware of safe migration so that they do not suffer from trafficking or other negative risks.

Bangladesh prepared the National Adaptation Plan for Action (NAPA) in 2005 to meet the immediate need and challenges of climate change. Based on NAPA, in 2009 the country produced the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), a document that provides background information on adaptation as a priority issue without losing sight of mitigation as a path for low-carbon development to achieve sustainable development. Indeed, in the post-2015 agenda existing and past interventions can be scaled up alongside wider adaptation and, particularly, mitigation efforts.

The BCCSAP is built around six pillars: i) food security; ii) social protection and health; iii) comprehensive disaster management; iv) infrastructure, research and knowledge management; v) mitigation and low-carbon development; and vi) capacity building, while taking into account the needs of the women, children and marginalized communities. Two of these pillars, food security and social protection and health, identify gender equality issues as a priority; the BCCSAP suggested a comprehensive study of the impacts of climate change on women and gender relations in order to develop further recommendations under these pillars. It also suggested two more activities under the sixth pillar on capacity building, namely, i) the development of criteria and approaches for inclusion of gender considerations in all climate response activities and ii) building the capacity of gender focal points in all Ministries and agencies to incorporate gender issues in such activities. Meanwhile, making beneficiaries responsible for implementation of strategies at community level also can produce benefits on a much larger scale. To achieve this, strengthening linkages between national and sub-national levels will need to be addressed.

Post-2015 policies and programmes in Bangladesh also may need to include resettlement/rehabilitation for displaced environmental migrant populations, encompassing housing, employment, livelihoods, health and sanitation, and education. For example, planned forestry for the protection of riverbanks with indigenous species can effectively stop erosion or further erosion in affected areas. A social forestry programme in this respect also can ensure employment of local people as well as those directly affected by erosion. Dredging to maintain
navigability of rivers will be necessary so that during flooding, water does not overflow and waterways can be used by boats.

Climate change further defines a new framework for development that could offer new strategies and sources for production and trade tied to climate responses and climate finance. Implementing adaptation and mitigation actions will require public and private investments. New political frameworks and policy instruments likewise need to be in place; for this, the Government will need to create appropriate frameworks and a “road map.” Moreover, some climate change actions will require a change in policies and designing of new policy instruments, although there continues to be a knowledge gap in these areas.

At the same time, Bangladesh should strive to link adaptation, mitigation and disaster management with national development programmes. The mainstreaming of climate-resilient development remains to be accelerated, as does the feasibility of mitigation efforts. Supporting people – in rural communities in particular – to strengthen their resilience and adaptation to climate change will need to remain a high priority in the years to come. Bangladesh also will need to increase its advocacy at regional and global levels on the impact of climate change.

**Sustainable Energy for All**

Rising global energy demand, coupled with limited resources and the increasing threat of climate change, means that energy has become a central concern that cuts across all sectors of society. While there were no MDGs on energy, experts agree that energy is a prerequisite for higher economic growth, poverty reduction and social development. Poverty and energy deprivation go hand in hand, with energy expenses accounting for a significant proportion of household incomes in many developing countries. Moreover, the cycle of energy exclusion can trigger other forms of exclusion, with poor living conditions leading to illness and making it hard to maintain a job – and therefore to pay for electricity or heating, which further puts health at risk.

Bangladesh is a prime example of this reality: Booming economic growth, rapid urbanization and increased industrialization, and development have all increased the country’s demand for electricity. Yet only 53 percent of the total population has access to electricity, and per-capita generation stands at just 272 kwh. The Government’s vision is to provide access to affordable and reliable electricity to all by 2021. This also implies ensuring uninterrupted and quality power supply for all by that time, through improved generation, transmission and distribution systems.

Meanwhile, commercial energy in Bangladesh is dominated by natural gas, particularly in power generation. This is supplemented by imported liquid fuel; indigenous coal has yet to make any significant impact in the energy scenario. Although gas demand is estimated to reach to 5.6 billion cubic feet by 2025, current reserves (12 trillion cubic feet) would be unable to meet this increase; in turn, there is expected to be more than US$9 billion in required investments for exploration, development and transmission network expansion by 2025. As for coal, about 3.3 billion tonnes of reserves have been discovered so far, although some of this may not be viable for extraction because of its depth beneath the Earth’s surface.
At this juncture, the contribution of renewable energy is barely 1 percent of total energy in the country. The Government has taken several steps to address this, including passage of the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA) Act. Under this Act, the Government is committed to establish this renewable and clean energy promotion institution to facilitate both public and private-sector investment in conventional and non-conventional energy projects to develop indigenous non-renewable energy resources, which can play a vital role in national socioeconomic development. It also is looking toward scaling up contributions of existing renewable energy-based electricity production as well as improving energy efficiency.

Significantly, all these national developments correlate to the UN Secretary General’s Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative, a global agenda to rally national governments, the private sector and civil society to realize three goals by 2030: i) ensuring universal access to modern energy services; ii) doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix; and iii) doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

12a. Drivers of Environmental Sustainability
As noted in Chapter 1, the MDG framework has propelled important successes in specific areas. However, by largely overlooking inter-linkages and synergies, it promoted development efforts implemented in isolation, with inadequate consideration of the potential impacts on ecosystems and on other environmental, social and economic dimensions.

However, key linkages increasingly define the major driver of environmental sustainability, as noted above: Overall, the link between population growth and the resulting increased demand for water, sanitation, energy, food and housing will have significant impact upon the environment. It is also important to be cognizant of land access issues forcing people to occupy and farm lands known to be vulnerable—which is a reality in Bangladesh. The drive toward middle-income status has raised both living standards and expectations. All of these complex issues result in a dynamic and constantly evolving development scenario which needs due consideration as Bangladesh’s post-2015 development agenda moves forward.

Within this conceptual framework, several aspects are important to consider. Currently the global economic model does not account for or value the essential benefits that nature provides to people.62 It is increasingly evident that there is a need to develop an economic model that accurately reflects benefits to people from the environment and the costs associated with ecosystem degradation, potentially through a green economy model (see also Chapter 2). The win-win in green economy comes from the fact that there is real potential through creating economically, environmentally and socially just green jobs and technology transfer and innovation at

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a national level. Even so, the cautionary principle that should be kept in mind is that a green economy is not about imposing conditionalities on developing countries.

For developed countries, the green economy model may be very much focused on environmental protection and on reduction of GHG emissions. However, for a country like Bangladesh – which is still aiming to graduate to middle-income status – there exists an opportunity to define a green economy on its own terms, for example, with green industry as a model. Greening investment strategies to ensure that the public and private sectors alike favour greater resource efficiency will remain important. Critically, initiatives such as development of the Government’s Climate Change and Gender Action Plan will be a practical means to ensure gender is mainstreamed, for example, in climate change-related interventions in Bangladesh. Greening investment strategies to ensure public and private sectors favor greater resource efficiency will remain equally important.

Addressing Bangladesh’s emergence as a “hot spot” for new infectious diseases, in part because of changing climatic conditions, also will be critical. Infectious diseases in the extensive, low-lying haors can initiate a vicious cycle by negatively affecting the availability of overall food supply and causing or compounding hunger and undernutrition. Increased water salinity in the coastal belt and the presence of arsenic in the water supply also represent serious threats to health and agriculture. Meanwhile, outdoor and indoor air pollution are now major causes of global ill health, and can generate large economic losses, for instance, by lowering agricultural yields. Indeed, the OECD predicts that air pollution will become the main global environmental cause of premature deaths by 2050, overtaking unsafe water and sanitation.

At the same time, ensuring long-term food security is dependent on maintaining environmental resources – land, water and others – through sustainable agricultural practices and sound water management. A shift is needed from natural resource management to better utilization of innovative approaches such as climate-smart agriculture and forestry, including greater national and international investments in research and development for adaptation, such as stress-resilient crop varieties. Nutrition issues also have important linkages, with a need to increasingly address the issue of sustainable and diverse diets that are nutritionally adequate but economically fair and affordable, and with low environmental impacts amid increasing population pressure on diminishing land and agricultural resources.

Yet increases in agricultural production would not be necessary if, for example, significant measures were taken to reduce waste; it is believed that as much as one-third of food produced for human consumption globally is lost or wasted. The fast-growing middle class in emerging economies such as Bangladesh also is expected to lead to a significant shift toward a more meat-intensive diet, although meat production is extremely resource-intensive in terms of land and water, and significantly contributes to CO2 emissions. Education and communication for development will be crucial vehicles to foster the changes in lifestyles needed to achieve behaviours required to ensure that the needs of future generations also will be met.

National policymakers have given increasing prominence to these issues, particularly recognizing that Bangladesh must both act to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change, through the greening of its development trajectory. In addition, the country is a signatory to two international Conventions on hazardous chemicals and wastes, but as noted below, much more remains to be done.
Critically, fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development. Unsustainable consumption and production patterns are among the root causes of climate change and extreme weather. Thus, all countries, including Bangladesh, will need to promote sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns (see also Chapter 2). The most obvious connection between SCP and the MDG agenda is contained in MDG7, and to a certain extent in MDG8, developing a global partnership for development. Overall, attaining the MDGs requires the production and consumption of more goods and services to meet the basic needs and aspirations of the world’s poor while keeping within the limits of already-stressed ecosystems.

SCP issues, particularly those related to sustainable production, have a particular resonance for Bangladesh. Rapid economic growth and industrialization have posed huge environmental costs to the country. Hazardous wastes from industrial processes, medical waste, e-wastes and the thriving scrap recycling business are polluting the air, soil and waterways. Tanneries discharge wastewater containing animal flesh, sulfuric acid, chromium and lead, with much of this water eventually winding up in Dhaka’s main river. Effluents from the textile dyeing industry also contain numerous chemical and organic pollutants. Thus, many of the industries that bring rapidly growing sources of export income to Bangladesh are among those most challenged by unsustainable production processes.

While new economic opportunities may arise as a result of SCP adoption, they also will need to be linked with sectors that can absorb a huge labour force and simultaneously accelerate the growth process. At the same time, additional efforts in this regard can be inspired in numerous areas: consumer information; sustainable lifestyles and education; sustainable public procurement; sustainable buildings and construction; and sustainable tourism, including ecotourism. Bangladesh will need to capitalize on these while maintaining its environmental focus.

XIII. Recommended Environmental Sustainability Goals, Targets and Indicators

Based on the preceding analysis, and in view of this challenging development context as Bangladesh looks forward to achieving middle-income status by 2021, three major environmental sustainability goals for action stand out. (For details on targets and indicators, see Annex 1.) These are:

- **Goal 8:** Ensure inclusive environment and natural resources management that promotes sustainable ecosystems, development and green growth, livelihoods and health
- **Goal 9:** Reduce risk and build resilience to disasters and climate change, with a focus on adaptation
- **Goal 10:** Improve diversity of, and access to, clean and more efficient sources of energy

Sustainable development, of which environmental sustainability is a key part, thus encompasses key endeavours in areas such as climate change and biodiversity; sustainable consumption and production patterns; food security and sustainable agriculture; sustainable energy for all; water
access and efficiency; sustainable cities; decent work and social inclusion; and disaster risk reduction and resilience. It also implies achievement of inter-generational justice and a future world fit for children.

The post-2015 development agenda has an opportunity to focus on building environmental governance capacity at national and local levels, specifically on policy compliance and implementation of pro-poor, climate-resilient development, sustainable natural resource management, and efficient conservation plans and regulations. At the same time, the policymaking process can be targeted to promote a green economy and growth, the spread of green technologies, creation of green jobs and affordable modern energy access, especially for the poor and marginalized. Overall, what is needed now is enhanced and effective long-term visioning, utilizing the opportunities and scaling up the win-wins to bring about true transformational change that reflects the positive aspirations of the Government and the people alike.

Chapter 5: Inclusive Governance in Bangladesh for the Post-2015 Agenda

XIV. Background

Inclusive governance has been a particularly significant omission from the MDGs. The Millennium Declaration, which underpins and contextualises the MDGs, sets out the critical importance of good governance, democratic participation and the rule of law in achieving sustainable and equitable development. However, in the absence of global consensus, inclusive governance was not included as one of the specific measurable Goals.

The absence of inclusive governance from the MDGs has had profound impact on development programming across the globe, since concerted efforts have been focused on meeting the specific targets set out in the MDGs. For many development partners, support for inclusive governance, while important, was undermined by a lack of consensus between donors and developing countries on the metrics of inclusive governance. As a result, while many countries made good progress in achieving the MDGs, and consequently improved the lives of many (see also Chapter 1), there has been less progress in improving governance, democratic participation and respect for the rule of law, which would sustain and enhance those gains. This deficit in the MDGs has increasingly been recognized by the international community, including at the MDG Summit in 2010.63

The critical role of inclusive governance for realizing sustainable human development and poverty alleviation was highlighted in the most recent global Human Development Report.64 Growing evidence suggests that economic growth alone is not delivering the development outcomes expected, particularly since many countries, including Bangladesh, aspire to move into middle-income status. Without effective State responses, growing inequality results in prosperity benefiting the few rather than the majority. Today, exclusion lies at the heart of critical development

64 UNDP, op.cit.
challenges related to State fragility, social and political violence, and the integrity, capacity and legitimacy of the State.

Addressing inequality requires an activist approach to opening up livelihoods and opportunities for all, and ensuring an equitable distribution of public resources. It requires women to have equal capacity and opportunity to participate in, and influence, decision making. Inequality can only be addressed when democratic space is open and communities and individuals have effective voice and participation. Inclusive governance also is essential to ensure effective policy development in areas vital for underpinning sustainable development, such as addressing climate change and environmental degradation, or managing population size.

Inclusive governance likewise is critical for the development of innovative social policy responses, including sound health, nutrition and educational provision, and effective social protection. Building a capable State that is able to deploy diverse policy instruments is a fundamental priority for effective poverty alleviation and sustainable development, offering the ability to fully unlock a country’s potential.

Accordingly, inclusive governance is critical to the post-2015 framework, given that it is essential for sustained development as a whole – development that ensures that women, children, older people, the poor and marginalized groups share in the benefits of economic growth and prosperity. Inclusive governance requires that all people have the right to participate meaningfully in governance processes and influence decisions. It also means that governance institutions and policies are accessible and accountable to marginalized groups, providing equal access to public services. In all, inclusive governance occurs when the rule of law is followed, access to justice is afforded, and discrimination is addressed.

For Bangladesh as elsewhere, three central aspects of inclusive governance are: i) accountable public institutions that deliver public services to all, and especially the marginalized and poor, ii) participation and representation of all people in the democratic process, and iii) rule of law and respect for human rights.

First, accountable and effective public administration provides predictability and fairness in the actions of government. It supports business investment necessary for economic growth. It has also recently been acknowledged that public administration has a critical role in responding to inequality through fair and effective service delivery (see also Chapter 3). A well-trained and effective
workforce, coupled with sound budget planning and management institutions and processes, are critical for effective public administration. Thus, public administration is the “engine room” of government, supporting the development of policy, implementing laws passed by the parliament, ensuring proper revenue raising, and delivering important services such as education, nutrition, health, and water and sanitation. In a democracy, public administration must also be responsive, transparent and accountable.

At the same time, free and fair elections, strong institutions such as parliament and CSOs to highlight the voice of the people – coupled with the space and opportunity to debate and discuss public policy – are the critical elements of participation that ensure inclusive governance. Fundamentally, democratic governance is about how power is exercised within the State, and the extent to which all individuals have the capacity and opportunity to raise their voice and participate in civic decisions.

In turn, effective public administration and democratic processes also need to be supported by well-functioning legal institutions. The rule of law is an inherent part of inclusive governance. Evidence suggests that establishing transparent and legitimate legal frameworks, ensuring predictable enforcement of rules and procedures, and reducing corruption have enabled effective delivery of health, education and other social services in realization of specific MDG targets.

Globally, evidence suggests that both access to, and the quality of, justice are major rule of law challenges. The World Development Report 2011 demonstrates that strengthening the rule of law is crucial to ensure security, justice, and economic prosperity. Corruption, undue influence, violence and fear each undermine the rule of law, national stability and prosperity. Overall, traditional development interventions focusing heavily on developing State capacities have proven inadequate. Rule of law institutions and services therefore will need to be more inclusive, innovative and accessible.

Lastly, respect for human rights is at the heart of legitimate governance. While the MDGs themselves do not explicitly reference human rights, many MDG targets reflect core human rights norms such as the right to health and the right to education. Momentum is substantial for the post-2015 agenda to be fully aligned with international human rights standards and principles. Human rights are underpinned by universally recognized moral values and reinforced by international legal obligations. Accordingly, international human rights provide a compelling normative framework for the formulation of national and international policies, including inclusive development strategies. The linking of human rights and post-2015 goals would seek to deliver sustainable and inclusive development that supports the realization of human rights, particularly for the marginalized.

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66 Ibid.
**XV. Trends in National Governance**

Bangladesh is often referred to as an example of the governance paradox – despite numerous challenges to good governance, it has nevertheless maintained steady economic growth, albeit from a low base. Like many other developing countries, Bangladesh has made exemplary progress in achieving many MDG targets, but less progress on inclusive governance. The most recent Human Development Report reinforces this, confirming that Bangladesh is one of 18 countries that has substantially exceeded their steady-state Human Development Index (HDI) scores based on 1990 values. Despite this, the Report also highlights that the quality of governance in Bangladesh remains a key area of concern.\(^{70}\) Both quantitative assessments and qualitative evidence show that the standard of administration and nature of the policymaking and supportive processes require strengthening in Bangladesh. Such strengthening is likely to be a key to further significant advances in human development.

In Bangladesh, key deficits in governance include the need to create democratic space in which policy and governance issues can be openly and rationally debated; the need to reform public administration to ensure effective service delivery; the need to tackle governance deficits that allow inequality to thrive; and the need to tackle endemic corruption and stamp out extrajudicial processes.

**15a. Drivers of Inclusive Governance**

The importance of good governance as a critical enabler of development and poverty alleviation is recognized by the Government in its Sixth Five Year Plan.\(^{71}\) For Bangladesh, like many countries in South Asia, a crucial aspect of governance reform has been the need to reorient the civil service away from its traditional role of serving the colonial elite to serving the people. In this reform journey, success has been very mixed. The Government also has invested significant energy in improving public administration, service delivery and access to information under its e-governance ("Digital Bangladesh") agenda.\(^{72}\) Nevertheless, despite these commitments and initiatives, significant work remains to improve public administration in the country.

A key area of focus for the Government has been on developing a merit-based system of human resource management within the civil service. In 2011, a draft Civil Service Act was published that aims to create a merit- and performance-based civil service.\(^{73}\) Encouragingly, national consultations have been conducted to allow citizens to raise their views on the proposed law. The challenge for the Government now is to pass the law in the face of entrenched opposition from segments of the civil service, and after a long history of failure of civil service reform.\(^{74}\) Simultaneously, legal reform will need to be sustained through long-term capacity building of the civil service.

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\(^{71}\) General Economics Division, Planning Commission, op.cit.
\(^{72}\) Digital Bangladesh has led to more than 2 million people using digitized services since its launch.
The realization of these reforms will be crucial for improving the quality of policy development processes, which in turn will be essential for Bangladesh to effectively respond to critical development challenges that require decisive State-led action, such as severe environmental degradation (see also Chapter 4).

Beyond effective human resource management, strengthening Public Financial Management (PFM) is an urgent issue in Bangladesh. On the expenditure side, the introduction of the medium-term budget framework (MTBF) has been one achievement leading to a more strategic and performance-oriented approach to budgeting. A key challenge is to build capacity to implement the MTBF and entrench accountability for meeting budget targets across the Government. Capacity to measure and budget the demand for services remains a critical weakness. Effective financial accountability, together with sound auditing practices, will need to be consolidated. Building citizen engagement in the budget process also is a priority challenge.

On the revenue side, effective resource planning and management constitutes an area for strengthening. Tax revenue has been stuck at 10 percent of GDP for a decade. The low revenue-to-GDP ratio can be attributed to low domestic taxes, coupled with major shortfalls in tax administration and high levels of tax evasion. Inadequate revenue collection significantly constrains the scope and reach of poverty reduction strategies in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, the limited tax base fundamentally constrains the delivery of universal health, education and housing services, which are desperately needed by the poor. To tackle inequality in Bangladesh, improving public revenue management and the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service will be an urgent priority.

Excessive centralization also represents a critical shortfall of public administration in Bangladesh. Despite recent positive reforms, including the passage of the Union Parishads Act in 2009, Government administration in the country remains one the most centralized in the world. The two administrative units below the national Government, the Division and District, have no independent governance structures. At lower levels, the UpazilaParishad Chairman is elected, along with the Mayor of the City Corporation and Pourashava (municipality) in urban areas. While improving accountability to the people, these local elections also create conflicts with members of the national Parliament due to a failure to clearly delineate responsibilities and authority.

Local Government Institutions (LGIs) spend only about 3 to 4 percent of total Government expenditures, compared to 34 percent and 52 percent in Indonesia and South Africa respectively. Similarly, on the revenue side LGIs collect less than 2 percent of total Government revenue.

76 Moinul Islam, Additional Secretary, Finance Division. Presentation to LCG PFMWG. Dhaka, October 2012.
Accordingly, LGIs have not had any opportunity to act as effective tiers of Government, with mandates and funds to carry out their roles and responsibilities.79

Enhanced decentralization in Bangladesh would encourage improved service delivery, enable the civil service to effectively engage with CSOs and communities, help to resolve conflict, and meet the challenges of rapid urbanization. Critically, effective decentralization will require equal participation of women in decision making. In all, decentralization will ultimately require an effective devolution of power at the political, policy and legal levels as well as consequential support to build the capacity of LGIs, both elected and local administrations, for convergence and bottom-up planning.

Linked to effective public administration is the further critical issue of corruption. Recognizing the enormity of the challenge, the Government recently released a National Integrity Strategy. Implementation of this strategy is urgent, since a lack of systemic accountability and transparency continues to plague governance in Bangladesh. In 2012, the country dropped from 120th to 144th on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, reflecting a strong perception of endemic corruption among political and administrative authorities in Bangladesh.

Corruption hinders business investment, particularly foreign investment, undermining long-term, sustainable national economic growth. In addition, Transparency International Bangladesh estimates petty bribery costs 13.4 percent of the national budget, or 2.4 percent of GDP.80 The cost to households of these bribes is not shared equally, and disproportionately falls on the poorest and most marginalized groups, widening inequality. Households with the lowest quintile of expenditure lost 5.5 percent to corruption in 2012, compared with the highest quintile, who lost 1.3 percent. Thus, poor households spend 55 Taka out of every 1,000 Taka on bribes. Tackling corruption effectively requires a commitment to the rule of law, and particularly the accountability of all to the law and legal process.

The importance of strengthening democracy and participation in order to realize sustainable development is also critical for ensuring a high standard of governance in Bangladesh and the capacity of civil society to effectively influence public policymaking. These challenges are likewise recognized by the Government in the Sixth Five Year Plan. Nevertheless, the culture of participatory democracy, with emphasis on broad consultations and the participation of all groups, has yet to be fully developed.

National elections held in December 2008 were widely considered the freest and fairest in the country’s history.81 The Election Commission was reinvigorated and widely considered professional and independent. In addition, the Election Commission successfully restored the integrity of the electoral roll. Bangladesh responded with overwhelming enthusiasm, with voter turnout of 85.26 percent. This turnout was a record for elections in Bangladesh, and higher than that found across

79 Ibid.
Evidence suggests women’s participation in the Bangladesh election was also at a record high and comparable to male participation. Unfortunately, no reliable data exist on the participation rates of marginalized groups such as dalits and indigenous peoples, or ethnic and religious minorities.

Another national election is due at the end of 2013. However, recent moves by the Government to amend the Constitution and end the practice of holding elections under a neutral “caretaker” Government have not been supported by the opposition. This has led to widespread protest and growing concern about the capacity of the Election Commission to conduct a free and fair election this time under a political government.

Despite widespread turnout at the 2008 national election, the composition of the elected Parliament failed to reflect the diversity of society in Bangladesh; women won just 19 of the 300 elected seats. Social and cultural practices, including ideas about the traditional role of women, as well as economic exclusion and a consequential lack of capital, have all inhibited women’s effective participation in politics. This diminished participation extends to political party officeholders and elected representatives at national and local levels alike; it also is reflected in the lack of representation of women in senior posts in the civil service.

Religious minorities account for less than 5 percent of the total number of members of Parliament elected, well below their 10 percent share of the total population. Only four members of Parliament were elected from the indigenous (Adivasi) population. Minority groups are similarly underrepresented in local government as well as senior positions in public administration. Evidence thus suggests that elected members of Parliament overwhelmingly represent the elite of Bangladesh society. The significant proportion who are poor, or with minimal

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82 Voter turnout in the last national parliamentary elections in India was only 58.19 percent. See the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int).
83 [International Crisis Group, op.cit.](http://www.idea.int)
84 In addition to the ordinary seats in Parliament, there are 45 reserved seats for women. Accordingly, there are 64 women in a parliament of 345.
86 Women hold just 8.19 percent of administrative and 12.16 percent of technical or professional posts in the civil service.
87 [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, op.cit.](http://www.idea.int)
88 In 2009, ethnic and religious minorities comprised 8 percent of Ministers, 13.33 percent of State Ministers (Junior Ministers), 5.56 percent of Departmental Secretaries, and 11.49 percent of Additional Secretaries.
education, are largely absent from the Parliament and thus struggle having their voice heard and represented. Thus, culturally, socially and politically, the poor and marginalized, including dalits, indigenous peoples and religious/ethnic minorities, are spoken for rather than being equal partners in political dialogue.

Beyond the Parliament, Bangladesh has an active civil society, and the debate in the media is of relatively high quality. Despite this, Bangladesh’s democracy since the 2008 election has followed the pattern of previous periods. The leading political parties tend to practice an “all or nothing” brand of politics; the most notable example of this is the longstanding boycott in Parliament by the main opposition party alliance, which has stifled the opportunity for plural parliamentary debate and undermined the Parliament’s ability to fulfil its constitutional role. Effectively, the Parliament has been sidelined as an institution of representation and accountability to the people.

The confrontational nature of the political parties, coupled with their profound influence in civil society, has resulted in divided opinions percolating through all levels of society. Rather than a responsive political culture, which is steered by public opinion on a demand side, policy discourse and debate are largely governed by political party interests. This is reinforced by the parties’ opaque rules and procedures. Steering capacity from civil society and other platforms that mediate individual interests into collective interest groups (professional associations, business groups, unions), and that traditionally lobby for influence in public policymaking, remains weak and often decoupled from political decision making. Youth feel particularly excluded from policymaking and disconnected from public discourse.

The lack of institutionalized democratic space in Bangladesh is confirmed by the continued reliance on protest as the only avenue of pressing political and policy demands. Traditionally, political protests have been dominated by hartals, professionally organized by opposition parties as a show of political strength. However, it is also true that hartals and protest movements are used by disaffected groups, including unions and youth groups, as the sole way to highlight their legitimate grievances and seek redress. This was seen most recently in February 2013, with the Shahbag protest movement led, and organically organized, by Bangladesh’s youth. Shahbag saw hundreds of thousands in the streets demanding justice for those held responsible for serious crimes during the country’s war for independence in 1971. Shahbag also has highlighted the ability of youth to use social media to debate policies and politics, organize around issues, and press their legitimate

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89 International Crisis Group, op.cit.
90 Ibid.
92 The right to assembly and protest is protected by the Constitution, provided that such protests are peaceful and do not infringe the rights of others. A total of 21 hartals, spanning 26 days, occurred in 2011 and 2012. This pace has accelerated considerably in 2013 as the election approaches.
concerns despite their exclusion from traditional forums. Likewise, Shahbag highlighted the challenge for youth to articulate their demands specifically.

Ultimately, however, hartals and protest movements demonstrate the failure of the institutional democratic channels to yield results in Bangladesh and the resultant preference for protest. Hartals often turn violent, challenging law and order. The economy is also harshly affected, with an estimated cost of around 3 to 4 percent of GDP.

Bangladesh’s record of mixed progress on good governance is particularly true in the area of rule of law and human rights. Progress includes the separation of the judiciary from the executive, as well as the establishment of an independent human rights commission and a right to information commission to ensure greater scrutiny and accountability of Government. Social protection schemes have been extended to most of the poor. In addition, legislation has been introduced to tackle domestic violence, and the Government is consulting on legislation that will improve the protection of the rights of children and the rights of people with disabilities (see also Chapter 3).

Yet major challenges remain. Bangladesh’s formal justice system continues to be relatively inaccessible for the vast majority of people. Marginalized groups face particular difficulty in accessing timely and affordable justice. A key constraint is the slow case disposal rate and corresponding buildup of a large case backlog. Addressing this backlog will require legal, policy and administrative reform as well as capacity development support for the judiciary.

The backlog, together with limited access to legal aid, significantly hampers access to justice. At local level, traditional dispute resolution forums are preferred. However, these forums are often not sanctioned by law and also raise human rights concerns, particularly for women. A significant access to justice issue arises because the vast majority of people are unaware of their rights, nor aware of the forums through which they can enforce those rights. Awareness raising through effective communication for development will be critical to build demand for the State to promote and protect human rights.

The judiciary is also undermined by the intense political rivalry afflicting Bangladesh described above. Judicial appointments and promotions are perceived to be based on political loyalties rather than merit. Endemic corruption in the lower judiciary undermines access to justice and the rule of law. Moreover, access to civil remedies and bail in criminal cases is reported to be increasingly decided by the amount paid to the magistrate or district judge, rather than on merit in accordance

93 An important caveat is that less than 10 percent of Bangladesh youth have access to a computer or the Internet (see BRAC Institute for Governance Studies survey, op.cit.), and, accordingly, much youth organizing continues to centre around word of mouth and mobile phones.
98 International Crisis Group, op.cit. The International Crisis Group reports that political decisions have influenced the appointments of a substantial number of assistant attorneys general and high court judges.
with the law. Corruption and political influence have also undermined the police and security forces, with continuing concerns about the persistent culture of impunity of law enforcement officials and their lack of accountability for extrajudicial killings. In addition, a growing number of cases involving enforced disappearance are being reported. Stamping out these extrajudicial processes is critical for upholding the rule of law.

Also undermining the rule of law is the low conviction rate in criminal cases, of around 10 percent. This raises concerns about political influence and corruption as well as highlighting weaknesses in the police, prosecution services and judiciary. The recent Shahbag protests, and the response of those who opposed the protests, both highlight the extent to which there is a public perception that judicial processes are influenced and undermined by politics. The practice of persons found guilty of a crime under one Government being subsequently pardoned or otherwise released by a new Government compounds this concern. In addition, without de-politicization and capacity building, Bangladesh will not be able to respond effectively to increasingly important issues of transnational crime, money laundering and narcotics control.

In terms of human rights treaties, Bangladesh is a party to the majority of international human rights instruments. Despite this, Bangladesh has a poor record of implementing human rights treaties into national law and reporting against those treaties.

With respect of the rights of women, much progress has been made in developing laws and policies. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain, and women continue to face discrimination in both the public sphere and their family life, particularly in the areas of inheritance and divorce. Domestic violence, sexual violence and dowry continue despite being illegal (see also Chapter 3). Social and cultural change is required in order to realize the rights of women and girls and ensure their full participation in the public sphere.

While gender parity has been achieved in primary and secondary education enrolment, there remains a high level of dropout among girls, especially in rural areas often associated with child marriage (see also Chapter 3). The gender gap at the technical/vocational and tertiary education levels remains high. Girls still face particular barriers to accessing education, with high number of girls suffering sexual abuse and harassment in schools and on their way to school.

In addition, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised concerns regarding the allocation of financial and human resources for children as well as equitable access to, and the quality of, health,

99 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 For example, while Bangladesh is party to the Convention Against Torture, the Convention has not been effectively adopted in the criminal laws of the country. National Human Rights Commission, Legal Analysis of Compliance with the Convention Against Torture. Dhaka, 2012.
103 Key developments include adoption of the National Women’s Development Policy 2011.
nutrition and education services (see also Chapter 3). Of serious concern is the widespread practice of child labour (see also Chapters 2 and 3). The vast majority of child workers are engaged in informal employment where occupational health and safety protections, wages and legal and social protection are either absent or inadequate. Over 2.5 million, or 7 percent, of children in Bangladesh aged 5 to 14 years are engaged in employment and not attending school.

Meanwhile, indigenous communities and ethnic minorities, including refugees from Myanmar, continue to be amongst the poorest in Bangladesh and are more likely to suffer breaches of their human rights, particularly in relation to rights to land and the realization of social, economic and cultural rights. There has been some progress on the implementation of the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Accord, including support for education in the mother tongue. Nevertheless, the overall slow pace of implementation of the CHT Accord remains a significant concern. Finally, laws appropriate for a number of socially marginalized groups, including sexual minorities, remain to be formulated and enforced (see also Chapter 3).

XVI. Recommended Inclusive Governance Goals, Targets and Indicators

Based on the above analysis, this section sets out proposed goals, targets and indicators for inclusive governance that would be relevant in light of the Bangladesh context. The goals reflect the three aspects of inclusive governance outlined in this Chapter, while the targets seek to allow measurement of progress against the specific challenges in Bangladesh. (For details on targets and indicators, see Annex 1.)

- **Goal 11:** Improve accountability of public institutions for equitable public service provision to all communities
- **Goal 12:** Ensure equal participation and effective representation of marginalized groups, thereby strengthening inclusive democratic governance
- **Goal 13:** Strengthen rule of law, access to justice and promotion and protection of human rights

Given the importance of inclusive governance for addressing critical development challenges, it is essential that it is included in the post-2015 framework. Already, the MDGs have proven an effective advocacy and communication tool resonating both with political leaders and with the public. Moreover, the MDGs have built a common understanding, making it easier for a broad range of actors to work with Governments in addressing development challenges. These are all benefits that the cause of strengthened inclusive governance for sustainable human development in Bangladesh and around the world certainly needs.

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Chapter 6: The Future We Want for All in Bangladesh

Globalization offers great opportunities, but its benefits are at present very unevenly shared. The continuous striving for improvements in material welfare, including in Bangladesh, is threatening to surpass the limits of the natural resource base unless there is a radical shift toward more sustainable patterns of consumption, production and resource use.

Major inequalities, the knowledge challenge, shifting demographics, growing environmental footprints, governance and accountability deficits, and living in an insecure world: All demand the urgent formulation of new development pathways. Persistent inequalities and struggles over scarce resources also are among critical determinants of situations of insecurity and violence, which in turn are key factors that hold back human development and efforts to achieve sustainable development.

“Business as usual” thus cannot be an option. Transformative change that encourages creativity and innovation in the pursuit of inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and development is needed. Such an effort must be matched by reshaping global, regional and national partnerships for development to support implementation and to ensure effective accountability mechanisms at all levels.

Any successor to the MDGs will have its limitations, as do the current Goals. There is a need to be realistic about what can and cannot be measured in the post-2015 development framework, and to acknowledge the limitations of poverty numbers. This report has attempted to crystallize the United Nations vision of Bangladesh’s priorities in clear, easy-to-communicate sustainable development goals that will help guide coherent policy action.

Achieving this holistic approach will require a break with the past on many fronts, including follow-up issues such as policymaking, governance at all levels, implementation processes, and accountability mechanisms. Critically, implementation is often the bane of many good policies. The following issues will need to be kept in focus to ensure that goals and targets are achieved: i) sustained and innovative motivational campaigns; ii) provision of positive incentives to relevant stakeholders; iii) ensuring stricter laws and punishments as deterrence to persistent violators of rules and regulations; iv) adoption of time-bound action plans; v) collaboration and coordination among relevant Government agencies, local government organizations, NGOs, the private sector, media, academia and development partners, as well as within the United Nations System itself; and vi) embedding an effective monitoring system.

Costing for results also is an exercise that is not only a practical matter but likewise signals the seriousness of purpose. Without it, progress would be difficult, if not impossible. The costing exercise also demands that it spells out who will bear how much of the expenditure, in what manner (grants, additional taxes, user charges, cross-subsidies), and in what time frame. Bangladesh’s Country Investment Plan (CIP) for agriculture, food security and nutrition, which is a country-led planning, mobilization and alignment tool, may be useful as an initial reference point for developing other costed and prioritized interventions and investment areas.
In addition, formulation of the post-2015 development framework becomes meaningful if the entire process is imbued with a results orientation. To keep the focus on results, as in the case of MDGs, establishing clear benchmarks using all available data will be crucial. Of particular importance will be innovation on low-cost monitoring methodologies, including community-based monitoring.

Lastly, the MDGs fostered a useful focus on data and progress reporting, as noted in Chapter 1. The post-2015 framework, with its greater focus on process factors and disaggregated results, pose newer challenges on data gathering, reporting and lesson learning. Greater emphasis on mixed-method research, including contextual participatory research, will be needed.

Strengthening equity, enabling voice and participation, confronting social, environmental and economic challenges simultaneously, managing demographic change, and capitalizing on new partnerships: Bangladesh must move forward boldly on all these development fronts in the post-2015 era. But if it can achieve these considerable ambitions and sustain the momentum – and it is a country with the undeniable potential to do so – then it can realize the future we want for all in Bangladesh.
Annex 1: Proposed Post-2015 Goals, Targets and Indicators

A. Inclusive Economic Development

Goal 1: Secure economic growth that is inclusive, reduces poverty and inequality, creates sufficient numbers of decent jobs, and is environmentally sustainable

- Target 1: Substantially reduce income and multi-dimensional poverty by 50 percent of the 2015 value (for LDCs) or by 25 percent (for other countries)
  - Suggested indicators: i) National Poverty Headcount Rate (cost of basic needs, direct caloric intake); ii) Multiple Poverty Index (HDR, UNDP); iii) per-capita economic growth rate (World Bank WDI series); iv) ratio of growth (%) to poverty reduction (%) (growth elasticity of poverty, GEP); v) underweight and stunting.

- Target 2: Reduce the level of inequality (for highly unequal low-income countries/middle-income countries: consumption Gini > 0.40) or maintain this level (for other low-/middle-income countries)
  - Suggested indicators: i) National Gini coefficient (consumption-based, World Bank WDI); ii) Theil index and the spatial component of inequality (National Statistical Offices, NSOs); iii) ratio of lower to upper quartile (consumption-based, NSOs); iv) rural/urban disaggregated poverty indicators (CBN, DCI).

- Target 3: Ensure full employment and rapid growth in decent work, and secure equal pay for equal work for men and women at home and abroad
  - Suggested indicators: i) Labour market participation rate (male/female); ii) percentage of workers within the informal sector (male/female); ratio of women’s to
men’s median wage (after econometric adjustments for labour quality and sector differences, NSOs).

- **Target 4: Reduce/maintain the carbon footprint of production progressively and limit economically driven environmental degradation** *(for middle-income countries: reduction of 25 percent; for low-income countries, no deterioration)*
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) CO2 emissions in total; ii) CO2 emissions per capita and per $1 GDP (PPP); iii) air quality in urban areas (partial count); iv) access to improved water sources in urban areas.

- **Target 5: Maintain sustained growth and development through trade expansion and foreign investment**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Trade-GDP ratio increased to 62 percent; FDI increased by XX percent; ii) GDP share of manufacturing sector increased by XX percent; iii) GDP share of medium small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) and service sector increased by XX percent.

### B. Inclusive Social Development

**Goal 2: Ensure sustainable food security and good nutrition**

- **Target 1: Halve the number of undernourished children under 5 years old (from the 2015 value)**
  - **Suggested indicator:** Proportion of stunting and wasting among children under 5

- **Target 2: Improve the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating mothers and their newborns**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Proportion of girls under 18 years who have begun childbearing (decrease by 50 percent); ii) Proportion of pregnant and lactating mothers with undernutrition (MUAC cutoff); iii) Percentage of coverage of iron/folic acid supplements among pregnant and lactating mothers to prevent anaemia; iv) Incidence of Low Birth Weight (decrease by 50 percent)

- **Target 3: Ensure adequate complementary feeding and appropriate child care practices**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Universal exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life; ii) Proportion of children aged 6-23 months receiving a minimum acceptable diet for children, using WHO composited indicator; iii) Percentage of people who self-report handwashing before feeding a young child

- **Target 4: Halve the proportion of undernourished people, disaggregated by sex**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Proportion of people consuming less than 2,122 kcal per day; ii) Proportion of people consuming less than 1,805 kcal per day; iii) Proportion
of people with Body Mass Index below 18.5 (undernourished), or an age-specific
MUAC cutoff to be decided; iv) Proportion of people with Body Mass Index above 25
(overnourished), or an age-specific MUAC cutoff to be decided

- **Target 5: Improve dietary diversity**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Proportion of people obtaining more than 60 percent of daily
    energy intake from cereal in rural and urban populations; ii) Proportion of
    households taking more than 6 out of 12 food groups per day (Household Dietary
    Diversity Score); iii) Proportion of women aged 14-19 years taking more than 5 out
    of 9 food groups per day (Women’s Dietary Diversity Score)

- **Target 6: Ensure sustainable food supply**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Number of food items certified by CODEX standards; ii) Proportion of
    safe and nutritious food in the market; iii) Availability of ISO-certified
    and internationally recognized laboratories for ensuring safe food

- **Target 7: Increase and diversify the food supply**
  - **Suggested indicator:** Share of non-rice food value added in agricultural GDP

- **Target 8: Ensure the universal right to food through access to adequate safety nets**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Proportion of poor covered by food- and cash-based safety
    nets; ii) Average benefit from safety net relative to cost of essential food basket

- **Target 9: Ensure the supply of safe drinking water and sanitation to reduce diarrhoeal
diseases**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Universal access to safe drinking water; ii) Proportion of
    population having improved sanitation facilities

- **Target 10: Improve equity in indicators for undernutrition**
  - **Suggested indicator:** Gap in impact indicators by gender, household wealth and
    population group quintiles

- **Target 11: Strengthen nutritional governance**
  - **Suggested indicator:** Level of nutrition governance score, developed by WHO

**Goal 3: Reduce social inequalities, particularly among marginalized groups, and improve living conditions**

- **Suggested targets and indicators:** Growing inequalities have negative social, economic and
  political consequences for all people, and are evident in many components of social
  development: in education, food consumption, housing, and access to safe drinking water,
  among others. These multiple forms of deprivation tend to overlap and reinforce each other.
  Thus, for example, poor people are more likely to live in places that have limited or low-
quality health services; with less education, the poor also may be less able to appreciate
benefits of timely medical treatment and intervention. Systematic, two-way social and
economic interactions of this kind can reinforce cumulative disadvantages over
generations. Developing human capital among specific marginalized groups will be
particularly critical: It will be necessary, for example, to recognize that the broad spectrum
of social-related laws and policies (e.g., housing, education, labour and social protection) has
a particular impact on the health needs of all migrants and their families (see also Goal 5).

- With regard to improved living conditions, the post-2015 development agenda must
  consider the process of rapid urbanization and address the needs for basic social services
  along with affordable housing and transportation; while the MDGs did include a reference to
  improvement in the lives of slum dwellers, a lack of adequate data prevented effective
  monitoring. In particular, overcoming knowledge gaps with regard to urban poverty will be
critical to the forging of effective strategies that deal with divergent economic and social
trends for the rising numbers of urban poor. Key targets may need to include affordable
housing, adequate mass transit, urban planning norms, targeted skills development
strategies, and issues related to land tenure. Overall, this goal should include targets on
water and sanitation, but it also could incorporate vital infrastructure, including roads,
electricity and telecommunications.

Goal 4: Achieve equality between women and men

- **Target 1: Eliminate violence against women and girls**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Proportion of women over 15 years old (by age,
rural/urban location) subjected to physical or sexual violence in the past 12
  months by perpetrators; ii) Percentage of people (by sex, age) who think it is
  never justified for a man to beat his wife/partner; iii) Proportion of women over
  15 years old (by age, rural/urban location) subjected to physical or sexual
  violence in the past 12 months who reported it to the justice system; iv)
  Proportion of police officers who are women (rural/urban)

- **Target 2: Promote the human rights of adolescent girls**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married
  before age 18; ii) Maternal mortality ratios for girls 18 and under; iii) Transition
  rates from primary to secondary education of adolescent girls from the two
  lowest wealth quintiles; iv) Proportion of secondary school teachers who are
  women; v) rates of sexual, physical or psychological violence experienced by
  adolescent girls in the previous 12 months, by location or perpetrator; vi)
  Percentage of girls participating in collective activities or organizations that are
  not linked to the family or required by the school

- **Target 3: Women and men benefit equally from the economy**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Average number of weekly hours spent on unpaid
domestic work, by sex and age; ii) Average number of weekly hours spent on
unpaid agricultural work, by sex and age; iii) Percentage of adult population owning land, by sex; iv) Proportion of women in the labour market who are in the lowest income category compared to the proportion of men; v) Share of women graduates in higher-paid trades and occupations (such as science, commerce, engineering, construction) at secondary and tertiary levels

- **Target 4: Women have an equal say in decisions that affect their lives**
  - **Suggested indicators:** i) Percentage of women who have a say in household decisions regarding purchase, own health, contraception and visiting relatives; ii) Percentage of women aged 20-24 who had a say in when and whom to marry; iii) Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments; iv) Proportion of seats held by women in local governments; v) Percentage of private-sector managers who are women; vi) Percentage of media professionals who are women

**Goal 5: Ensure health for all**

- **Suggested targets and indicators:** This could encompass not only the three existing goals on child and maternal health and communicable diseases (HIV/malaria/tuberculosis), but also should add non-communicable diseases. Besides the carried-over maternal health target of skill attendant at delivery, two new targets could be considered in terms of access to EmOC and an effective referral system to ensure women receive EmOC in case of complications. Besides maternal health, a new area to prioritize will be ensuring the health of adolescent girls. Achievement of all these targets will require a health system that is people-centred, through the development of competent human resources and provision of appropriate and targeted infrastructure for quality delivery of required services to all. For example, health issues as they relate to migration during all its phases will need to be addressed across all sectors. To remove unnecessary health constraints related to migration, restrictions on travel and work abroad based on treatable health conditions, which do not affect migrants’ ability to work, should be lifted. Migrants also should have access to culturally sensitive, quality health care as nationals, as well as social protection benefits including health insurance, sick leave and maternity leave.

**Goal 6: Provide high-quality basic education**

- **Suggested targets and indicators:** The goal of access to education has not been won on all fronts in Bangladesh. Specific segments of the population, particularly within the poor, minority ethnic groups, those in remote locations, and marginalized groups including people with disabilities and living with HIV still have to struggle for access and require their needs to be accommodated. Increasingly, however, a paradigm shift toward a preoccupation with quality, while retaining the focus on equity, has become an urgent necessity.

**Goal 7: Reduce social risks and vulnerabilities**

- **Suggested targets and indicators:** This should encompass social protection and universal health care, among other aspects. A key target in social protection would be to formulate a nationally owned and developed comprehensive social protection strategy that builds on
Bangladesh’s rich experience as well as on relevant global lessons. Developing a better understanding of the drivers of graduation from social protection coverage, and how programmes can be meaningfully designed and sustainably scaled up, will need to be a priority. In addition, efficacy gains through innovative use of technologies must be actively explored. Technological innovations such as a beneficiary database and payments through banks have demonstrated their potential both within the country and elsewhere, and will need to be further tapped effectively.

- Meanwhile, sustainable solutions for health care financial risk reduction will require an environmental health approach that overcomes gaps on both the demand and supply sides. Key targets may include i) significant reduction in the burden of out-of-pocket health care expenditures from the current high of 60 percent and ii) strengthening of a health care system in which better performance of public health infrastructures, sustainable household health care financing solutions, and improvement in critical supply-side capacity gaps mutually reinforce stronger health care outcomes, particularly for the poor and marginalized groups.

C. Environmental Sustainability

Goal 8: Ensure inclusive environment and natural resources management that promotes sustainable ecosystems, development and green growth, livelihoods and health

- Target 1: Implement, strengthen and promote accountable decision-making institutions and frameworks from the bottom up, employing an inclusive and participatory process involving women and marginalized groups and supported by effective monitoring systems with legal authority

- Target 2: Develop and implement a national comprehensive (solid/liquid) waste management law that supports energy generation from waste, recycling, and usage of environmentally friendly materials

- Target 3: By 2030, X percent of the population has equitable access to (and use of) sustainable, affordable, improved, proximal and safe drinking water and sanitation facilities and services; by 2021, a comprehensive national environmental monitoring system has been developed, adopted and implemented, supported by a legal framework to ensure adherence.

- Target 4: Annual deforestation rates are reduced by X percent, facilitated by strengthening of institutional management and promotion of conservation policies that are established using a bottom-up approach

- Target 5: Biodiversity and ecosystem services are restored by inclusion of ecosystem valuation for decision making at national level, with women and marginalized groups targeted to raise awareness

- Target 6: Ensure a complete ban on the application of harmful preservatives in fruit and vegetables, promoting technology innovation, and support this with effective monitoring
Target 7: Promote the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, using a community-based approach targeting women, young people and marginalized groups

- **Suggested indicators:** i) Deforestation rates have reduced by X percent from 2015 levels; ii) 100 percent of households have equitable access to and use of safe water and sanitation facilities and services; iii) number of comprehensive national environmental monitoring systems developed, adopted and implemented; iv) number of legal frameworks to ensure adherence; v) percentage of the agricultural yield produced using soil-, nutrient-, water- and energy-efficient technologies; vi) number of policies adopted, implemented and monitored at local and national levels that address biodiversity loss; vii) number of ecosystems valued for decision making at national level; viii) number of campaigns promoting preservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems at local, regional and national levels that are complemented by viable livelihood alternatives; ix) number of cases of illness due to preservatives reported; x) national policy implemented and percentage of community participation in cultural heritage management

Goal 9: Reduce risk and build resilience to disasters and climate change, with a focus on adaptation

- **Target 1:** Protect the natural resource base from degradation or loss due to de-watering, flooding, saline intrusion, contamination or damage from natural disasters, and increase by X percent the number of technical disaster risk reduction solutions implemented in areas deemed vulnerable to disasters and climate change (e.g., polders and dykes constructed, riverbanks raised, early warning systems expanded, harmful agricultural practices abandoned)

- **Target 2:** Reduce by X percent disaster-related deaths, through mainstreaming and implementation of appropriate, effective and integrated disaster and climate risk management into country policies, programmes and sector-based development planning

- **Target 3:** Based on national strategies, approve/update and implement a new law on climate change that includes adaptation and mitigation and ensure a monitoring mechanism to implement the BCCSAP

- **Target 4:** Food security is better ensured at national level by increasing agricultural production without causing environmental degradation; by allocating increased expenditures on agricultural extension services, new low-carbon technologies, supporting structures, and new market mechanisms; and by targeting women engaged in small-scale agriculture and fishing activities

- **Target 5:** Develop a gender-centred National Adaptation Policy Framework for the most vulnerable sectors to climate change (agriculture, water, biodiversity, forestry)

- **Target 6:** X percent of community-based approaches/systems implemented and operational at national and sub-national levels to support disaster risk reduction and early warning
Goal 10: Improve diversity of, and access to, clean and more efficient sources of energy

- Target 1: X percent of electricity generated in the country is from renewable energy compared to a baseline in 2015

- Target 2: By 2021, X percent of modern energy-deprived areas reduced by half, through improved energy efficiency and demand-side management practices

- Target 3: Reduce by X percent emissions from energy consumption, by lowering the use of household electricity through policies that promote energy conservation efficiency and improved building designs (including subsidies)

- Target 4: Reduce by X percent emissions from energy industry categories, by improving generation and distribution services and substituting low-carbon technologies for carbon-intensive technologies

- Target 5: X percent reduction in emissions from the transport sector by promoting access to low-carbon technologies and implementing a low-carbon, efficient, affordable and reliable transportation system

- Target 6: Implementation of effective platforms of negotiations/consultations for the establishment of roles and responsibilities between Government and the private sector with respect to energy policies

- Target 7: X percent increase in the inclusion of women and marginalized groups to support the private sector through adoption of public-private partnership schemes in the energy sector

  - Suggested indicators: i) Solar electrification generation efforts (off- and on-grid doubled; ii) low-carbon technologies used to generate X percent of electricity demand; iii) reduction of X percent in energy demand and emissions achieved through improved management of demand and promotion of low-carbon energy appliances; iv) number of campaigns and incentives to change energy consumption patterns in place; v) SREDA in place as part of policy and institutional capacity building efforts, to assist in policy framing and promote energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy; vi) number of public-private partnership schemes in place in the energy sector
D. Inclusive Governance

Goal 11: Improve accountability of public institutions for equitable public service provision to all communities

- **Target 1**: Revenue budget allocation directly benefiting the poor and marginalized groups is increased to ensure universal access to essential public services

- **Target 2**: Increased fiscal and administrative authority of Local Government Institutions (LGIs)

- **Target 3**: Reduced corruption across the public administration
  - **Suggested indicators**: Reported levels of satisfaction (disaggregated) with access to services, including by women, children, ethnic and religious minority groups, and socially and economically marginalized groups (disaggregated); percentage of total national revenue and expenditure raised and disbursed by LGIs; implementation of National Integrity Strategy Action Plan; Corruption Index and national household survey

Goal 12: Ensure equal participation and effective representation of marginalized groups, thereby strengthening inclusive democratic governance

- **Target 1**: Free and fair elections across all levels of Government in Bangladesh

- **Target 2**: Increased representativeness in all public and legislative bodies, including of women and marginalized groups

- **Target 3**: Effective consultations on major policy issues among Government parliament and professional associations, unions, and trade, agricultural and employers’ groups
  - **Suggested indicators**: Electoral monitors judge elections to be free and fair; voter turnout is comparable across the population, including among women and marginalized groups; percentage of individuals from marginalized groups, or women, in elected offices and in public administration; number of institutionalized platforms and processes for policy negotiation among professional bodies, trade unions, associations and/or CSO with members of Parliament and relevant Government agencies

Goal 13: Strengthen the rule of law, access to justice, and promotion and protection of human rights

- **Target 1**: Timely and effective formal and informal justice systems, equally accessible to women and other vulnerable groups

- **Target 2**: Alignment of national laws with international human rights principles and obligations, and the full implementation of those laws
- Target 3: A reduction in the number of human rights violations, particularly against women and marginalized groups
  - Suggested indicators: Length of time is reduced for civil and criminal cases to be resolved (from initiation of suit/action to disposal of the case); reduction in the number of human rights violations reported; number of Universal Periodic Review recommendations implemented; rate of access and usage of legal aid services by marginalized groups is comparable to that among the broader population