

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT Inauguration of One Stop Service Centre
Dhaka, 14 November 2011**

Your Excellency Ms. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh,

Your Excellency Mr. Syed Ashraf, Minister for Local Government and Rural Development,

Mr. Nazrul Islam Khan, National Director of the “Access to Information” project,

Members of the diplomatic corps, members of parliament, local officials and donors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Digital Bangladesh is becoming a reality. That is the message of the film we just saw. And that is what people across Bangladesh can see with their own eyes.

Vital services are being provided quickly and affordably.

Modern electronic systems have replaced century-old, heavily bureaucratic manual administrative practices.

Women have new venues for empowerment.

Cutting out middlemen reduces corruption.

And instead of travelling long distances for such services, people in all 64 districts now have, as the slogan so aptly puts it, service at their doorsteps.

For these reasons and more, I am proud to participate in the inauguration of the One Stop Service Centres.

Bangladesh has a clear vision for the development of the country.

Bangladesh has a bold vision for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, our blueprint for building a better world, and it is delivering.

Bangladesh also aspires to become a middle-income country by 2021.

The One Stop Service Centres are a major step in translating that vision into daily improvements in the lives of the country’s people.

The idea of establishing public internet kiosks is not new. Many countries have similar systems.

However, the e-service work going on in Bangladesh is remarkable for three reasons.

First, it focuses on people, and uses appropriate technologies. This should enable the centres to reach the poor, especially in rural areas.

Second, it promotes transparency and accountability. Citizens can track the status of their requests – something that many people in developed countries still cannot do.

Third, the Centres promote public health by delivering information directly to the people. One of the goals of my visit at this time is to learn from Bangladesh's successful efforts to reduce maternal and child mortality. These new centres will enable you to go further still.

This effort also has great potential beyond Bangladesh's borders, as an area for South-South cooperation.

You have a lot to showcase to countries that have just started their e-service journey.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The digital innovations being inaugurated today are a major advance for public service and administration in Bangladesh.

Looking ahead, additional and broader governance reforms are the necessary complement.

I therefore welcome the Government's commitment to finalize a Civil Service Act.

I also welcome the passing, two years ago, of the Right to Information Act.

These and other initiatives are necessary to fully realize the transformative potential of Digital Bangladesh and the Government's Vision 2021.

I thank the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and her great team, for their leadership in taking this vision forward.

I would also like to thank the UN Development Programme for leading the efforts of the UN system to support the Government in implementing this pro-poor initiative.

Most of all, I urge people across Bangladesh to take full advantage of these new centres. The results can be quick and tangible improvements in their lives, a closing of the digital divide, and a better future for all.

Dhonyobad. Thank you.