

**Honourable. President of the session, Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates, stakeholders, ladies and gentlemen.**

First I like to express our sincere gratitude to United Nation for steering the global community towards a sustainable, inclusive and resilient future. My warmest thanks to city of Quito for hosting this conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Settlement.

Distinguished participants,

Bangladesh has been experiencing rapid increase in its urban population ever since its independence in 1971. In last 50 years, the total population of Bangladesh has increased from 75 million to 160 million, whereas urban population has increased from 2.6 million to 43.43 million.

It is estimated that by the year 2021 nearly one-third of the population of Bangladesh will be living in urban areas. The tremendous challenge of absorbing such a massive population in urban areas and providing them with shelter, food, communication, employment, healthcare, education, municipal services and recreation facilities has become more challenging within the context of limited urban facilities and resources, skilled manpower and good governance. Supply of decent housing, planning for mass transport, water sanitation and waste disposal facilities, management of water, air and soil pollution are the major urban challenges. Conservation of natural resource areas due to uncontrolled pressure of urbanisation has become crucial and causing environmental and social imbalance.

Distinguished participants

Lack of adequate housing for large urban population is obviously a key problem in all of the cities and secondary towns in Bangladesh. There is significant shortage of quality housing both in urban and rural areas within affordability of low and middle income population. The key challenge includes management of slums to make them part of dynamic urban economy. The strategies include upgrading slums, resettlements of slum dwellers, ensuring tenure security, enhancing access to infrastructure and all urban services, promoting income generating activities and providing social safety net coverage with special attention to generation of employment opportunities for the youth.

Distinguished participants,

With the commitment to provide housing for all, National Housing Policy 2016 has been published. Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has adopted a program titled “**one house and one farm**”. In addition to solving housing issue this program aims to address the issue of food security and employment.

The strong commitment of government to ensure environmental sustainability through conservation of natural resources and reduce air and water pollution has been reflected in the Seventh Five Year Plan. This plan has stressed the need to take into account environment, climate change adaptation and mitigation and recognizes climate change as an added challenge to reduce poverty and environmental degradation. Government has also adopted necessary policies, rules and acts to protect environment and to ensure sustainable development.

Esteemed participants,

In case of Bangladesh rural urban linkages and their development in a supportive manner is crucial to ensure food security and ecological balance of this delta region. Urbanisation challenge, unless managed well, could pose a serious problem to the future growth prospects for Bangladesh.

As one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world, urbanisation in this delta region is more complex and facing multifaceted problems. Floods, tropical cyclones, storm surges and droughts are likely to become more frequent and severe in the coming years. Adoption to climate change and resilient development of cities and urban areas is already in the major focus of national policies. Bangladesh is active participant of Delta Coalition and in the process of preparing **100 Year Delta Plan** for Bangladesh as part of delta project supported by Netherlands government.

Urban Development Directorate of Bangladesh has already prepared a module for mainstreaming disaster risk prevention measures at municipal level. To uphold equity and sustainable development goals, the government of Bangladesh has taken the project to prepare comprehensive risk sensitive land use plan for the whole country. To give legal strength to this plan, "Urban and Regional Planning Act 2016" has already been drafted and under the process of discussion in parliament.

Distinguished delegates,

Despite enormous constraints and challenges, Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in a host of areas including food production, safety net programs, rural infrastructure, credit provision, primary education, child immunization, family planning, sanitation, drinking water provision etc. Bangladesh has adopted a number of documents to guide development such as **Vision 2021, Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021, National Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-2021, National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh, 6th Five Year Plan, 7th Five Year Plan.**

Distinguished participants,

In the next two decades Bangladesh is prepared to address the urban

challenges and committed towards sustainable urban development with participation of all strata of population irrespective of income, gender, occupation. No one will be left behind, a balanced and inclusive development will uphold the social harmony, cultural richness, with acknowledgement of diversity and innovation.

People of Bangladesh believes that urbanisation is the vehicle of development when it recognises social and environmental values. Active participation of all stakeholders, collaborative activities of public and private sector and generous support from global partners will lead Bangladesh to a Sustainable future. Bangladesh is committed to achieve the goals of New Urban Agendas in the next two decades. We envision cities for all, for present and future generation with equal right and opportunities.

Honourable chair and distinguished house,

We all together set the milestone for present and the future generation to come. On behalf of people of Bangladesh I express my sincere gratitude to all and look forward to a liveable world.