



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

(UN-OHRLLS)

**Statement by
Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu
High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General
Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small
Island Developing States**

at the formal celebration program

Bangabandhu International Convention Center

10:00- 11:30 am, 22 March 2018

Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
Honourable Ministers
Colleagues from the UN System
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

What a momentous milestone to celebrate!

Your country not only met but even exceeded by a considerable margin all three criteria for graduation.

You showed that it is possible. This accomplishment ought to give pride to all Bangladeshis, at home and abroad.

You made rapid progress in a variety of sectors across the economic, social and environmental fields. This is testimony to your and your people's resilience against a range of economic and environmental shocks.

Once more, my heartfelt congratulations go to all women and men, girls and boys of your country.

Vision 2021 led under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina consistently guided and guides your development priorities. Consistency is the word for a long, often arduous but also steadily to be pursued road of many steps and building blocks needed on the journey to become a middle-income digital economy and country.

The foundations to reduce poverty and foster sustainable development for all are built. Domestic resource mobilization has increased remarkably. UN targets have been surpassed in gender parity at primary and secondary education levels and reduction in infant and maternal mortality rate.

The macroeconomic environment remains stable. Economic growth has been robust for many years in a row. The country is among the fastest growing least developed countries.

This is a powerful story - a story telling us that a rallying vision, strong national ownership, leadership, strong planning and implementation capacities, robust institutions can bring about transformative changes and help in managing through the myriad of complex shocks and crises.

Graduation is a major step but not an end in itself.

I liken it to the writing of a book - you have finished one chapter and now open a new chapter in the story. The end of the story is yet to be written.

Time is now to prepare for smooth transition strategies and processes.

Time is now to map potential loss of benefits previously enjoyed and to take a strategic approach to fill such gaps.

Time is now to build productive capacities, economic diversification, and generally to focus on value addition and structural transformation for the sustainability and enhancement of gains hard won in the process of graduating from the LDC category.

Generally, graduating countries need to create conducive and stable domestic business environments to get the returns on graduation in the form of attracting investment and capital.

This means all stakeholders from citizens, women and men, girls and boys, private and public sectors but also development partners, need to be part of a smooth transition processes.

Graduation of a country testifies to the strong nationally driven efforts in a development journey.

This should be rewarded and not penalized.

Development partners should continue appropriate support to Bangladesh for a period consistent with the country's development needs and aspirations.

The United Nations stands ready to continue support to the hardworking people of Bangladesh and your goal to fully achieve the goals of Agenda 2030 by leaving no one behind.

Once more, I extend my most sincere and heartfelt congratulations to all of you.

Thank you.