

Statement by A. K. Abdul Momen
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
at the Sixth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence
Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

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Republic of Kazakhstan

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen

Assalamualaikum; Peace be upon you all.

Complex, evolving and transboundary challenges such as climate change, international conflicts, COVID-19 pandemic define our current time. Our resolves are being continually tested. These challenges remind us the significance of the confidence building activities that CICA conducts.

This year, CICA is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Founders and member states of CICA deserve special appreciation for their contributions over these years. I also thank our host and Chair Kazakhstan, not just for the wonderful hospitality they have extended to us, but also for their immense contribution in CICA process. I also welcome our new member, Kuwait.

Excellences,

We believe that multilateralism, including regional peace, stability and confidence building measures, is the answer to resolving the emerging challenges that we face today. COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of how helpless we can be without collective actions. Bangladesh, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, led from the front the multilateral negotiations on access and equity of COVID vaccines and countermeasures. No wonder, we demanded vaccines to be a public good to be distributed to all without any discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

We have been successful in managing COVID pandemic. Bangladesh has been a leading voice of the climate vulnerable countries for many years. Despite being one of the least polluters, yet worst victims, we remained true to our climate commitments. During our last Presidency of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, we launched the 'Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan', which aims to put Bangladesh on a sustainable growth trajectory. But, unless global mitigation measures are implemented, ADB estimates that the economic cost of climate change would be equivalent to 9% of GDP for Bangladesh by the end of the century. I call upon all countries for decisive climate actions under Paris Climate Agreement, including the implementation of climate finance pledges by developed countries in commensurate with the principle of “loss & damage”. Each year nearly 650,000 people are uprooted from their sweet homes due to climate change, global warming, river erosion and salinity in Bangladesh. We try to rehabilitate them although we are not responsible for their misery. We demand other countries come forward to share the burden of their responsibilities. We call upon all to attach utmost importance to climate finance in the upcoming climate conference in Sharm El Sheikh.

Mr. Chairman,

Our peace-centric foreign policy is based on our motto- Friendship to all and malice towards none- a philosophy set as the cornerstone of our international engagements by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh MujiburRahman. We actively engage in UN-led peace processes and have been a leading contributor of peacekeepers in UN peacekeeping operations. We practice zero-tolerance towards terrorism and violent extremism. We want safe and secure information space, as we pivot digitalization for development. We are fully committed to complete disarmament, including the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We do see that spread of venom of hatred towards others at times create hatred leading to violence, terrorism and wars. In order to have peace, we have been promoting a concept of culture of peace, the very essence of which is to create mindset of tolerance and respect towards others irrespective of ethnicity, color, race or religion to have sustainable world of peace. We need your supports to it.

Excellencies,

Inclusive and sustainable economic growth is at the core of security architecture. Bangladesh- a leading negotiator during the formative stage of SDG 2030 and now a staunch promoter of it, has adopted a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach for attaining SDGs by 2030 and becoming an advanced economy by 2041. With gender sensitive and socially inclusive development, our GDP grew fourfold in just over a decade and poverty halved. Maternal and child health improved remarkably, resulting in a life expectancy of 73 years- highest in South Asia.

However, our resilient economy that posted 6.94% growth last year withstanding the challenges of the pandemic is now under pressure from the spillovers of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, more importantly, due to sanctions and counter-sanctions, which are disrupting the supply chain, causing price hikes and fuel shortages dampening global growth. We call for restraints from all parties and a quick and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite our sincere commitment to the security and stability, we face a dire situation in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, where we have been sheltering 1.1 million Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (Rohingya) for over 5 years. Unless the repatriation of the Rohingyas begins soon, this humanitarian crisis can potentially spiral out to a regional security crisis or beyond. Myanmar must create conducive conditions for the safe, sustainable, and dignified return of their nationals to Myanmar. We solicit support and cooperation of CICA partners in this regard.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, Bangladesh remains committed to and will continue to support CICA activities aimed at collective security, peace and shared prosperity. I wish success of CICA and its desired transformation.

Thank you all.