



Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh

Non-State Actors as Delivery Partners

Edited by
Mustafizur Rahman



Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh
এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ

Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh
Non-State Actors as Delivery Partners

Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh

Non-State Actors as Delivery Partners

Edited by
Mustafizur Rahman



Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ

Published in February 2020 by

Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

Secretariat: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

House - 6/2 (7th & 8th floors), Block - F

Kazi Nazrul Islam Road, Lalmatia Housing Estate

Dhaka - 1207, Bangladesh

Telephone: (+88 02) 58152779, 9141734, 9141703, 9126402

Fax: (+88 02) 48110414

E-mail: coordinator@bdplatform4sdgs.net

Website: www.bdplatform4sdgs.net

© Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh 2020

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from the publisher. Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The views expressed in the SDG-specific reports are those of the respective teams alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, CPD or any organisation(s) they are affiliated with.

ISBN 978-984-34-8749-0

Citation: Rahman, M. (Ed.) (2020). *Four years of SDGs in Bangladesh: Non-state actors as delivery partners*. Dhaka: Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

Printed at

Lithograph

41/5 Purana Paltan, Dhaka 1000

Preface

One of the relatively understated issues concerning implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) happens to be the role of non-state actors (NSAs), who include the private sectors, non-government development organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs). In this connection, the present publication, prepared under the aegis of the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*, can be distinguished by its two main features. First, it embodies a unique set of works undertaken by the NSAs in Bangladesh in the context of the state of delivery of the SDGs. Second, this invaluable compendium is the outcome of an extraordinary participatory process which was initiated on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Platform

Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh at present is a partnership of more than 110 organisations who are NSAs, and intend to contribute in the national SDG process of Bangladesh. This unique Platform was convened in 2016, as a congregation of organisations already working in different areas of SDGs, in order to promote greater interaction and coordination among themselves along with the government and other related stakeholders. The aim is to put a concerted effort in realising the Global Goals, and ensuring transparency and accountability in the national process.

The Product

Regarding the first distinguishing feature of this publication, it may be noted that, the need to follow-up and review the delivery of the SDGs has been emphatically underscored in the 2030 Agenda – the designated vehicle of which is the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). However, in most cases, these VNRs have remained more 'governmental' than 'national'. Experience suggests that the participation of the NSAs in preparation of these documents had been perfunctory. Moreover, these VNRs hardly reported on the contributions of the private sector and NGOs in delivering the SDGs. In response, this compendium seeks to fill the lacuna concerning the documentation of the SDG-related activities of the NSAs in Bangladesh.

However, reporting on these activities remains limited to the six goals pre-identified for discussion at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2019. These goals are: Quality Education (SDG 4); Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8); Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10); Climate Action (SDG 13); Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16); and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17). The review on each of these goals attempts to report on the nature of interventions by the NSAs and their intended outcomes by situating them in the overall SDG context of the country.

An earlier publication put forward the executive summaries of the six reports prepared in this regard.¹ This publication, prepared prior to the HLPF 2019, was launched at a dialogue on “Addressing an Understated Issue in the SDG Discourse: Contribution of the Southern Non-State Actors,” in New York on 11 July 2019. The present volume carries the full reports on the aforementioned selected six goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The Process

Regarding the second distinguishing feature of this publication, it may be pointed out that the seven review reports – one overview² and six on specific SDGs – have been prepared through an extensive, as well as focused, multi-stakeholder consultative process. This involved focus group discussions, technical workshops and presentations at a national conclave of stakeholders, among others.

One of the most remarkable traits of these review reports had been their mode of preparation. The six status reports were prepared by Platform’s designated partner organisations with demonstrated expertise regarding that concerned SDG. The review reports sought to assess the progress of the goals in Bangladesh, capture the lessons learnt – best practices and challenges, and indicate the way forward for more effective delivery. Indeed, this approach allowed the generation of ‘portraits’ of the contributions of the private sector and NGOs from the ground. Valuable inputs were received from the relevant ministries and government agencies, international development partners,

¹Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. (2019). *Four years of SDGs in Bangladesh and the way forward: Looking through the prism of non-state actors*. Dhaka: Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

²The overview report is brought out as a separation publication: Khatun, F., Bhattacharya, D., Rahman, M., Moazzem, K. G., Khan, T. I., Sabbih, M. A. and Saadat, S. Y. (2020). *Four years of SDGs in Bangladesh: Measuring progress and charting the path forward*. Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

representatives from print and electronic media, the entrepreneurs and business leaders, and partner organisations of the Platform. The key findings of the status reports were then used to prepare the overview report on the progress of SDGs in Bangladesh. The event titled ‘Citizens Conclave: Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh’ was the climax of a long participatory process for preparation of review reports on each SDG, and was attended by more than 1,000 delegates from across the country.

The Prospect

Curiously, the journey of preparing these reports has given rise to a set of issues regarding the recognition of the contribution of the NSAs in actualisation of the 2030 Agenda. These include the following:

- a. Tracking the changes in NSAs’ priorities following launch of the SDGs;
- b. Identifying the NSAs’ approaches and interventions in the area of the SDG pledge to *leave no one behind*; and,
- c. Developing a framework for assessing contributions of the NSAs in delivering the SDGs.

Although the materials presented in this publication are based on the experience of Bangladesh, one can readily see its broader approach in terms of both concepts and practice.

However, as Bangladesh prepares for its second VNR, to be presented at the HLPF 2020, this publication may be considered as an input for that preparatory process. Indeed, this may help to address one of the ‘understated’, if not missing, aspects of the earlier Bangladesh VNR (2017). The publication may also provide guidance to the country’s development NGOs and private sector regarding marshaling their inputs for the HLPF 2020.

Acknowledgements

Productive and creative efforts of many have gone into publication of this book.

We are particularly grateful to our Platform partners, who spontaneously came forward to form the Goal-Groups on the six SDGs and prepared the review reports. Our cordial

gratitude to the anchor organisations and report contributors for their collective effort. We sincerely appreciate the inputs received from consultation meetings with government officials, private sector representatives, international development partners and media professionals. We are also grateful to the partner organisations, as well as private sector entities, who have extended generous support towards underwriting the preparatory process and different events. In this connection, we would like to make special mention of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and The Asia Foundation.

My esteemed colleague Professor Mustafizur Rahman took upon himself the enormous task of editing the Goal-Group reports under one cover. I express my sincere appreciation for his time and effort in this regard.

Ms Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh has put in substantive amount of energy in guiding the preparatory process of the Goal-Group reports to a successful end. Ms Nazmatun Noor, Publication Specialist, CPD and her team deserves huge appreciation for meticulous effort in publication. We would also like to thank Mr Avra Bhattacharjee, Joint Director, Dialogue and Outreach, CPD for his contribution in various capacities in both programme implementation and coordinating the publication, and Mr Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate, CPD for his diligent support in communication and relevant areas.

One final note of gratitude is due to members of the Core Group of the Citizen's Platform as well as to the senior management of the CPD and colleagues of the Platform Secretariat for their extraordinary efforts in taking the unique initiative forward.

Dhaka
February, 2020


Debapriya Bhattacharya, PhD
Convenor, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh
and
Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
<deb.bhattacharya@cpd.org.bd>

Note from the Editor

On a personal note, undertaking the responsibility as the editor of this unique volume has indeed been an intellectually challenging but also highly satisfying experience for me. When my good friend Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh invited me to edit the volume, I had agreed readily, being fully aware of the significant work that lay ahead. At the same time, I also appreciated the nature of the publication which could claim genuine distinction from the perspective of both the process of preparation of the volume, as also its subject matter. In the end, without doubt, it has proved to be a most worthwhile journey, not only for me; but also, I presume, for all of us who have been associated with this exercise. This remains true for Debapriya who had conceived the volume and steered the exercise, the six anchors and Goal-Group members who had prepared the individual reports, and colleagues at the Platform Secretariat at the CPD who have played a key role in implementing the idea.

It is now well-recognised that implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demands a *whole of society* approach, and that its success hinges critically on the contribution of the non-state actors (NSAs). The NSAs in Bangladesh are closely involved in a diverse range of activities, which either falls under particular SDGs, or cuts across various SDGs. Any review of SDG implementation experience in Bangladesh will thus be incomplete, without appreciating and capturing the role of the NSAs in all its dimensions in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In this backdrop, the six reports in this volume have made an attempt to document the contribution of NSAs in Bangladesh in six selected goal areas. The reports have covered five areas in varying degrees: major activities carried out by the NSAs in respective goal areas, the challenges faced in attaining the targets, what has worked best and where the gaps are, areas of interface and complementarities concerning government agencies and NSA activities, and what needs to be done in moving forward to attain the targets by 2030. What also gives the reports in this volume a distinct flavour is that, they have drawn extensively on field-level experiences in reaching the marginalised groups by exploring the ground realities in attaining

the SDG aspiration of *leaving no one behind*. The case studies and anecdotal stories presented in the volume, based on NSA experience of working with the marginalised sections of the poor, are indeed telling and compelling.

Partner organisations of the Citizens Platform, the Goal-Group anchors and the authors of the individual reports of the volume have done an excellent job in getting together a wealth of information covering the wide spectrum of their activities, field-level experiences and learnings. However, the volume does not claim to have captured all the activities which are being carried out by the NSAs in Bangladesh towards implementation of the SDGs in the selected six goal areas. In the limited time that was at their disposal to prepare the reports, the Goal-Groups were able to focus primarily on capturing their own activities, although attempts have also been made to go beyond, drawing on secondary evidence. Thus, NSA activities in Bangladesh are no doubt broader and richer than what the Goal-Groups have been able to capture in their respective reports. However, the volume has been able to make a strong case by establishing that SDGs implementation is a collective endeavour, and that effective government-NSA partnership and collaboration is crucial to its success.

The discussion in the volume clearly evinces that SDG interventions produce best results when government and NSA activities are well-sequenced, and are able to leverage each other based on comparative advantages. For example, while the enactment of the Right to Information (RTI) Act has been a very welcome initiative of the government, it could deliver the expected results only when people made use of the RTI. This is clearly borne out by the field-level evidence cited in the reports. The reverse is also true. As the case studies presented in the volume testify, when NSAs join hands in partnerships, their collective voice is capable of transforming into a powerful agent of change, inducing reforms and policy changes for the betterment of people, society and economy. Laws that have been enacted in Bangladesh to guarantee rights of women and protect the children are pertinent examples in this connection. It is also found that efficacy of NSA interventions rises significantly when their advocacy work and development initiatives are able to draw synergies from each other. It is hoped that these and other lessons that can be drawn from the volume will provide useful insights from the perspective of making NSA deliveries more effective and government-NSA partnerships more successful towards attaining the goals and targets of SDGs in Bangladesh.

As Bangladesh prepares for the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2020, it is earnestly hoped, that the volume will make substantive contribution towards preparation of that document. One would also like to believe that the volume will appeal to a broader readership keen on learning how NSAs in Bangladesh are playing their part to attain the national aspiration of an economically developed, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable Bangladesh, in light of the SDGs, where no one will be left behind.

Tahsin Sadia, Executive Associate, CPD did an excellent job meticulously and with great patience in getting the successive versions of the editorial interventions incorporated in the texts. Nazmatun Noor had to put in long hours and enormous hard work to prepare the manuscripts for publication. I would also like to sincerely thank Dr Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director of the CPD and colleagues at the CPD for the whole-hearted support they have readily extended in the course of putting this volume together. Ms Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform and Mr Avra Bhattacharjee, Joint Director, Dialogue and Outreach and other colleagues at CPD's Dialogue and Communication Division have worked tirelessly to get the volume ready for publication under an extremely tight schedule. To all of them I owe a debt of gratitude.

Finally, I will be failing in my duties if I do not put on record my deep appreciation of Debapriya's singular contribution in this entire process, from conceptualisation of the volume and inspiring the Goal-Groups to volunteer their time and effort towards its preparation, to seeing this unique exercise to its fruition through publication of this unique volume.



Professor Mustafizur Rahman

Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
and
Core Group Member, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Note from the Editor</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acronyms</i>	<i>xvii</i>
Promoting Quality Education for All (SDG 4)	1
Pursuing Decent Jobs Agenda for Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8)	37
Reducing Inequality in a High-Growth Scenario (SDG 10)	81
Improving Capacity for Effective Climate Action (SDG 13)	111
Ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)	147
Strengthening Global Partnerships for Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusion (SDG 17)	215

Tables, Figures, Diagram, Flowchart and Annexes

Promoting Quality Education for All (SDG 4)

Table 1:	Education sector coverage in Bangladesh	8
Table 2:	Summary of findings of SDG 4 Strategic Framework	11

Pursuing Decent Jobs Agenda for Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8)

Table 1:	Global Tier classification and national data availability for SDG 8 indicators	44
Table 2:	Bangladesh labour market information from the Labour Force Survey 2016-17	50
Table 3:	Progress as regards Targets 8.1 and 8.2 indicators	54
Table 4:	Progress as regards Targets 8.3 and 8.5 indicators	55
Table 5:	Progress with Target 8.6 indicators	56
Table 6:	Progress with Target 8.8 indicators	57
Table 7:	Progress with Target 8.10 indicators	58
Table 8:	CSO involvement concerning SDG 8 targets	60
Table 9:	Resource needs of private sector in the context of the SDGs	69
Table 10:	Employment generation and projections by sector	70
Figure 1:	SDG 8 priorities in Bangladesh: Results from survey	60

Improving Capacity for Effective Climate Action (SDG 13)

Table 1:	Alignment–allocation status for different SDGs	122
----------	--	-----

Figure 1:	Focus of interventions	136
Figure 2:	Activities related to interventions	136
Flowchart 1:	Process of Goal-Group 13 report preparation	119
Annex 1:	SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts – Targets and indicators	144
Annex 2:	List of organisations which provided information in the Goal-Group exercise	145

Ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)

Table 1:	Bangladesh in the Global Peace Index (2016–2018)	158
Table 2:	Non-development and development expenditure in FY2016-17	166
Annex 1:	Existing laws that inform efficiency, transparency and accountability of selected institutions	203
Annex 2:	Success stories	206

Strengthening Global Partnerships for Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness (SDG 17)

Table 1:	Status of data availability for Goal 17 targets at national and global levels	223
Table 2:	Perception on level of importance of different indicators of Goal 17 in the context of Bangladesh	235
Table 3:	Issues related to policy coherence	249
Table 4:	Engagement of youth-related organisations in SDG activities and their association with Goal 17	258
Table 5:	Private sector of Bangladesh engaged in SDG-related activities	262

Table 6:	Country contributions by mission and personnel type (as of 31 March 2019)	268
Figure 1:	Performance of South Asia vis-à-vis world and LDCs in selected finance-related indicators of Goal 17	228
Figure 2:	Performance of South Asia in technology-related issues	229
Figure 3:	ODA flow for technical cooperation	230
Figure 4:	Performance of South Asia in trade-related issues	231
Figure 5:	Macroeconomic performance scenario of South Asia: Selected indicators	231
Figure 6:	Performance of South Asia in systemic issues: Policy coherence	232
Figure 7:	Performance of South Asia in systemic issues: Data and monitoring	233
Figure 8:	Tax revenue as per cent of GDP: Bangladesh, India and Nepal	240
Figure 9:	Flow of resources from alternate sources: FDI and remittances	241
Figure 10:	Fixed broadband use: Bangladesh, India and Nepal	242
Figure 11:	Statistical plan under implementation: Bangladesh and other South Asian countries	243
Figure 12:	Flow of foreign grants through NGO Affairs Bureau	244
Figure 13:	Finance-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal	244
Figure 14:	Technology-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal	245
Figure 15:	Capacity building-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal	246
Figure 16:	Trade-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal	247
Figure 17:	Systemic issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal	248
Figure 18:	Goal 17 linkage with other SDGs	260
Diagram 1:	Logical link between targets, indicators, role of CSOs/private sector and the LNOB aspiration	222
Annex:	Performance of Bangladesh in different targets and milestones for 2020	278

Acronyms

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ACIE	Asian Centre for Inclusive Education
ACR	Annual Confidential Report
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AfT	Aid for Trade
AG-CS	Advisory Group on Civil Society
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIEC	Access and Inclusive Education Cell
ALAC	Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre
AOSED	An Organization for Socio-Economic Development
APA	Annual Performance Agreement
APBF	Asia-Pacific Business Forum
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APFSD	Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development
APRCEM	Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism
ASF	Acid Survivors Foundation
ASK	Ain-o-Salish Kendra
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
AVAS	Association of Voluntary Actions for Society
AWF	Average Weighted Frequency
a2i	Access to Information
BAB	Bangladesh Association of Banks
BACE	Bangladesh Association for Community Education
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information and Statistics
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCAF	Bangladesh Climate Action Forum
BCAS	Bangladesh Center for Advance Studies
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
BCCTF	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund
BEF	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
BEPS	Base Erosion and Profit Shifting

BFIU	Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BIDA	Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
BILS	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
BIPET	Bangladesh Institute of Plastic Engineering and Technology
BJRI	Bangladesh Jute Research Institute
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
BMP	Bangladesh Mahila Parishad
BNCC	Bangladesh National Cadet Corps
BNCU	Bangladesh National Commission for UNICEF
BRIS	Birth and Death Registration Information System
BSEC	Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission
BTCL	Bangladesh Telephone Communications Limited
BTMA	Bangladesh Textile Mills Association
BUILD	Business Initiative Leading Development
BWDB	Bangladesh Water Development Board
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCC	Committee of Concerned Citizens
CCCI	Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry
CCGAP	Climate Change and Gender Action Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
CLC	Community Learning Centre
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRA	Community Risk Assessment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRI	(Global Index of) Commitment to Reducing Inequality
CRMW	Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers
CRP	Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed

CRSA	Climate-Resilient Sustainable Agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
C-in-Ed	Certificate in Education
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extension
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DCCI	Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry
DF-QF	Duty-free Quota-free
DIP	Department of Immigration and Passport
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DPED	Diploma in Primary Education
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
EBA	Everything But Arms
EC	Election Commission
EdM	Enfants du Monde
ERD	Economic Relations Division
EU	European Union
EYE	Education for Youth Empowerment
FBCCI	Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FfD3	Third International Conference on Financing for Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FICCI	Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry
FIR	First Information Report
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTC	Financial Transparency Coalition
GATJ	Global Alliance for Tax Justice
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GBSS	Gram Bikash Sahayak Sangstha
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	General Economics Division
GFI	Global Financial Integrity
GFR	General Financial Rules

GIU	Governance Innovation Unit
GNI	Gross National Income
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GPI	Global Peace Index
GTF	Green Transfer Fund
G2G	Government-to-Government
HDI	Human Development Index
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HRFB	Human Rights Forum Bangladesh
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
ICCCAD	International Centre for Climate Change and Development
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTSD	International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development
IDA	International Development Association
IDI	Inclusive Development Index
IE	Inclusive Education (project)
IEMS	Information Exchange Management System
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International NGO
IPDS	Indigenous Peoples Development Society
IRD	Internal Resources Division
IT	Information Technology
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JCS	Joint Cooperation Strategy
JSC	Junior School Certificate
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAAP	Local Area Adaptation Plan
LDC	Least Developed Country
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGD	Local Government Division
LGSP	Local Governance Support Program

LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MAP	Multi Actor Partnership
MCCI	Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MGMC	Migration Grievance Management Committee
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MoPTIT	Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology
MoST	Ministry of Science and Technology
MPO	Monthly Pay Order
MRDI	Management and Resources Development Initiative
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NAMA	Non-Agricultural Market Access
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBR	National Board of Revenue
NCC	National Coordination Committee
NCCB	Network on Climate Change in Bangladesh
NCRC	National Commission for the Rights of Children
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDCC	National Data Coordination Committee
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NESS	National E-Service System
NFPE	Non-Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NIF	National Indicator Framework
NIS	National Integrity Strategy
NMLnD	National Mechanism to address Climate-induced Disaster Loss and Damage
NSA	National Students Assessment
NSA	Non-State Actor

NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
NTSC	National Teaching Service Corps
NU	Nagorik Uddyog
OCAG	Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights
PCCR	Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights
PD	Project Director
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PPE	Pre-Primary Education
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PPPA	Public-Private Partnership Authority
PSC	Primary School Certificate
PSDPCC	Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee
PWD	Person with Disability(s)
RCBC	Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation
RMG	Readymade Garments
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
RoO	Rules of Origin
ROP	Rules of Procedure
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
RTI	Right to Information
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAWTEE	South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment
SB	Special Branch
SBK	Shishu Bikash Kendra
SD	Supplementary Duty
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEATINI	Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SFDRR	Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction
Shujan	Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik
SID	Statistics and Informatics Division
SLIP	School-Level Improvement Plan

SMC	School Management Committee
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SSC	South-South Cooperation
STAR	Skills Training for Advancing Resources (programme)
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
Supro	Shushashoner Jonno Procharabhijan
Swajan	Shwachhatar Jonno Nagorik
S&D	Special and Differential Treatment
TAPP	Technical Assistance Project Proforma
TI	Transparency International
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TIES	The Inclusive Education Society
TJN	Tax Justice Network
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Properties
TVC	Television Commercial
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UGC	University Grants Commission
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UN COMTRADE	United Nations Trade Statistics Database
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UNSTATS	United Nations Statistical Commission
USD	United States Dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGF	Vulnerable Group Feeding
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WDI	World Development Indicators
WEF	World Economic Forum

WEF	World Education Forum
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness
WTO	World Trade Organization
YES	Youth Engagement and Support (group)
7FYP	Seventh Five-Year Plan
10YFP	10-Year Framework on Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Promoting Quality Education for All (SDG 4)



Anchor organisation

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)

Co-anchor organisation

Plan International Bangladesh

Associate organisations

British Council in Bangladesh

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)

Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK)

JAAGO Foundation

Kapaeeng Foundation

Save the Children in Bangladesh

SERAC-Bangladesh

Turning Point Foundation

Lead author

Md. Mostafizur Rahaman, PhD, Program Manager, CAMPE

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing this report on SDG 4, the author has received important contributions from many experts, academicians, researchers and practitioners. The author remains grateful to all of them. Their inputs have significantly enriched this report, which has made an attempt to assess the progress of implementing Goal 4 in Bangladesh over the past four years, with particular focus on the contribution of non-state actors.

The lead author and Goal-Group 4 team members would like to express their indebtedness to Manzoor Ahmed, Professor Emeritus of the Institute of Educational Development of BRAC University, for extending valuable support in giving final shape to this report. He has read the manuscript meticulously at every stage of its preparation. The team is deeply grateful to Rasheda K. Choudhury, Executive Director of CAMPE and Core Group Member, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh for reviewing the report and providing valuable comments and suggestions. The author and his colleagues in the Goal-Group 4 are thankful to Afrin Sultana Chowdhury, Advisor, Programme Development and Resource Mobilisation, JAAGO Foundation, for providing editorial support. In this connection, they also appreciate the support received from Murshid Aktar, Head of Education Program, Plan International Bangladesh. A number of organisations have shared their respective success stories which have been reported in the paper. In this connection, the author and the team acknowledge the cooperation of Ghulam Mustafa Dulal, Executive Director (Programs), GK, G. F. Hamim, Acting Director (Programmes), Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Khokon Suiten Murmu, National Consultant, Kapaeng Foundation, K. M. Enamul Haque, Deputy Director and Rajasree Gain, Deputy Program Manager of CAMPE, and other associated organisations of Goal-Group 4. Their valuable contributions have made the report informative and insightful. Members of CAMPE shared information

about various programmes they and other civil society organisations are implementing in connection with SDG 4. The author is very grateful to all of them.

Sincere appreciation is also due to Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, CPD for his critical feedbacks in the course of preparing this report. Anis Pervez, former Additional Director, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues from the CPD and the Secretariat of the Platform extended support, guidance and cooperation as and when needed. The author would like to put on record his sincere appreciation to all of them.

1. Introduction and background

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in the United Nations (UN) by the world leaders, with a pledge to “transform our world” (UN, 2015). Earlier in May 2015, the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 held in Incheon, Korea, had formulated the ambitious Education 2030 agenda, with a view to ensure ‘inclusive and equitable quality education’ and to promote ‘lifelong learning opportunities for all’. It is to be noted that, the Education 2030 Agenda, in the spirit of the earlier Education for All (EFA) 2015, has been well-reflected in the post-2015 goal relating to education, i.e. the SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) 4.¹

It may be recalled here that, Bangladesh had previously prepared its own Post-2015 Development Agenda, and also made important contribution to the international discourse on the SDGs through the UN process. The General Economics Division (GED) of the national Planning Commission gave stewardship in this process. Goals and targets were developed in the particular context of Bangladesh, based on a consultative process initiated in 2013. Through this process, 11 goals along with 58 targets with corresponding 241 measurable indicators were proposed (GED, 2013). As part of the GED-led process, extensive consultations were organised with government agencies, research and academic institutions and civil society bodies.² Bangladesh civil society, particularly the non-government development organisation (NGOs), organised dialogues concerning the progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the design of post-MDG agenda. The exercise produced what was described as ‘a people-centred, equitable, inclusive and sustainable Post-2015 Development Agenda’ as a contribution to the relevant global discourse. It came up with a framework along with goals and associated targets and indicators. On its part, the civil society also contributed to the discussion by coming up with 13 goals, 50 targets and 199 indicators.

There was a large degree of overlap between the official and the civil society agendas, as there were also some differences. The civil society concern

¹The Incheon Declaration is the logical continuation of the EFA movement concerning education. The Education 2030 Framework for Action recognises ‘lifelong learning for all’ as one of the underpinning principles of the new vision, stating that, “all age groups, including adults, should have opportunities to learn and continue learning.” It also calls on countries to develop policies and programmes for the provision of quality distance learning in tertiary education, with appropriate financing and use of technology, including the internet, massive open online courses (MOOCs) and other modalities that meet accepted quality standards to improve access. These concerns are also reflected in SDG 4.

²See, for example, PFM (2013).

was that, in some ways, MDGs were restrictive, and became more so in implementation. They wanted to avoid this limitation while formulating the post-2015 agenda and in designing the SDG implementation strategy. For example, in respect of education, MDG (and EFA goals) narrowed the educational canvas quite significantly by focusing only on universal primary education and gender parity, at least in terms of targets and indicators. Other areas, such as early childhood education and development, skills and learning for youth and adults, and quality of education did not find place in the MDGs. Tertiary education was kept outside the scope of the MDG and the EFA. Even though a broad range of objectives were mentioned in the EFA, not having necessary elaboration as regards targets and strategies signalled a lower priority accorded to these objectives. Moreover, even the low-level ambitions that were set out in the MDGs, were not fully achieved. In this backdrop, it was argued the rich lessons and experience encountered by the Bangladesh civil society organisations (CSOs) in the field of education spreading and management, should be fully taken into account during the course of formulating the post-2015 agenda.

As is revealed by both the government and the CSO documents (e.g. PFM, 2013), the two had significant common grounds as regards the proposed targets and indicators for education. Both, for example, had emphasised the need for implementing compulsory education up to grade 8. Livelihood and life skills were given priority by both the parties. Quality inputs with adequate facilities and trained teachers were given emphasis in this context. The cross-cutting nature of Goal 4 needs to be appreciated upfront. It may be noted in this connection that, both government and non-state actors (NSAs) have various non-education targets, which are relevant and important for creating conducive conditions for learners' groups to participate in education effectively, and benefit from the education they received. For instance, the target for eliminating child labour is closely linked with responsive education opportunities for children. Natural disasters, to take another example, predictably affect a certain part of the population and some areas more than the others. Preparedness plan must include provisions for keeping education services ongoing. Coping with natural disasters must also be part of the curriculum and educational experience of students. Another crucial element – fighting violence against women in all its forms – has been given priority in both inputs.

The SDG 4 reflects the important role of education for the 'world we want' by encapsulating many interlinked targets under a standalone goal. There is also a recognition that, the success of other SDGs in such areas as those concerning health, growth and employment, sustainable consumption and

production, and climate change also hinges on SDG 4.³ For making SDG 4 a reality, a key concern of Bangladesh is to ensure effective resolution of conflicting perspectives relating to a number of educational dimensions, such as policy development, policy ownership, building consensus on key objectives, strategies and their effective implementation.⁴ Bangladesh needs to adopt credible roadmaps to deliver high-quality, inclusive and free public education, which are at the heart of SDG 4. NSAs are playing and could play an important role in this regard.

Education system of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has one of the world's largest education systems in the developing world, catering to nearly 40 million students (please see Table 1). The system comprises of primary and secondary education (including teachers' training), *madrrasah* (religious organisation school) education, higher education (university), and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The schooling system include one year of pre-primary education, five years of primary education (grades 1–5), three years of lower secondary education (grades 6–8), two years of secondary education (grades 9–10), two years of higher secondary education (grades 11–12), and four years of higher or university education.⁵ The system is complex and involves a large number of government and non-government agencies. Service provision ranges from general formal schooling to religious formal and informal education, and includes 25 types of primary education-providers, seven types of secondary institutions and 10 examination boards at the secondary level. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) is responsible for pre-primary and primary education, and non-formal education and mass literacy, while the

³SDG 4 has seven targets and three means of implementation. The targets cover primary to tertiary education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), skills development of youth and adults, literacy and numeracy of population, inclusiveness and equity in education, quality of education and teachers, as well as provisions, scope and characters of education services that address the targets.

⁴See, for example, CAMPE (2016).

⁵Other South Asian countries also have similar education system. India has lower and upper kindergarten, 5-year primary education, 5-year secondary education (composed of 3-year middle school and 2-year high school), and 2-year higher or senior secondary education. Nepal, as of 2016, extended compulsory basic education from grades 1–5 to grades 1–8, and combined the previous 2-year lower secondary (grades 9–10) and higher secondary (grades 11–12) education into a 4-year secondary education (grades 9–12). It has 1-year pre-primary education, but the participation rate is rather low. Bhutan has 11 years of basic education, including one year of pre-primary schooling, six years of primary, two years of junior high, and two years of high school. These are all offered for free by the government. Sri Lanka has 5-year elementary school, 3-year junior secondary school, 2-year higher secondary school, and 2-year collegiate-level (pre-university) education.

Table 1: Education sector coverage in Bangladesh

Sub-sector	Institute	Student	Teacher	Type of service-provider
Primary education (school)	126,615	18,602,988	548,201	25
Secondary education (school)	27,116	11,623,593	317,267	7
Tertiary education (college)	1,819	3,126,550	76,002	6
Tertiary education (university)	130	3,126,550	27,734	
Total	155,680	38,733,358	999,321	

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information and Statistics (BANBEIS).

Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for secondary education, madrasah education, vocational education and training, and tertiary education.

Methodology

The objective of the current report is to present the status of implementation of SDG 4 – its various targets in Bangladesh – during the last four years, since the inception of the global agenda, and also to assess the contribution of state and non-state actors in this connection. Relevant data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. For primary source, a structured questionnaire was developed and circulated among the NGOs, international NGOs (INGOs) and member organisations of the Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh which have education programmes in their activity portfolio. A review of relevant literature was undertaken prior to developing the questionnaire to draw necessary insights. Various relevant materials and documents were studied to elicit necessary information. These included government reports, frameworks, guidelines and also data generated by the non-state entities (NGOs, INGOs, development partners and UN bodies), gleaned from research reports, annual reports, project progress reports, fact sheets, policy briefs, spotlight reports, etc.

2. Achievements in view of SDG 4

Government initiatives and achievements

It needs to be noted that, the starting time of the SDGs (2016–2030) had coincided with the Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP) (the national development

plan for the period FY2015-16–FY2019-20) of Bangladesh. This actually provided a good opportunity to integrate the SDGs in the national plan. So, in this regard, Bangladesh was an early starter in terms of embedding the SDGs in its policy documents. All the 17 goals were integrated into the 7FYP – 14 goals (82 per cent of the goals) are thematically fully aligned, while three goals (SDGs 14, 16 and 17 – 18 per cent of goals) are partially aligned with the plan. Consequently, achievement of plan objectives and targets are expected to support the cause of achieving many of the SDG targets. This would mean that, Bangladesh’s achievements in implementing the 7FYP will reinforce its efforts at fulfilling the global commitments in view of the 2030 Agenda.

As was mentioned earlier, Bangladesh had prepared its own post-2015 development agenda and contributed to the global discourse spearheaded by the UN (GED, 2013). With the GED being the lead, the MoE and the MoPME have been taking a number of initiatives to achieve the targets of SDG 4 and other goals in Bangladesh. The NSAs, including NGOs, have also designed a number of programmes focusing on the targets of SDG 4 and other goals. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs Implementation and Review which testifies to its commitment to attaining the SDGs. The committee includes secretaries from 20 ministries/divisions, and coordinates all activities and initiatives relating to SDG monitoring and implementation. The Principal Coordinator (SDGs Affairs), a newly created high-level position at the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), heads the committee. The committee is mandated to ensure that activities of various ministries and agencies that are responsible for implementing projects/programmes, are well-coordinated and contribute meaningfully towards attainment of the SDGs in Bangladesh. The committee reviews data and information for monitoring and evaluating the progress being made in SDG implementation at the national and local levels. GED acts as the Secretariat of the committee, and is entrusted with the task of coordinating implementation at the policy level and monitoring and reporting the status of SDGs implementation. Government has assigned ministry-wise SDG focal persons; MoE and MoPME also have respective focal points. The GED has conducted and published a mapping of ministries by targets, in view of implementation of the SDGs (GED, 2016). This exercise is aligned with the 7FYP (GED, 2015), as well as the subsequent SDG-related key government documents, such as the SDG financing strategy (GED, 2017), and the monitoring and evaluation framework of SDGs (GED, 2018a), among others. In addition, a Strategic Framework and Action Plan on SDG 4 is more or less ready. This was prepared under the leadership of MoPME and MoE, where United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Bangladesh National

Commission for UNICEF (BNCU) and the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) are jointly involved as associate partners. The SDGs and their targets are aligned with the 7FYP, in varying degrees: 56 targets of 14 goals are fully aligned, 37 targets of 13 goals are partially aligned; 65 targets of 12 goals are not aligned.⁶ However, it should be noted in this backdrop that, the goals which are mostly relevant with human development-related indicators –SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) – are in general, not aligned with the 7FYP. It is pertinent to note in this context that, none of the 10 targets of Quality Education are aligned.

The GoB has also prepared a national action plan for SDGs implementation (GED, 2018b). A number of bodies has been constituted in view of the SDG implementation, which include – an SDGs Working Team (hosted by the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) at the PMO), SDGs Implementation Sub-committee (led by the NGO Affairs Bureau, PMO) and the National Data Coordination Committee (NDCC) (with the aim to deal with data gap under the Statistics and Informatics Division (SID)). Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) is preparing a National Indicator Framework (NIF) for measuring the SDG 4 progress in Bangladesh. They have identified additional 19 indicators in addition to the globally agreed 43 indicators. These are currently under review, and are expected to focus on context-specific areas and issues of interest to Bangladesh.

As a result of the various initiatives, significant progress has been made in Bangladesh over the years (2016–18) in areas of SDG 4, as also in other goals. According to GED (2018c), the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in Bangladesh exceeded 1 at primary and secondary levels of education, and has remained above 1 for more than a decade now. GPI at tertiary education level reached its peak at 0.737 in 2014, and then somewhat declined to 0.701 in 2016, and 0.71 in 2017. Concerted efforts are needed to reverse the direction of change with respect to tertiary GPI. The proportion of primary school teachers with Diploma in Primary Education (DPED)/Certificate in Education (C-in-Ed) degrees has been on the rise, reaching more than 80 per cent of total teachers in 2015. However, gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education has been increasing at a slow pace of 1.45 per cent per annum since 2013.

Government has continued to implement policies and programmes to enhance access to education and training, improve quality and relevance of education, reduce inequality in education and leverage knowledge and skills in science,

⁶Eleven targets of seven goals are considered to be not relevant for Bangladesh.

technology and innovation. Despite various government efforts and progress achieved in different dimensions of the education sector, significant challenges continue to undermine the performance of the sector. These include inclusive and equitable education, quality of education at all levels, quality of teaching, adult literacy and lifelong learning. Future policies and programmes in education sector would need to focus on sustaining past achievements and dealing with the emerging issues.

Target-wise summary findings of the SDG 4 Strategic Framework for Bangladesh

As mentioned earlier, under the leadership of MoE and MoPME, the UNESCO, BNCU and CAMPE have developed a Strategic Framework for SDG 4 in Bangladesh. The findings have come out from a consultative process that included 35 key informant interviews (KIIs) with relevant field experts (both government and CSOs), eight sub-national-level focus group discussions (FGDs), four sub-national-level consultations, feedbacks on the draft report by the Steering and Technical Committees on SDG 4 of the government, and a national-level consultation, where the final draft was shared. Target-wise summary findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of findings of SDG 4 Strategic Framework

Target	Summary findings
4.1: Universal primary and secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of public exams at primary and secondary levels needs to be competency-based; • Equal facilities for all types of schools; all government schools should progressively become single shift in the medium- to long-run; minimum learning conditions for running schools needs to be ensured; • Quality of non-state schools needs to be ensured with government support and supervision; • Subject-based teachers are needed; • Secondary completion rate needed to be increased, particularly for girls; • Schools that are currently not under the ambit of government's monthly pay order (MPO) scheme should get more support from the government, and need to improve their quality.
4.2: Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure better nutrition in the form of balanced calories and micro-nutrient for pre-primary and primary level children; • Raise pre-primary education to two years; • Better collaboration among various providers; • More parenting education; • Undertake necessary educational reforms to ensure relevance of learning outcomes for indigenous children.

(Table 2 contd.)

(Table 2 contd.)

Target	Summary findings
4.3: Equal access to technical/vocational and higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational education needs to become flexible and market-driven; • Gender gap needs to be reduced; • Ensure equal access of indigenous children and youth, and in particular of indigenous girls, at all levels of education; • Vocational education should progressively create access for the rural population; • A well-designed system of accreditation and recognition of acquired skills is needed.
4.4: Relevant skills for decent work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery institutions for TVET ought to be modernised through developing capacity to conduct assessment on market skills and demand, developing vocational skills and through providing job placement along with post-training support; • TVETs needed to be environment-friendly; • Skills endowments need to be upgraded; • Create on-the-job training opportunities and involve the private sector more closely with this; • Optimum coverage versus maximum coverage: increase cost effectiveness of training; • Tertiary education needs more policy support and set up more centres of excellence.
4.5: Gender equality and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls at secondary and tertiary education need more support, particularly with respect to curricula on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); • Ethnic groups need more support, e.g. teaching mainstream subjects in mother language; • Economically and geographically marginalised groups need more support with GO-NGO (government-NGO) collaboration; • Physically and mentally challenged children need more support.
4.6: Universal youth literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link literacy with socio-economic skills and demands of employment; • Strengthen informal rural-based economy through literacy and skills training; promote linkages with formal economy, based on the principles of lifelong learning through community learning centres (CLCs).
4.7: Education for sustainable development and global citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value education (Global Citizenship Education) needs to be incorporated in teaching and learning programmes; • Promotion of democratic and secular principles; • Integration of indigenous people's knowledge, culture and languages in formal curricula, including for non-indigenous sections of the society.

3. Non-state initiatives and achievements

NSAs, particularly the NGOs, are playing a crucial role in implementing SDGs at the grassroots levels by operating in remote areas and helping people to combat the adverse effects of climate change and achieving the Human Development Index (HDI)-related targets. In addition to microfinance services, NGOs have been concentrating in areas, such as health, nutrition and population; education; water, sanitation and hygiene; skills development; disaster, environment and climate change; rural development; urban development; agriculture and food security; migration; gender justice; and poverty eradication.

The UN member-states have pledged to attain the aspiration of *leave no one behind* (LNOB) and have promised the endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. In the 2030 Agenda document, five factors have been proposed in this connection, as key to understanding who are being left behind and why; these are – discrimination, place of residence, socio-economic status, governance and vulnerability to shocks. As an SDG-4-related high-profile body, Education 2030 Steering Committee of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has emphasised on the ‘need to go Beyond ...’

- Beyond averages: leave no one behind
- Beyond access: relevant learning outcomes
- Beyond basics: content of education
- Beyond schooling: lifelong learning
- Beyond education: multi-sectorial planning
- Beyond countries: peer learning mechanisms

In Bangladesh, the NGOs are closely involved in activities that concern addressing the needs of the left behind groups. These include those living in geographically hard-to-reach areas, deprived and underprivileged communities and physically challenged population, among others. About a thousand NGOs in Bangladesh conduct a diverse range of programmes on education and skills training. They are actively involved in achieving the various targets of SDG 4. NGO programmes are focused on both service delivery and advocacy. With a service delivery approach, many NGOs are carrying out programmes/projects to address specific areas, such as dropout and left-out children, inclusive education, early childhood development and care, girls’ education and education services for geographically hard-to-reach areas. They are providing technical and vocational education, lifelong

learning, adult education, multi-lingual education, tertiary and vocational education, etc.

According to field data, NGOs have provided the following services in relation to SDG 4:

- Delivered education services to 2.9 million learners (61.71 per cent girls/female) through 79,573 learning centres/schools. This is a continuing activity.
- Operated 37,000 formal and non-formal centres/schools with 1.7 million learners (56.56 per cent girls).
- Extended pre-primary education support, including early childhood development through 25,000 centres covering 700,000 learners.
- Provided lifelong learning facilities through 20,000 community learning centres (CLCs) for 700,000 learners.

Many children in Bangladesh get access to the mainstream education system through the government primary schools. However, NGOs are providing education support to the marginalised children, particularly those who do not enrol in schools or those who have dropped out from the mainstream schools. Thus, dropout children, children with disabilities, children of ethnic minority communities, and children living in hard-to-reach areas are rather targettedly being provided education by the NGOs. Following case stories present a flavour of some of the activities being implemented by selected NGOs to advance the cause of SDG 4 in Bangladesh.

Case story: Digital school innovation for quality education

JAAGO Foundation is a CSO, working to provide education to underprivileged children in Bangladesh, with a view to eradicating poverty and encouraging social mobilisation. The vision of JAAGO Foundation is to break the cycle of poverty through quality education; this aligns well with the SDG 4 – Quality Education for All. JAAGO's Online Schooling Program is aligned with the LNOB spirit of the SDGs by ensuring that children of hard-to-reach areas are able to get quality education supports.

In order to attain the targets of Goal 4, GoB is giving high priority to provide and ensure quality education for all by using information and communication technology (ICT) solutions. Government has been struggling for a long time to ensure quality education in remote and hard-to-reach regions of Bangladesh. Underdeveloped communication system and lack of facilities in such areas

make it difficult to recruit teachers and motivate them to work in these places. When it comes to qualified English subject teachers, the situation is even more challenging. To mitigate this problem and meet the needs, an alternative system was needed, so that children in hard-to-reach areas are able to receive quality education and have good knowledge of English. However, despite offers of attractive salary and benefit packages, qualified teachers were unwilling to move to rural areas. Lack of proper amenities was a key reason. On the other hand, local teachers were unable to provide quality education, since they themselves lacked adequate training and pedagogical skills.

As a solution to this problem, JAAGO introduced Online School model to reduce the gaps through unique use of ICT. Online Schooling is a simple model. A class in the Online School is connected to a teacher from Rayer Bazar Teachers' Centre in Dhaka via video conferencing technology. This was first introduced in 2007. JAAGO teaches English version of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) in its 12 digital schools. The classes run in the physical presence of two school-end teachers in the rural areas and one online teacher teaching from Dhaka. The online teacher delivers the lecture followed by an interactive session with students in every class. The school-end teachers assist the children during class work and help

maintain disciplines in the classroom. Using the Cisco WebEx software, Online School solution enables the online teachers to provide quality education to learners in remote areas and share audio-visual teaching learning materials. Children and teachers of online schools get exposure to technology-based teaching and learning

Digital school outputs

Number of schools: 12

Total students: 12,800 (app.)

Number of teachers: 283

Teacher-student ratio: 45:1

Number of communities served: 24
communities in 13 districts

Success rate in public exams: 100 per cent
in all the Board exams – Primary School
Certificate (PSC), Junior School Certificate
(JSC) and Secondary School Certificate (SSC)

experience which are suitable for the age of global digital advancement. Using the WebEx, teachers can take daily attendance of students, track students' progress against learning outcomes, prepare students' assessment reports, and monitor and manage classrooms. The programme ensures quality education, and is able to reach many children who are living in rural, peri-urban and urban hard-to-reach areas, tea gardens, slums, river-eroded areas and hilly areas of the country. Children from ethnic, religious and socio-economically disadvantaged minority groups are at present receiving quality education from JAAGO's digital schools. There are 12 online schools across Bangladesh

in 10 locations: Dhaka, Rajshahi, Gaibandha, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Habiganj, Bandarban, Cox's Bazar, Lakshmipur and Madaripur. Trained and qualified teachers are identified who are able to provide quality education from distance to the children. JAAGO's online education model is indeed best suited to cater to the needs of children in hard-to-reach regions of Bangladesh.

In order to reduce student dropouts, JAAGO has introduced The Sewing Center project to help students' mothers and sisters earn money which can ease their financial burden. JAAGO has also introduced three supporting projects for its education programme – Healthy Living, Call for Hygiene and First Aid Center – to meet students' needs of nutrition and provide them with quality medical services. These programmes have been successful in ensuring students' regular class attendance in schools. The programmes also create awareness and encourage their family members to maintain hygienic living. The programme has brought positive changes in the mindset of parents and other people in the rural catchment areas. Now, parents see a better future for their children when they are in JAAGO schools.

JAAGO Foundation has achieved multiple international recognition, particularly for extending education support to children who are left behind. In February 2017, JAAGO received the prestigious UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the 'Use of ICTs in Education' for its Online School model. In 2015, the Global Development Network, with support from the Japanese Ministry of Finance, awarded JAAGO for the concept of Online Schooling as being the 'Most Innovative Development Project' of 2015. Her Royal Highness the Princess of Jordan, Princess Badiyabint El Hassan awarded JAAGO Foundation with the Mosaic International Award for its work for the underprivileged children in Bangladesh in 2010.

Case study: Community-driven Inclusive Education

Plan International is an INGO working for the children with focus on protection, education and health support. Plan Bangladesh has designed an inclusive education project titled 'Developing a Model of Inclusive Education (IE) in Bangladesh'. The project promotes a comprehensive and holistic model that creates an opportunity for achieving quality primary education. It is a rights-based social model of inclusion, which targets zero exclusion and addresses the diverse needs of each learner. This model considers school as an entry point, and school catchment area as a unit. The project aims to universalise quality primary education for all children, irrespective of their ability, religion, gender, socio-economic condition and geographical location.

Major components of this project are: (a) strong community outreach by parents' groups; (b) community-based early learning opportunity for all 3–5 years aged children; (c) linking schools with community resources; (d) promoting inclusion for quality education in school; and (e) professional capacity building of monitors and supervisors.

The project was built on existing policies, structures and facilities of the government schools, and is working in collaboration with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). The project is working with 50 government primary schools in five locations by involving all credible stakeholders to develop demonstrative model of inclusive education. It has made its mark at five levels: organisation, local/community, country, region and across the globe.

- The project has generated a significant momentum locally, in the school catchment areas at sub-district and district levels. School teachers and management committee members are sincerely concerned about the well-being of school-age children in the school catchment areas. Local community, especially the local elites, are contributing to the schools, both in cash and kind. Students' enrolment rate has increased significantly in project-supported schools. Research study to assess the project has found that attendance rate for children has increased, and there was almost zero dropout rate in last one and a half years.
- Kulaura, a sub-district under this project, is replicating the IE model in its government primary schools. Areas such as Jaldhaka, Hatibandha, Barguna and urban Dhaka are replicating the model of Plan International Bangladesh. Attendance of learners has significantly increased following renovation of the schools in a child-friendly way. Schools under the project are following Plan's Pedagogical Training Manual of IE model in their trainings, and teachers are practicing IE pedagogy in the conduct of classes.
- IE project's influence at country level has been quite impressive. Access and Inclusive Education Cell (AIEC) of the DPE regularly refers to Plan's IE project. Two in-depth studies carried out under this project, as also the overall project design, have been referred to in UNICEF ROSA (2014). It was recognised as one of the successful cases in EFA 2015 National Review of Bangladesh by the MoPME. IE module of DPED and Pre-Primary Education (PPE) training manuals also draws on the project. The project model has been presented at various national conferences and symposiums, and has received high appreciation. Inspired by the project initiatives, some development partners and NGOs, such as the World Food Programme (WFP) Bangladesh, Save the Children, ActionAid Bangladesh, Stromme Foundation, Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) and

Asian Centre for Inclusive Education (ACIE), are replicating similar project interventions in their working areas.

- The IE project of Plan International Bangladesh has received global recognition. The project has been presented at a number of international conferences, including the International Conference on IE 2015 in Dhaka, International Conference on IE 2016 in Pune, Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Conference 2015 in Washington, The Inclusive Education Society (TIES) conference in Melbourne, and the Zero Project Conference 2016 in Vienna. This model has been awarded as one of the most innovative practices across the globe through Zero Project Conference 2016 in Vienna. The IE project approach has been recognised as one of the best practices in education on Plan's Global Education website.
- Plan's IE model is very much aligned with the SDG 4. As was stated above, the IE model is a social model of inclusion, and it has created an equal and equitable environment for all categories of learners. The children who are covered by this project are developmentally on track since project interventions cover from 0-5 years: 0-3 years aged children who are getting parenting support; 3-5 years aged children who are getting support from the *Shishu Bikash Kendras* (SBKs) (child development centres). After completing the SBK cycle (2 years), the 5-year old children enrol into pre-primary level. The challenge is to scale up the model and make it a part of the mainstream education. The project objectives are very much aligned with SDG 4.2 targets. Plan is also operating a pre-primary shift for children adjacent to government primary schools.

Towards delivering good quality primary education in Bangladesh, Plan's IE model has supported government primary schools in three ways: (i) creating equal access opportunities for ALL learners; (ii) helping teachers to raise their capacity to conduct classes according to IE pedagogies; and (iii) putting in place a support system to create enabling and friendly environment for the children within and outside the schools. Plan IE model, thus, very much fits with implementation of SDG 4 in Bangladesh, helping the development of children from very early age and generating opportunities to continue education over the life cycle.

4. Gaps and challenges

Pre-primary and primary education

Primary and pre-primary education are the first major targets (SDGs 4.1 and 4.2) of Quality Education. Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to

achieve different national and international educational goals over the years. Visible progress has been made in this regard. However, a good number of the vulnerable and disadvantaged children still remain out of the education system. These include children with disabilities, street children, children from hard-to-reach areas and ethnic communities, including children with extreme poor socio-economic conditions. Some of the children, while they do receive opportunities, fail to make use of those (e.g. indigenous children who are deprived of education in their mother tongues).

In a welcome move, in January 2017, government took the initiative to introduce textbooks for indigenous children in five languages: for Chakma, Garo, Marma, Sadri and Tripura children at the pre-primary level. About 50,000 textbooks were printed and distributed among approximately 25,000 indigenous students. However, there are still many indigenous groups, whose children are yet to receive textbooks in their mother tongues. Moreover, new teachers with knowledge of alphabets of the five indigenous languages are yet to be appointed. Currently working teachers have also not been provided with necessary training.

Though primary education has achieved almost universal enrolment in Bangladesh, there is still a long way to go in dealing with other attendant concerns. The DPE report shows that the overall repetition rate stood at 5.6 per cent and the survival rate to grade 5 was 83.3 per cent. Efficiency remains at the level of 81.9 per cent and the average number of years input per graduate is 6.1 (DPE, 2017). In the baseline survey (2005), the overall repetition rate was 10.5 per cent, the rate of survival to grade 5 was only 53.9 per cent and efficiency rate was 60.6 per cent. “The fact that almost a quarter of the children, who began their journey to the primary school, could not reach their destination is clearly a major hurdle in achieving Goal 2 target (MDGs) of universal primary completion” (MoPME, 2015, 21).

The average pupil-teacher ratio has improved from 51:1 in 2007 to about 40:1 in 2016 for the government schools (including government primary schools and newly nationalised primary schools); however, in urban areas, such as in Dhaka and Chittagong, the ratio was as high as 84:1. In 2016, only 35.4 per cent of the government schools achieved the ratio of 40:1. High pupil-teacher ratios obviously undermine the quality of education. According to the National Students Assessment (NSA), students’ performance has declined since 2011. In 2015, only 65 per cent and 41 per cent of grade 3 students performed at their levels or above in Bangla and mathematics, respectively, down from 68 per cent and 50 per cent in 2011, and 75 per cent and 57 per

cent in 2013. The performance is even lower for grade 5—only 23 per cent and 10 per cent of grade 5 students performed at their levels in Bangla and mathematics in 2015, down from 25 per cent and 32 per cent in 2011. The decline in NSA (Assessment) results is partly related to the expansion of school samples between NSA 2011 and NSA 2015. There were changes in various features, including teacher profiles (qualification and training), student backgrounds (socio-economic conditions) and physical facilities at schools (learning environment).

A shortage of classrooms is evident since only one-third of primary schools achieved an average student–classroom ratio of 40:1 or less in 2016. In terms of quality, only 35.3 per cent of classrooms are in good condition, 22.2 per cent are in moderate condition, 30.8 per cent are unusable or in need of having repairs, and 11 per cent are in bad condition. About 47 per cent of schools lack a separate and functioning toilet for girls, and 26.8 per cent of schools still do not have safe water. Given the shortage of classrooms, about 77.4 per cent of Bangladesh’s primary schools are running double shifts, and the teacher–student contact hours are about 50 per cent lower than the international standard of 900–1,000 hours per year. Lack of adequate contact hours restrict effective teaching and learning. As is known, Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Natural hazards, such as tropical cyclones and tornadoes, floods, riverbank erosion and landslides, often damage education infrastructure, causing school closures for as long as five months during the monsoon season. Schools affected by disasters have reported a 3 per cent increase in dropout rates and lower competency achievement (DPE, 2017).

Filling of teacher vacancies is a recurrent challenge. On average, 27 per cent positions of head teacher (primary school principal who often also teaches) and 7 per cent positions of assistant teacher were vacant in 2016. Teacher absenteeism is also high. About 42 per cent teachers are high school graduates or not even that. Less than 50 per cent of the primary teachers are proficient in teaching. Teachers continue to rely heavily on lecturing and repetition with scant instead of interactive learning, independent work and problem-solving. Lack of support in schools and lack of career progression have resulted in low morale for teachers. The current curriculum in grades 1–5 is the one revised at the time of reforming with introducing competency-based curriculum in 2011, and textbooks are the ones revised in 2013. Given the rapid knowledge and technological development and the need to consider students’ performance on an ongoing basis, it is urgent to review and revise curriculum and textbooks, as also teaching and learning materials (including supplementary reading

materials). Currently, three types of assessment for primary school students are used: (i) school-based tests; (ii) primary education completion examination; and (iii) the NSA the (Assessment). However, there is no system to analyse the assessment results, review lessons and experiences, and provide feedbacks for refinement of curriculum and textbooks, teaching methodologies, examination methods and questions.

Despite the decentralisation efforts since 2003, education service delivery in Bangladesh remains highly centralised. Fiscal and administrative powers are concentrated largely in Dhaka, discouraging local solutions and weakening efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. In view of this, School-level Improvement Plan (SLIP) and Upazila Primary Education Plan were designed to boost participation of students. SLIP has the required funds. However, funding is same for all schools, regardless of its size, needs or performance. And enforcement of proper fund usage has also been lacking. The Upazila Primary Education Plan was not even funded.

Secondary education

Universal secondary education is the first target (SDG 4.1) of Quality Education goal. However, it is not easy to implement free and compulsory secondary education, and free education up to grade 12. GoB is currently giving special importance to secondary education. As a result, enrolment has increased; indeed, it has more than tripled compared to the 1980s. The number of secondary education institutions has also risen in tandem. Girls accounted for 54 per cent of secondary enrolment, a major accomplishment in combating gender disparity (BANBEIS, n.d.). Nonetheless, high dropout rate remains a major challenge in secondary education. Less than half of the students complete the 5-year cycle of secondary education (grades 6–10), reflecting a significant waste of financial resources and an education system that lacks efficiency. Gender gap analyses show that 51 per cent of boys completed the 5-year cycle as against only 43 per cent of the girls. Multiple challenges related to gender and poverty are behind the high dropout rate for the girls. One important factor relates to traditional values that favour early marriage of girls. Enrolment in science in grade 10 fell from 48 per cent in 1980 to 20 per cent in 2011. A number of factors can be identified behind this: (i) a shortage of qualified teachers; (ii) teaching that emphasises theory and rote learning; (iii) lack of science laboratories and equipment; and (iv) students being attracted more to business studies considering the employment prospect. English is seen as an essential skill, but is poorly taught in secondary school.

The capacity of the MoE and the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) to supervise and monitor the secondary education sector has not kept pace with the rapid increase in the number of secondary schools and madrasahs. A number of organisations, including teacher training colleges, higher secondary teacher training institutes, and the Bangladesh Madrasah Teacher Training Institute provide teacher training at the secondary education level. Coordination and institutional linkages among these need to be further improved. In addition, the rapid growth of non-government teacher training colleges, which operate commercially without government's proper quality control, has further undermined the quality of training.

In total, 98 per cent of all secondary schools are non-government establishments with administration being overseen by school management committees (SMCs). These non-government schools and madrasahs receive significant government subsidies to pay the salaries of the teachers of selected subjects (through the system of enrolling teachers in a monthly pay order (MPO) roll, as also block grants for construction and maintenance of school buildings). Given the highly significant growth in the number of non-government schools, it has been difficult to enforce performance and accountability requirements. Teachers of these schools are recruited directly by the schools, in accordance with the government's set regulations and procedures. However, instances of corruption and nepotism have clouded transparency of the system, particularly regarding teachers' recruitment and the salaries paid in non-government secondary schools which are funded by the government. Working out a transitional process and strategy with the two concerned ministries (MoPME and MoE), by setting up a dedicated taskforce, could be a sensible approach to deal with the attendant challenges.

Technical and vocational education

Targets 4.3 and 4.4 are relevant to TVET and good work practices. Participation in TVET and tertiary education is not satisfactory and below the MDG target of attaining full equality. Gender-based discrimination still remains one of the most difficult hurdles to realising the right to education. Inclusive, gender-responsive framework, second chance and non-formal education have to be recognised and implemented dynamically to end all forms of disparity and inequity in education. The challenge is to turn education into a rights-based tool for building a just and equitable society for breaking the cycle of trans-generational disadvantages.

Aligning science and technology education with the development plan of Bangladesh and the objective of meeting the SDGs must be seen as a challenge, as well as an opportunity for Bangladesh. UNESCO, in one of its 2015 report, has stressed the role of science and technology leading to innovation (UNESCO, 2015). Significant investment is needed for this in order to build a solid knowledge base in science, technology and innovation. To address the needs of SDGs, Bangladesh will have to increase the capacity in higher education significantly. In this connection, it must be noted that, Bangladesh's budgetary allocation for higher education is less than 0.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP); this is way lower than some of the other least developed countries (LDCs).

Gender and equity in education

SDG Target 4.5 relates to gender and equality in education. Though girls are doing better than the boys at the primary level, it is frustrating to note that the share of girls completing secondary-level education continues to remain much lower in comparison to primary education. Poverty, early marriage, lack of awareness of guardians, misinterpretation of religion, lack of communication, sexual harassment and violence against girls are some of the reasons for this lagging performance. Various studies confirm the prevailing wisdom that the main reasons for dropout is poverty and related factors. There is also a consensus about reasons for higher dropout rates for the girl students in rural areas, confirming the well-known reasons, such as early marriage of girls, household responsibilities that girls have to bear and the lack of recognition of the need for girls' education.

Ensuring equality is fundamental to human capital development; this is also important for poverty reduction. In terms of educational attainment, gender parity has been achieved in primary and secondary education; indeed, female enrolment in primary and secondary education has surpassed male enrolment in Bangladesh. There have been improvements in equity in primary enrolment between the poor and the non-poor. But Bangladesh will need to do more, if the aspirations of the SDGs are to be attained.

Inter-ministerial coordination

At the public sector, four ministries are involved with the delivery of education, training and technology services. These are: MoPME, MoE, Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST); and the ICT Division of the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology

(MoPTIT). The Ministries of Women and Children Affairs, Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Youth and Social Welfare, Health and Family Welfare and others also have specific and significant involvement. From the perspectives of output and results, it is obvious that there are issues concerning inter-ministerial linkages. Thus, for example, the quality and quantity of what gets produced at the earliest stages of education and training cycle (primary schooling managed by MoPME) has a determining influence for the next stages of the cycle (secondary and tertiary education managed by MoE; science and technology research managed by MoST; and ICT managed by MoPTIT). Yet, in practice, inter-ministerial coordination and joint policy-making remains a key challenge in Bangladesh. Besides, the service delivery is heavily centralised with most policy decisions and implementation are managed from Dhaka. Centralised management of quality in remote districts of Bangladesh is a challenging task. It is near-impossible to properly manage teacher attendance, quality of school infrastructure and quality of learning without a decentralised service delivery. Recruitment of teachers and procurement of infrastructure and supplies are also highly centralised; there are lags and delays resulting from centralised decision-making.

Inadequate financing

Though the public expenditure on education has increased from Tk. 17,959 crore in FY2010-11 to Tk. 53,054 crore in FY2018-19, it remains stuck at about 2 per cent of Bangladesh's GDP. Indeed, the national budget share of education has been on the decline since 2010. The last three years' scenario of allocation in education are 14.39 per cent for FY2016-17, 12.6 per cent for FY2017-18 and 11.4 per cent for FY2018-19. These figures testify to the decreasing trend which needs to be reversed. Indeed, allocation for education as a percentage of the GDP is one of the lowest in South Asia and among the developing countries. Expenditure on primary education is about 45 per cent of the total education expenditure. Teachers' salaries and school infrastructure development account for more than 90 per cent of the expenses. Since the introduction of the new pay scale (basic pay and allowances) for all teachers, in 2016, which was almost twice the previous one, the share of teachers' salaries has risen even further. As a matter of fact, it has now emerged as the largest expenditure item in the budget, surpassing that of school infrastructure and equipment expenditure.

The EFA 2015 National Review, which was prepared by the MoPME in Bangladesh, reasons inadequate budget allocation in education as one of the key factors behind the aforesaid gaps. As a signatory to education-

related international treaty, Bangladesh has committed to ensure adequate allocation (20 per cent of the national budget or 6 per cent of the GDP) in education. To recall, the Muscat Agreement has recommended 4–6 per cent of the gross national product, and 15–20 per cent of the total government spending to be allocated for education. However, the allocation for primary and secondary education in Bangladesh remains low compared with the figures for other developing countries, as was pointed out above. While the size of national budget of Bangladesh is getting bigger every year, allocation for education has not kept pace with this. The GDP share of education has been stagnant at around 2 per cent over the last 18 years. Bangladesh spends much lower than the global standard for investment in education. It is to be noted that this budget amount is not only on account of education; there is another component, technology, which is also included here. Although in terms of amount, the education budget is increasing, it is inadequate to undertake the needed activities to ensure quality education for all. The lion's share of the allocation is spent on salary, infrastructure development, management purposes, etc. Only an insignificant amount of the budget is left for quality development of education, including procurement of education materials, teacher training, library and research. It is important to allocate adequate resources for education, and to ensure its effective use for quality improvement and quality education.

Moreover, with more focus on increasing the quantity and numbers on the part of decision-makers and practitioners, many aspects of 'quality' continue to remain neglected. Experience of recent decades shows that efforts to expand enrolment should be accompanied by measures to enhance educational quality, if children are to be attracted to school, kept there and enabled to achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Attention should be given to professional development of primary school teachers. Members of SMCs should be provided with the skills and capabilities to manage schools properly.

The complexities of balancing priorities, diverse interests, significant capacities and resources required to implement a workable and coherent plan that contributes to national SDG implementation should not be underestimated while discussing reforms in the education sector in Bangladesh. A number of issues and challenges have been discussed in the preceding sections. The peculiarity of the education sector in Bangladesh is that the work involving the sector is divided between two ministries. There is no strong rationale for this (alternatively speaking, perhaps the rationale has outlived its usefulness). A high-level joint taskforce may be set up by the two ministries and also include other stakeholders, such as concerned NGOs, academics and research

institutions, civil society and private sector to examine and formulate objectives, targets, strategies and indicators concerning the education set up in Bangladesh. Such a taskforce should ensure that the policy is tuned to the aspirations of the SDG 4 and its targets.

5. The way forward

An action agenda needs to be formulated to identify structural and operational constraints concerning education and human resource development in Bangladesh. The agenda should indicate what should be done to overcome the attendant obstacles. Addressing the structural weaknesses will require sustained and long-term efforts, yet must be pursued with a sense of urgency. More immediate steps need to be taken as regards operational issues which should be designed within the framework of structural reforms.

Structural issues

Major structural issues which should be attended to in the course of consultations, based on recent studies and policy advocacy carried out by education researchers and stakeholders, include the followings:

Resource adequacy. Very low level of public resources for education by international comparison, lack of criteria and benchmarks for resource allocation (and proportional reduction of education allocations as share of GDP and total government budget) in recent years. These must be reversed.

Decentralised and effective governance. Very highly centralised governance and management structures, perhaps in view of the large scale of the country's educational system. Decentralisation with accountability in educational management at all level is needed.

New thinking about teachers. Inadequate number of teachers of required quality and inability of the system to attract and retain capable people in the teaching profession remain recurring problems. Extensive training programmes to equip teachers with needed skills required.

Effective skills development. Supply-driven skills development is pervasive, with inadequate quality and low relevance. Apprenticeship and needs of the informal economy (the sector which accounts for 86 per cent of the total employment) must be given due importance and attention.

Quality in higher education including degree colleges. Quality of colleges under the National University (three-quarters of tertiary enrolment are in these colleges) is unacceptable. On the other hand, graduates coming out of this system are the primary sources of recruitment of primary and secondary teachers (this creates a vicious cycle in education). The situation must be significantly improved through quality improvement of National University education system.

One ministerial jurisdiction for school education. As was noted, school education in Bangladesh is overseen by two ministries (unlike anywhere else in the world), creating problems of curriculum continuity, student assessment, teacher preparation and supervision. This needs to be addressed keeping the interests of the sector in the perspective. Initiatives are needed for developing, guiding and implementing an overall quality-with-equity strategy in the national education system to service the needs of Goal 4.

Partnership building. Government and NSAs (actors), including the civil society and private sector, need to work together to design policies, improve governance, mobilise resources and undertake assessment of progress. Greater voice of stakeholders at all levels needs to be encouraged.

Operational issues

Operational issues arise mainly from the governance, management and decision-making processes concerning the national education system. Several of these were raised in the consultations at various levels, and some have been gleaned from recent research reports as well as media coverage of educational issues. These include:

Student learning assessment. Dysfunctional learning assessment with too many public examinations which do not measure competency and distort teaching-learning. The issue has been brought up repeatedly in education-centric discourse and discussions. However, decision-makers have not taken the needed initiatives to address the attended concerns.

Harmful political interference. Criminalisation of political party-affiliated student bodies, particularly at the tertiary education level and the fact of elected representatives exercising undue control and influence over local institutions have emerged as a major problem facing the education sector of Bangladesh. All these have adverse impact on academic environment.

Curriculum reform. Curriculum burden and weak continuity and assessment through grades. No integrated and unified curricula for all school education.

Disadvantaged groups. Geographical, ethnic and language-based access deficits, highly inadequate opportunities for children with disabilities, neglect of cultural diversity, limited scope for cultural contribution to sustainable development – all these need to be addressed through targeted programmes.

School facilities. School building, premises and playgrounds should be built and maintained as a symbol of commitment to education and community pride. This is not the case at present and should be attended to.

Quality enforcement in tertiary education. Proliferation of private universities without the necessary quality control has emerged as a new problem that demands priority attention. Quality enforcement in National University institutions ought to be given the highest priority.

Education policy implementation. Slow and fragmented approach to implementing the Education Policy 2010. Needs urgent attention.

Digital technology. Use of digital technology could contribute towards teacher quality upgrading, enriching student learning resources and efficient management information system. Need to ensure wide and affordable access to internet for all educational institutions.

School meal. School meal for all children, particularly at pre-primary and primary levels, which would make longer school day possible for children, and will improve their learning abilities.

Corruption. There is a need to control corruption, deal with mismanagement, weaknesses as and move away from a culture of tolerance of these harmful practices. Though difficult to document, bribery in education sector, including in connection with personnel recruitment and placement, is perceived to be a common problem that needs to be addressed by ensuring good governance in the sector.

Remoteness. Many indigenous communities in the remote areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and parts of Indo-Bangla borderlands of the plains do not have primary or high school within a radius of several kilometres. The distance from these communities to the nearest school could be as far as 30–40 km in some instances. Their children have to cross long distances on foot or by

taking a tiring and sometimes risky country boat-ride to make it to the classes. These problems should be addressed with due urgency.

Critical areas of actions

Considerable groundwork has already been done in moving forward in various areas concerning the attainment SDG 4. The job now is to refine, elaborate and ensure consistency and alignment of concerned proposals with national priorities, particularly giving special attention to issues which have not as yet been addressed adequately. Based on the discussion above, the earlier-proposed taskforce issues that will need specific attention, are recapitulated below.

First, the stagnation in public funds allocation for education, as share of the GDP and the national budget, visible in recent years, is inconsistent with the government's own proclaimed goals. With one of the lowest ranks globally in this respect, this scenario is not acceptable for Bangladesh, and must be reversed. Within a medium-term framework, the share of GDP for public education budget should be raised to at least 4 per cent, and eventually to 6 per cent and/or 20 per cent of the national budget. A significant increase in the revenue share of GDP and enhancing revenue-raising capacity of the local government bodies should contribute towards increase in the education budget. As interim steps, two initiatives may be considered – an education cess may be proposed (taking into account the positive and negative lessons from India and some other countries which have introduced such a cess); and tax incentives may be given for individual and corporate contributions to education.

Second, the national objectives and targets on education which will be spelt out in the upcoming Eighth Five Year Plan (FY2020-21 to FY2024-25) and the longer-term Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2021–2041) need to be aligned with the framework of the targets and indicators of the SDG 4 and the overall SDGs. No specific universalisation plan has been drawn for education beyond grade 5. Steps have to be taken to reconcile global target of universal full secondary education by 2030 with national targets for grades 8, 10 and 12. The exercise to enact a new education law is a good opportunity to improve the legal framework for the targets.

Third, the highly centralised structure of education governance and management in Bangladesh needs to be overhauled to devolve authority and responsibility, with greater accountability and transparency at the local level and individual institutions. Upazila- and district-based planning and

management of basic and school education must be strengthened to make education services adapted and responsive to local needs and conditions. This could be incorporated in the education law as foreseen in the Education Policy. A permanent statutory – National Education Commission, also proposed in the policy, can be a mechanism for guiding and exercising oversight, and assessing the progress and impact of reforms concerning education governance and management.

Fourth, a new thinking about teachers is needed. By far the largest expenditure item in education relates to the teaching personnel. Finance and budget measures have to provide for adequate numbers of teachers and ensure effective teaching–learning. Apart from improving current in-service training of teachers, measures have to be taken to make teaching one of the first career choices for talented young people, rather than the last one. A 10-year plan has to be drawn up to bring about this transformation – learnings and lessons from both developed Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, and East Asia, including China, could prove to be helpful in this connection.

There could be four key elements in this plan: (a) creation of a National Teaching Service Corps (NTSC) with high remuneration and prestige; (b) attracting bright young people with stipend and promise of NTSC jobs with a four-year teacher preparation track after higher secondary education; (c) introducing education as a subject in the four-year general degree programme (BA or BSc); and (d) ensuring high quality of the degree programme by enforcing quality standards in at least 100 government degree colleges in the country. A nucleus of quality teaching personnel in thousands of primary and secondary schools could be created in 10 years by placing 2–3 NTSC teachers in each school.

Fifth, the unacceptably low quality of degree colleges (with three-quarters of tertiary enrolment in these colleges; these are also the main sources of primary and secondary teachers) is creating a vicious cycle in education. This must be addressed with due urgency. Efforts at improving the quality of higher education are confined at present mostly to regular universities, leaving the National and Open Universities out of the purview. The relative neglect of the degree colleges under the National University and widening tertiary education opportunities through the Open University without reasonable quality assurance, are not consistent with SDG 4 agenda and the national education agenda. This has to be addressed on an urgent basis.

Sixth, non-formal alternatives for out-of-school children have to be effectively funded. About four million children of primary school age are still out of school, either because they never enrolled in schools, or dropped out early on. As may be recalled, Bangladeshi NGOs, led by BRAC, pioneered the non-formal second chance primary education programme in the 1980s which has subsequently been successfully scaled up and replicated. A second chance programme must be a part of the main strategy for universal primary education in order to serve out-of-school children of all kinds – dropouts, working children, those in remote areas and those in other special circumstances. But this can work only if a partnership is built with the NGOs which have proven commitment and capacity in relevant areas. The Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) option will also be needed for universalising grades 6–8 and secondary grades.

Seventh, expansion of pre-primary education with acceptable quality ought to be supported through appropriate measures. A good start has been made by expanding pre-primary education by one year. This will now serve more than half of the children entering primary school. Expansion of pre-schools with quality education is expected to be undertaken through GO-NGO collaboration and coordinated planning in each upazila. A GO-NGO collaboration guideline has been prepared by the MoPME, but was not implemented for lack of public funding earmarked for NGO contribution. Early childhood development for younger children also needs to be expanded; for this the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is the focal point. No specific target for early childhood development below pre-primary level has been set; only scattered activities, mostly by NGOs, are in existence. Quality deficit in pre-primary education is emerging as a serious problem. A programme without acceptable quality for young children can do more harm than good. These need to be addressed with the urgency it demands.

Eighth, lifelong learning has to be supported with literacy programmes as the first step to cater to the needs of adults who are illiterate. The principles and practices of lifelong learning have come to the fore once again in the context of Agenda 2030/SDG 4. To make lifelong learning a reality, and expand functional literacy for youths and adults, a network of CLCs offering relevant learning activities and supported by essential resources, complementing formal education, must be built up. NGOs have shown their capacity and commitment in this area with establishment of some 5,000 *gonokendras* (people's centres) run by different organisations. Core resources have to be provided by the government and partnership modalities have to be developed among government, NGOs and communities to build a nationwide network of

CLCs. A viable programme for literacy as the foundation for lifelong learning through networks of CLCs and wide and equitable access to ICT will need to be developed.

Ninth, supply-driven skills development of low quality and of little market relevance, and scant attention to apprenticeship and needs of the informal economy (though this accounts for over 86 per cent of employment), have to change. Indeed, such a change is anticipated in the National Skills Development Policy. Overall, TVET participation is low for the secondary education age-group – much lower for females. Low outreach and high gender disparity are common in non-formal/flexible shorter courses; there is no major programme at present for skills training for informal economy jobs. Formal/informal apprenticeship opportunities are also rather limited. Expansion of TVET within the present structure, without major reform, will not help attain Goal 4 targets, or the national education targets, for that matter.

Tenth, government must increase efforts to overcome barriers to equitable and inclusive education. Investment in quality education should be raised progressively, adhering to the benchmarks of at least 4–6 per cent of GDP and 15–20 per cent of total budgetary expenditure in education. Instructions in one's own language, including in sign language, must be promoted to preserve traditional culture and ensure inclusivity, and to make use of a more effective medium of instruction. Otherwise, meaningful participation of indigenous people in national life will not happen, undermining the aspirations of sustainable development. On the other hand, if this is done, education will contribute to sustainable lifestyles and human rights and advance the causes of gender equality.

Eleventh, all school education should be brought under one national administrative jurisdiction. The prevailing system of school education divided under two ministries is creating problems of curriculum continuity, student assessment, teacher preparation and supervision and developing, guiding and implementing an overall quality-with-equity strategy in the national education system. A separate agency for primary education up to grade 5, which was introduced with the adoption of the compulsory primary education law, and which later transformed into a full ministry, has lost its value at present. Indeed, this has become an impediment to school education development, particularly in the context of SDG 4 target of universal education that embraces secondary education.

The above is not necessarily an exhaustive enumeration of the issues which needs urgent attention and actions in connection with Bangladesh's education agenda. These have been flagged here, because while these are of critical importance, these are not being accorded the policy priority they deserve in the current context.

6. Conclusions

The government does recognise that human capital is a key determinant of economic growth and poverty reduction in Bangladesh. It is committed to Education for All and to the SDGs, and has integrated them in its development plans and actions. The 7FYP identifies improving education quality as the most important challenge facing the education sector. The Plan aims to improve the teaching-learning process in school, ensure participation, reduce disparity, promote decentralisation, and step up planning and management in the sector. The National Education Policy, 2010 considers primary education as a fundamental anchor of the country's education system and aims to achieve universal, compulsory, free and uniform quality primary education. Development partners have also been extending support to the education sector in Bangladesh on a sustained basis. The rapid socio-economic transformation of Bangladesh and its growing young population is generating a strong demand for high-quality education. Progress in ICT is making education more accessible and bringing in innovation in teaching and learning methods. This gives countries such as Bangladesh opportunities to leapfrog barriers to upgrade the education system and build up the needed human capital at a faster pace.

Finally, the fact that SDG 4 is a catalytic force, connected to all the other Global Goals, needs to be appreciated and emphasised. Government, NSAs (actors), development partners and other stakeholders who share responsibility for implementing SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Agenda must strengthen their efforts further. They must work together to address the challenges identified in the paper by taking an active part in the entire value chain in the education sector covering policy-making, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring. It is reckoned, if appropriate steps are taken in view of this, with the urgency it deserves, Bangladesh will be able to attain the aspirations of Goal 4 by leaving no one behind.

References

BANBEIS. (n.d.). *Bangladesh Education Statistics*. BANBEIS Educational Database. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <http://data.banbeis.gov.bd/>

CAMPE. (2016). *Literacy, Skills, Lifelong Learning: SDG4 in Bangladesh – Where Are We?* Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). Available at: <https://www.campebd.org/page/Generic/0/6/18>

DPE. (2017). *Bangladesh Primary Education: Annual Sector Performance Report 2017*. Dhaka: Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: [https://dpe.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dpe.portal.gov.bd/notices/f33bc7ad_c705_42a8_bba9_76b384f3ecb9/ASPR%202017%20Report/October%202017%20\(M&E\)%20\(4\).pdf](https://dpe.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dpe.portal.gov.bd/notices/f33bc7ad_c705_42a8_bba9_76b384f3ecb9/ASPR%202017%20Report/October%202017%20(M&E)%20(4).pdf)

GED. (2013). *Post-2015 Development Agenda: Bangladesh Proposal to UN*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <http://pkfs-bd.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/3.-POST-2015-DEVELOPMENT-AGENDA-BANGLADESH-PROPOSAL-TO-UN.pdf>

GED. (2015). *Seventh Five Year Plan (FY2016 - FY2020): Accelerating Growth, Empowering Citizens*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/aee61c03_3c11_4e89_9f30_d79639595c67/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf

GED. (2016). *A Handbook: Mapping of Ministries by Targets in the Implementation of SDGs Aligning with 7th Five Year Plan (2016-20)*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/19da51a5_b571_4158_beaefc3e798c1f7/A-Handbook-Mapping-of-Ministries_-targets_-SDG_-7-FYP_2016.pdf

GED. (2017). *SDGs Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <http://pkfs-bd.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2.-SDGs-Financing-Strategy-Bangladesh-Perspective.pdf>

GED. (2018a). *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/dc350cdc_4c6d_4a81_b72a_3afe082187ac/Monitoring_and_Evaluation_Framework_of_SDGS_Book_Proof.pdf

GED. (2018b). *National Action Plan of Ministries and Divisions by Targets in the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB).

GED. (2018c). *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20(1).pdf)

MoPME. (2015). *Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Bangladesh*. Report submitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Dhaka: Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000230507>

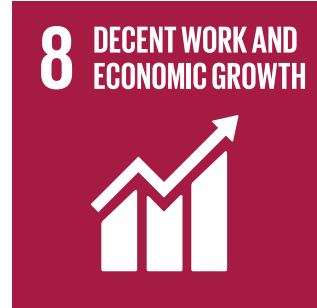
PFM. (2013). *Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Perspectives and Recommendations from Bangladesh Civil Society*. Dhaka: People's Forum on MDGs (PFM) and Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). Available at: http://C:/Users/PC/Downloads/31102013045234pmPost_2015_Sustainable_Development_Agenda.pdf

UN. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: United Nations (UN). Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

UNESCO. (2015). *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UNICEF ROSA. (2014). *Meeting the Educational Needs of Children with Disabilities in South Asia – Bangladesh Needs Assessment*. Kathmandu: UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA).

Pursuing Decent Jobs Agenda for Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8)



Anchor organisation

BRAC

Co-anchor organisation

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)

Associate organisations

Access Bangladesh Foundation

ActionAid Bangladesh

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)

British Council in Bangladesh

CARE Bangladesh

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)

Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK)

JAAGO Foundation

Plan International Bangladesh

Practical Action in Bangladesh

Save the Children in Bangladesh

SERAC-Bangladesh

VSO Bangladesh

Lead authors

Mohammad Azad Rahman, Programme Head, Advocacy for Social Change, and

Samira Manzur, Consultant, BRAC

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report is an output of an initiative by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The Goal-Group 8 set up by the Platform prepared this report with a view to providing a critical review on the progress made as regards SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth from the perspective of non-state actors. The focus has been on assessment of progress made, identification of key implementation-related challenges, and coming up with a set of recommendations in going forward.

The authors would like to thank Tasmiah Tabassum Rahman, Head of Skills Development Programme, BRAC, for editing the report. Important contributions were made by Ferdaus Ara Begum, Chief Executive Officer, BUILD, Nusrat Jahan Tania, Economist, BUILD, Md. Khairul Islam, Manager - EYE (TVET), Save the Children in Bangladesh, Mehrab Ul Goni, Manager - Advocacy & Partnership, Practical Action in Bangladesh, and Md. Shakhawatul Islam, Partnership Manager, Advocacy for Social Change Programme, Mahenaw Ummul Wara, Programme Manager, Farha Lutfah Rahman, Knowledge Management and Communication Specialist, and Medha Zayan, Intern of Skills Development Programme, BRAC. The authors are grateful to all of them.

Sincere appreciation is due to Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Research Director, CPD for his critical feedbacks in the course of preparing this report. We would like to sincerely thank Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, for her excellent support. Thanks are also due to Anis Pervez, former Additional Director, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues at CPD and the Secretariat of the Platform

who provided support, guidance and cooperation throughout the process of preparing this report.

Finally, we would like to register our gratitude to the many organisations and committed citizens across Bangladesh who are actively working to advance SDG 8 for everyone's benefit.

1. Introduction

Background

In September 2015, the member-states of the United Nations (UN) signed on to a commitment to attain 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Along with these goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (popularly known as the 2030 Agenda) includes 169 targets, which are to be achieved by the year 2030. As is known, the SDGs take their inspiration from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but aspire to go further and end all forms of poverty. The SDGs commit to advance sustainable development everywhere. Implementation of the SDGs at the country level involves two major stakeholders: the national government and the non-state actors (NSAs). It is reckoned that a strong partnership of these two is key to successful realisation of the SDGs.

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the major UN platform for this global agenda, which is vested with the key role of monitoring and reviewing the progress of the SDGs at the global level. As part of this process, the HLPF encourages the member-states to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national- and sub-national-levels, which are country-led and country-driven.” An official national review process of SDG-related activities is in place, as part of which, the Voluntary National Review (VNR)¹ of Bangladesh was prepared and presented in 2017. Also an annual review report was prepared in 2018.

The present report has been prepared with the objective of adding depth to our understanding on the progress made and capturing on the ground experiences on advancing this goal in Bangladesh. Particular focus has been put on the contribution of the NSAs in attaining the targets relevant to Goal 8. NSAs such as civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector have an important role to play – not only in attaining the SDGs, but also in monitoring and reporting on the state of implementation of the SDGs at the local level. In the final analysis, this is expected to help advance the cause of accountability and transparency in SDG implementation, especially in ensuring inclusion and achieving the aspiration to *leave no one behind* (LNOB) articulated in the 2030 Agenda. The LNOB framework has to be mainstreamed to address issues of inequality across all the 17 Global Goals.

¹The VNRs can be accessed on the UN’s Knowledge Platform for Sustainable Development. For more information, see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

Indeed, attaining aspiration in implementing Goal 8 is critically important to embed LNOB across all other goals.

NSA engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights define CSOs as “non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the state and the market.” CSOs in Bangladesh play an important role in translating the Global Goals into local and national actions and achievements, through their own interventions, as also in partnership with the government. CSOs in Bangladesh also have a key role as independent entities that hold governments, international organisations and multilateral development institutions accountable for their activities in connection with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Bangladesh. Another major NSA in the process of 2030 Agenda is the private sector. The private sector is a pivotal player in achieving the Global Goals. Its participation is critical to strengthening the economy, creating decent jobs and advancing the cause of environmental sustainability. In the final analysis, however, the advancement of the SDGs in Bangladesh will hinge on the cooperative efforts of both the government and the non-state stakeholders.

The present review is focused on SDG 8, which calls for Decent Work and Economic Growth. The report has been prepared by Goal-Group 8’s member organisations with a view to assess progress in terms of implementing SDG 8 targets, capture the contribution made by the NSAs in this connection, and articulate the challenges that need to be addressed in attaining the concerned targets of the 2030 Agenda.

About the SDG 8 review report

The objective of the report is to bring transparency and provide insights as regards SDG implementation in Bangladesh. The report particularly captures Bangladesh’s performance in advancing the cause of Goal 8 and the attendant targets, from the vantage point of the contributions being made by the NSAs in Bangladesh. An important aspect of the review is to examine the implementation of Goal 8 from the perspective of the 2030 Agenda’s pledge to ‘leave no one behind’. Thus, the report aims to: (i) assess the progress made in attaining the targets of SDG 8 in Bangladesh; (ii) capture the lessons learned, draw insights from the best practices and articulate the challenges faced in implementing the SDGs; and (iii) put forward recommendations to attain SDG 8 targets in Bangladesh by 2030.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces the methodology and the conceptual framework adopted in this report. The report's limitations are also acknowledged here. Section 3 presents an overview of how SDG 8 has been included in Bangladesh's development plans and programmes. Section 4 reviews the progress made as regards selected indicators of Goal 8, using both national data and field-level information. The role of NSAs and case studies concerning their interventions in Goal 8 areas are presented in Section 5. Finally, Section 6 highlights the attendant challenges and comes up with some recommendations in going forward over the next decade.

2. Methodology

The report is based on insights and information drawn from multi-stakeholder consultations, a brief survey, and review of relevant documents and data. Multi-stakeholder consultations included workshops with CSOs, private sector, government representatives from relevant ministries and international development partners. The workshops helped assess the SDG 8 priorities for Bangladesh, examine the progress made, identify existing gaps and discuss CSOs' role in achieving the Goal 8 targets. The report is a first of its kind in Bangladesh, and will hopefully be of use to CSOs and the private sector in Bangladesh to work more effectively towards achieving the SDG 8.

Conceptual framework

Two considerations have guided preparation of this report. First, embedding the LNOB aspiration of the SDGs; and second, integration and mainstreaming of the efforts of NSAs in national efforts to attain the SDGs in Bangladesh.

LNOB is considered to be an overarching principle which is an important commitment to reduce inequality and reach the most vulnerable groups in the society and the most marginalised (Fukuda-Parr and Hegstad, 2018). It is important to note that giving shape to the LNOB aspirations remains a major challenge. This will need to be addressed by mainstreaming the LNOB principles in the works of NSAs and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in Goal 8 areas, and through more effective partnership between the two.

It is to be recalled here that the importance of NSAs, particularly of CSOs and the private sector, was recognised early on in view of the experience gained during the MDG era and was given high importance in the process of developing the 2030 Agenda. The role that NSAs has been playing in implementing Goal 8, thus assumes heightened importance in this backdrop.

Indicators and data collection

SDG 8 has 12 targets, and 17 indicators; 14 of these indicators are quantifiable and three are of descriptive nature. As would be appreciated, availability of the needed data at the disaggregated level is crucial to measuring progress as regards SDG implementation. While it was relatively easy to get the 2016 and 2017 data for many of the indicators, the needed data and information with regard to some of the indicators were not readily available. While information generated from field-level experiences of NSAs has enriched the report, most of the data for this report was taken from the SDG Tracker hosted by the Access to Information (a2i) programme.² Table 1 presents the three tiers of global classification of data availability for various indicators³ of SDG 8 for Bangladesh.

Table 1: Global Tier classification and national data availability for SDG 8 indicators

Indicator	Global Tier classification	Availability	
		2016	2017
8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	Tier I	Yes	Yes
8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	Tier I	Yes	Yes
8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	Tier II	Yes	Yes
8.4.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP	Tier II	No	No
8.4.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP	Tier I	No	No

(Table 1 contd.)

²For more information, see: <https://a2i.gov.bd/sdg-tracker/>

³To facilitate the implementation of the indicator framework, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) classifies all indicators into three tiers, based on their methodological development and availability at the global level. Tier I indicators are conceptually clear, have well-established methodologies and are regularly produced. Tier II indicators are conceptually clear, have established methodologies, but are not regularly gathered. Finally, Tier III indicators do not have internationally established methodologies and are being developed or tested at present. Information for Table 1 is collected from the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS) (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>).

(Table 1 contd.)

Indicator	Global Tier classification	Availability	
		2016	2017
8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities	Tier II	Yes	Yes
8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	Tier I	Yes ^a	Yes ^a
8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	Tier I	Yes	Yes
8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	Tier II	No	No
8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	Tier II	Yes	Yes
8.8.2 Increase in national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status	Tier III	No	No
8.9.1 Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate	Tier II	No	No
8.9.2 Number of jobs in sustainable tourism industries out of total tourism jobs	Tier III	No	No
8.10.1.a. Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults	Tier I	Yes	Yes
8.10.1.b Number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults	Tier I	Yes	Yes
8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other	Tier I	Yes	Yes

(Table 1 contd.)

(Table 1 contd.)

Indicator	Global Tier classification	Availability	
		2016	2017
financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider			
8.a.1 Aid for Trade commitments and disbursements	Tier I	No	No
8.b.1 Total government spending in social protection and employment programmes as a proportion of the national budgets and GDP	Tier II	No	No

Source: Bangladesh SDG Tracker.

Note: a. Not for persons with disabilities. b. GDP: Gross domestic product.

A stocktaking exercise was undertaken with help from the CSOs who are members of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, and also networks and organisations working in areas related to SDG 8. The organisations shared information on their contribution and also notable success cases, based on their experience as regards progress made till now. Furthermore, a survey of Citizen's Platform partners and organisations was carried out to have a fuller understanding of the CSOs, and private sector perspectives on SDG 8.

Secondary data sources, primarily from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and General Economics Division (GED), were accessed to assess the current scenario concerning Goal 8 targets and complement qualitative observations. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2016-17 from BBS provided a large part of the information regarding labour market scenario. Additional information was elicited from UN agencies as needed (including the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS)). However, data is not available for most of the indicators. Disaggregated data, for example, concerning persons with disabilities, was also not readily found for many indicators.

Limitations

The review work has been constrained by some limitations. Constraints related to time and resources have limited the scope and depth of the report. It should be noted here that the report only covers a small sample of the CSOs and the private sector entities in Bangladesh. Case studies included in Section

5 represent only a small sample of the diverse range of activities being carried out in Goal 8 areas by the NSAs in Bangladesh. Going forward, it is important to develop a robust database of CSOs and private sector activities related to SDG 8 to have a better understanding about NSA contribution to attain the Goal 8 targets. This will help the NSAs to work more effectively to attain Goal 8 targets and also help monitor the progress being made in this connection. Indeed, Goal 8 covers a wide range of topics, and it was difficult to deal with all those in this review report. As a result, the report has put emphasis on some selected topics which were perceived as most important by the concerned stakeholders. Further research is needed to adequately cover topics such as aid for trade (AfT) and tourism under SDG 8.

3. Goal 8: Developing a global and national understanding

Goal 8 in the global and regional contexts

SDG 8 calls to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” Although Bangladesh has made important progress in terms of employment and productivity, much more remains to be done to further enhance employment opportunities, promote the cause of decent work and promote safe workplaces to advance labour market equality and improve financial services for sustained and inclusive economic growth of the country. Mere economic growth is not enough; as per the aspirations of Goal 8, growth must also be inclusive and sustainable.

As is known, South Asia as a region has been experiencing dynamic economic growth over the recent past. The region is expected to remain the fastest growing region in the world (World Bank, 2018). Yet inclusiveness and sustainability of the growth remain a key concern. As the economic transition sets in and the youth segment of the population grows at a fast pace, there will be a growing need for decent jobs. Till now, countries in South Asia have not been able to translate the high growth rates into high levels of decent work creation (World Bank, 2018). Across South Asia, economic growth, as of now, has not been able to harness the opportunities of youth bulge, and the potentials of demographic dividend through creation of decent jobs continue to remain unrealised (UNESCAP, 2018).

As would be expected, key priority areas under SDG 8 are common to Bangladesh and other countries of the South Asian region. These, as a recent study (UNESCAP, 2018) indicates, are the followings.

Sustained job creation through industry-oriented structural transformation.

Job creation, at a pace that caters to the needs of those entering the job market, is a challenge that is being faced across the world, including the South Asian region. Although South Asia hosts some of world's fastest growing economies, the rate of job creation does not correspond to the rising demand of its expanding young workforce. Economic growth alone cannot generate the significant numbers of additional jobs needed for the growing workforce (World Bank, 2018). Moreover, low employment rate among women is a widely prevalent reality in South Asia; women unemployment has been consistently high, when compared to the global average. Informal nature of the job market, and large number of those not in education, employment and training (NEET) is another reality that haunts the South Asian job market.

Harnessing the demographic dividend. Investing in human development through quality education and vocational training, and advancing equal opportunity for all is key to South Asian economies' ability to take advantage of the young workforce. Governments are starting to recognise the importance of skills development. A lot of resources are being directed towards human resources development and investment in skills formation. However, much more needs to be done in this connection.

Social protection and financial inclusion. South Asian countries have the potential to scale up models of social protection, including those based on income support, employment guarantee and conditional cash transfers. Besides expanding microfinance programmes, these economies can leverage the opportunities provided by mobile banking and financial services. These will promote financial inclusion of the most marginalised section of the society and those living in remote hard-to-reach areas.

Enhancing environmental sustainability. As South Asian economies seek transformative development, it is important that the regional countries prioritise clean energy and environmental upgradation, including enhanced energy efficiency and waste recycling. This priority also highlights the need for access to technology transfer and access to finance. Much more needs to be done in these areas.

Decent work and economic growth in the context of Bangladesh

From decent work perspective, following issues are becoming important in the Bangladesh context.

Inclusive economic growth. Although Bangladesh has maintained a steady economic growth of about 7 per cent over the recent past years, youth unemployment continues to be an issue that calls for urgent attention. As the country seeks to lift the remaining people out of the poverty trap, policies and actions grounded in the principles of equity and justice emerge not only as important, but also as necessary. Another challenge that is drawing increasing attention and gaining traction is the growing economic disparity in Bangladesh. As income and wealth inequalities rise, both GoB and the CSOs must work to actively address this challenge where attaining Goal 8 will play the defining role.

Falling real wages. From 2015-16 to 2016-17, the national real average wages in Bangladesh fell by 2.5 per cent (Rahman, 2018). When disaggregated by gender, this decline was 1.9 per cent for men and 3.8 per cent for women. Indeed, working poverty remains a major challenge not only in Bangladesh, but across the South Asian region, and also globally. When setting minimum wages, the cost of living must be taken into account. Reducing income and wealth inequality must be given priority in policy decisions.

Labour force participation and unemployment. Providing full and productive employment for the labour force in Bangladesh ought to be the most important priority for the government. Bangladesh's vision to accelerate economic growth and emerge as a developed country by 2041 requires that the economy is able to bring as many people as possible, including the young and the women, into the ambit of productive and decent jobs. Prosperity and advancement of the workforce depend on how well people are employed, the income they draw, and on the conditions in which they work. Implementing SDG 8, thus, becomes a top most priority, as Bangladesh moves forward towards the year 2030. Table 2 presents some key data from the latest LFS 2016-17 (BBS, 2018).

The LFS (2016-17) shows that the total number of people in the labour force of the country increased to 63.5 million, an increase of 6.8 million since 2010. However, female labour force participation remains low and well below the world average. At 36.3 per cent, this was, however, higher than the average for South Asia, which was about 28.3 per cent in 2015.

Difference in participation rates is significant between the female and male population in Bangladesh labour force. Further, over 90 per cent of the women in the labour market were in informal employment in 2016-17. This is about 10 percentage points higher when compared to men. Bringing women into

Table 2: Bangladesh labour market information from the Labour Force Survey 2016-17*(in Per cent)*

Indicator	2015-16	2016-17
Labour force participation rate	58.5	58.2
<i>Female</i>	35.6	36.3
<i>Male</i>	81.9	80.5
<i>Urban</i>	56.0	58.2
<i>Rural</i>	59.6	59.3
Unemployment rate	4.2	4.2
<i>Female</i>	6.8	6.7
<i>Male</i>	3.0	3.1
Youth unemployment rate		10.6
<i>Female</i>		15.0
<i>Male</i>		8.2
Employment by informality	86.2	85.1
<i>Female</i>	95.4	91.8
<i>Male</i>	82.3	82.1
Employed by broad economic sector	-	-
<i>Agriculture</i>	42.7	40.6
<i>Industry</i>	20.5	20.1
<i>Services</i>	36.9	39.0

Source: BBS (2018).

the labour market, and more into formal segment of the market, is critically important if Bangladesh is to reduce inequality. This is also important from the perspective of advancing the LNOB vision.

Many Bangladeshis leave the country as migrant workers every year in search of work opportunities to support their families. Low levels of education and lack of adequate information significantly increase the vulnerability for these migrants; this also results in their exploitation by unscrupulous middle-men. Migrant workers are subjected to exploitation starting from recruitment and overseas travel to work placement. Often, the working conditions in the destination countries is dismal. Migrant workers are important contributors to Bangladesh's economic growth. They contribute by lessening the pressure on the domestic labour market and by bringing remittances. There is a strong case to ensure that migration is safe and that safety and rights of migrant workers in the destination countries are fully secured.

Protection measures. Social protection policies, including minimum wage provisions and social transfer programmes, play an important role in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable population. About half of Bangladesh's population continue to live on about USD 2 per day. In the context of the prevailing labour market scenario in Bangladesh, having a job does not necessarily guarantee an escape from the poverty trap. The slow and uneven progress as regards creating decent job opportunities requires that we rethink and recalibrate our economic and labour policies.

The Decent Work Agenda. Reference to 'Decent Work' is found in a number of SDGs along with Goal 8. To lift themselves out of poverty and improve living conditions, people need decent livelihood opportunities. The jobs they are engaged in must be decent, productive and be able to provide fair wages. In Bangladesh, the ILO along with the government, workers' organisations and employers' associations are working on the national Decent Work Agenda. This work must be strengthened to attain the targets of Goal 8.

In Focus: Global initiative – Decent Jobs for Youth

Decent Jobs for Youth was launched in 2016 as a UN system-wide effort, focusing on addressing youth employment challenges which is central to realising the 2030 Agenda. It emerged as a global, multi-stakeholder initiative, which intends to bring together governments, social partners, private sector, youth and civil society organisations in an effort to scale up action and to create positive impact on youth employment. A diverse range of actors are working together to share knowledge, leverage resources and take actions at the country and regional levels.

Bangladesh became the first country from the Asia-Pacific region to commit to the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. The commitment was forged through the GoB's flagship programme on the digital agenda, *a2i – Innovate for All*. The programme has pledged to train 250,000 Bangladeshi youth in the areas of digital skills and to deliver 340,200 apprenticeships by 2023.

Diversification of production and trade. Readymade garments (RMG), knitwear, frozen food, leather and leather goods, plastics, light engineering and jute products are some of Bangladesh's prominent exportable items. However, exports, and also the economy, are heavily reliant on the RMG sector. In FY2018-19, the RMG sector contributed about USD 34 billion, which was equivalent to about 12 per cent of the country's gross domestic production (GDP). It is important that active efforts are made to diversify the country's exports beyond the RMG, and the markets beyond the traditional markets

of North America. Sectors such as leather and footwear, information and communication technology (ICT) and pharmaceuticals have the potential to contribute significantly to the economy. Export diversification is a key focus of the Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP) alongside the emphasis on labour-intensive sectors and job creation. The Export Policy (2015–18) included a list of 12 sectors which were to be given the highest priority, which included shoes and leather products, plastics, electronics, light engineering products, among others. However, export concentration has been on the rise in the recent past.

Bangladesh's graduation from the least developed country (LDC) group will lead to the withdrawal of a large part of the trade preferences that the country has been enjoying in export and other areas over the past decades. Appropriate policies need to be pursued to ensure that graduation does not harm Bangladesh's competitiveness and export performance. Innovation and diversification must be encouraged to make Bangladesh more competitive in the global market.

National priority targets under Goal 8

GoB has adopted a *whole of society* approach in its plan to implement the 2030 Agenda. The 7FYP formulated by the GED of the Planning Commission outlines the work and strategies that the government will implement in the years 2016–2020 (GED, 2015). The Plan coincided with the launch of the SDGs, and has stressed the importance of implementing the Global Goals in development vision of Bangladesh over the coming years. Prospect of LDC graduation and middle-income transition are set to create new demands on the Bangladesh economy and the job market. The 7FYP does include a number of strategies and policies that are tuned to the newly emerging demands.

Although not fully aligned, the 7FYP has tried to address various challenges that concern attainment of many of the targets of SDG 8. These include “GDP growth acceleration, employment generation and rapid poverty reduction” and “a broad-based strategy of inclusiveness with a view to empowering every citizen to participate fully and benefit from the development process.” The targets of 7FYP which coincide with the Goal 8 are:

- Attain an average real GDP growth rate of 7.4 per cent per year over the Plan period;
- Create good jobs for the large pool of underemployed and new labour market entrants by increasing the share of employment in the manufacturing sector, from 15 per cent to 20 per cent;

- Raise the total revenue to be 16.1 per cent of GDP by 2020 from the current 10.7 per cent;
- Create additional jobs to the tune of 12.9 million during the 7FYP period, including some 2 million jobs abroad;
- Take initiatives to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). FDI to be increased significantly to USD 9.6 billion by 2020 from the present level of about USD 2 billion;
- Raise productivity, enhance access to finance and extend policy support for urban micro, small and medium enterprises;
- Encourage female enrolment in technical and vocational education;
- Spend more on social protection as a share of the GDP to be raised to 3 per cent.

4. Progress in advancing Goal 8

Performance reporting and progress as regards selected targets and indicators

As was pointed out above, the VNR is an exercise for states to conduct regular reviews and share national experience concerning both success and challenges in advancing the 2030 Agenda. Bangladesh prepared its first VNR in 2017 (GED, 2017). In December 2018, the GED of the Bangladesh Planning Commission published the first SDG Progress Report of Bangladesh (GED, 2018). This section provides a critical review on the progress reported in these documents on selected targets. As may be seen, while there has been some commendable progress over the first quarter of the SDG implementation period, much more remains to be done over the next decade. Particularly, this relates to realising the LNOB aspirations embedded in the Agenda.

Targets 8.1 and 8.2 are concerned with sustainable economic growth, increased productivity and diversification of production. Attaining high economic growth is at the forefront of realising Goal 8. As is known, Bangladesh has been making impressive progress in terms of GDP growth rate. However, there is a need to develop a more in-depth understanding as regards the quality of growth and how the growth is being distributed. Table 3 presents recent data for Targets 8.1 and 8.2.

While the growth rates are promising, it is also equally important to understand if the growth is reaching the various segments of the economy and society in an equitable manner. The rate of economic growth in Bangladesh has not been accompanied by an increased pace of job creation and poverty

Table 3: Progress as regards Targets 8.1 and 8.2 indicators*(in Per cent)*

Indicator	Target 2030	2016	2017	2018
8.1.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	7.50	5.77	6.05	6.40
8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	6.50	6.27	4.99	5.56

Source: Bangladesh SDG Tracker.

reduction (Khatun, 2019). In 2016, Gini coefficient for income and wealth in Bangladesh stood at 0.48 and 0.74, respectively (Bhattacharya, 2018). In a recent ranking based on the commitment to reduce inequality, Bangladesh was ranked as the 10th least committed country globally (Oxfam and Development Finance International, 2018). Bangladesh has to be alert to issues of sustainability of growth; and for this to be the case, growth has to be inclusive in line with the LNOB spirit of the SDGs.

Target 8.3 relates to promoting development policies that enable job creation and innovation, while Target 8.5 calls for decent work for all. In Bangladesh, the majority of the employed population continue to be engaged in the informal sector. According to BBS (2018), about 85 per cent of all those employed were engaged in the informal sector. The share is higher for women – over 90 per cent of all working women were in the informal sector. While the informal sector has continued to be an important source of livelihoods for the majority, its regulation and governance remains a major concern. The jobs are insecure, low-paying, and often hazardous. There is a need to gradually reduce informality, through targetted policies, appropriate incentives and proper enforcement of regulations (Rahman, 2018). However, in the medium term, informality will likely remain a common feature of the Bangladesh labour market. In view of this, issues of raising productivity and ensuring higher wages in the informal sector must be given due importance. Indicator 8.5.1 is an important one for Bangladesh, as it sheds light on disparities in earnings. The data in Table 4 shows wage disparity by gender. It can be seen that women, on average, earn less than men.

The national unemployment rate has remained consistent over the years. The rate is higher for women (by 3.6 percentage points). Among all age groups, youth (aged 15–24) has the highest rate of unemployment at 10.6 per cent according to LFS (2016–17) data. This is rather disquieting, since the proportion of population belonging to the youth group will continue to grow. Both the

Table 4: Progress as regards Targets 8.3 and 8.5 indicators*(in Per cent)*

Indicator	Target 2030	2016	2017
8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	65.0	77.8	78.0
<i>Female</i>		88.7	85.5
<i>Male</i>		75.2	76.0
8.5.1 Average monthly* earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities (in Taka)	21024.9	12897.0	13258.0
<i>Female</i>		12072.0	12254.0
<i>Male</i>		13127.0	13583.0
<i>Persons with disabilities</i>		-	-
8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	2.5	4.2	4.2
<i>Female</i>		6.8	6.7
<i>Male</i>		3.2	3.1
<i>Persons with disabilities</i>		-	-
<i>Youth</i>		-	10.6

Source: BBS (2018); Bangladesh SDG Tracker; and The World Bank.

Note: * For Indicator 8.5.1, the 'hourly earnings' has been replaced with 'monthly earnings' as the data for the former is not available.

state and the private sector must give priority attention to these challenges and actively work to create more decent jobs to absorb the young people entering the labour market every year.

In order for Bangladesh to attain Targets 8.3 and 8.5, all concerned actors must come together to promote a job-centric growth. Here, the state has a prominent role to play to create an environment that promotes entrepreneurship, innovation and business growth. Pursuing business-friendly and conducive macroeconomic policies will be an important factor in this respect. Adequate support must be extended to facilitate the growth of the micro, small and medium enterprises through financing and training opportunities. Both state and NSAs will have to be actively engaged by providing targetted business and skills development services.

Target 8.6 calls for the reduction of youth in NEET. As highlighted earlier, harnessing the benefits of demographic transition and promoting youth

Table 5: Progress with Target 8.6 indicators*(in Per cent)*

Indicator	Target 2030	2016	2017
8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	3.0	28.9	27.4
<i>Female</i>		46.9	44.6
<i>Male</i>		9.9	9.8

Source: Bangladesh SDG Tracker; and The World Bank.

employment should receive highest priority from the policymakers. Table 5 shows the change in the share of youth in NEET. The indicator suggests that in recent years, there has been some improvement in getting more youth into education, employment and training. However, this is still below the 2030 target, particularly concerning the women cohort in the workforce.

Target 8.7 aims to eradicate child labour and modern day slavery. Bangladesh's Ministry of Labour and Employment adopted a National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010, which provides a framework to eradicate "all forms of child labour by 2015." There is, however, lack of needed data to assess the progress made in this connection. Only one indicator is used to measure the share and number of children engaged in child labour (8.7.1: Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age). Although an important target, no official data on child labour beyond 2013 is available for this indicator.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that while prevalence of child labour has been brought down in the formal sector, its presence remains significant in the informal economy that remains outside the scope and ambit of traditional enforcement models. It is important that the government and relevant international organisations (such as the ILO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) take steps to conduct a comprehensive survey of the working children in Bangladesh and make the projections in this regard, so that appropriate plans in line with the target could be made. This will allow the concerned stakeholders to grasp the magnitude of the challenge, and help strategise policies and actions to be pursued in this connection.

Additionally, as the target also calls for an end to modern day slavery and human trafficking, there is also a need to find ways to document the progress as regards this target. The government and NSAs should discuss the best ways

to capture the progress in this connection, in a way that goes even beyond the remit of the SDG target and indicator.

Target 8.8 relates to ensuring protection of labour rights and safe working environment for all, including that of the migrant workers. There are three indicators for this target. Data for two targets are readily accessible. This is an important target, which provides information on progress in terms of working conditions and occupational safety of employees and workers. As Table 6 shows, there has been a decline in the number of fatal injuries but at the same time an increase was experienced in the number of non-fatal injuries, from 2016 to 2017. It is also interesting to note that there was an increase in frequency of injuries among the women. This requires further validation and attention.

Indicator 8.8.2 belongs to Tier III of the global classification (the methodology for computing this indicator is yet to be finalised at the global level). However, respect for labour rights and compliance remains a cornerstone in attaining Goal 8 aspirations. As of now, trade union involvement in the SDG discourse has been largely lacking in Bangladesh. This must be strengthened. Much more needs to be done to safeguard workers' rights and ensure that the right of collective bargaining can be practised.

Table 6: Progress with Target 8.8 indicators

Indicator	Target 2030	2016	2017
8.8.1.a Frequency rates of fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	100	126	105
<i>Female</i>		9	15
<i>Male</i>		117	90
8.8.1.b Frequency rates of non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status	100	181	498
<i>Female</i>		68	191
<i>Male</i>		113	307
8.8.2 Level of national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on ILO textual sources and national legislation by sex and migrant status	-	-	-

Source: Bangladesh SDG Tracker.

Table 7: Progress with Target 8.10 indicators

Indicator	Target 2030	2016	2017
8.10.1.a. Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults	12	8.88	8.99
8.10.1.b. Number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults	9	8.07	9.08
8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider (%)	-	44.00	50.00

Source: Bangladesh SDG Tracker.

Target 8.10 is concerned with financial inclusion. As shown in Table 7, the indicators related to this target show some progress: there is an increase in the number of bank branches and automated teller machines (ATMs), share of adults who are connected to some type of financial institution has been on the rise. The target encourages all actors to explore innovative financial services, such as intelligent microfinance products and service-providers (e.g. bKash). More emphasis needs to be put on identifying modalities to further mainstream such financial instruments in mainstream practices.

5. Civil society and private sector engagement in advancing Goal 8

Engagement of CSOs in the 2030 Agenda

SDG localisation is defined as “the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving the SDGs” (Democracy Development Programme, 2016). Accordingly, localisation is the implementation of the Global Goals and the monitoring process at the sub-national and local levels.

NSAs have been key stakeholders in the conceptualisation and development of the 2030 Agenda. At the implementation stage, NSAs are expected to play a key role in advancing the ambitious goals of the Agenda at all levels – global, national and local. The role of CSOs is of particular importance in the context of localisation of the SDGs because of their close involvement in activities at the grassroots level. Inclusion of CSOs in SDG implementation has emerged as a crucial necessity in both service delivery and monitoring of implementation-related activities. Indeed, CSOs could make a positive difference in attaining the SDGs. The role of CSOs in representing the people and their interests – especially those of the marginalised – is perceived to be integral to achieving

the SDGs and realising the commitment to ‘leave no one behind’. And it is more so, in the context of achieving the targets of Goal 8.

Role of CSOs in advancing Goal 8 in Bangladesh

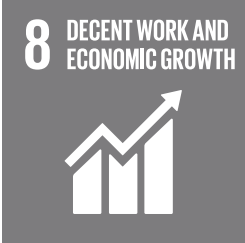
Although the primary responsibility for implementing the SDGs is vested on the states, the SDG aspiration can only be achieved if NSAs play their role. Both at the national and local levels, CSOs are key actors who can help translate the Global Goals into national priorities, and help materialise those priorities by acting in tandem with relevant government organisations.

The GoB has acknowledged the crucial role of CSOs in the implementation of SDGs in various policy documents. In its 7FYP (2016–20), the GoB has mentioned the important roles that the CSOs will need to play for the implementation of the SDGs (GED, 2015). The Plan recognises that partnerships and coordination with CSOs will be important, particularly in the context of efficient monitoring and evaluation of SDG implementation. As per the GoB’s whole of society approach, the government is to encourage wider participation of the non-government organisations (NGOs), development partners, private sector, media and CSOs in all activities in connection with the implementation of the SDGs. However, there is a need to design a framework to effectualise the GoB–NSA partnership on the ground.

A large number of CSOs and NGOs in Bangladesh are significantly involved in SDG-8-related activities. Some of the Platform members in this cohort are: Access Bangladesh Foundation, ActionAid Bangladesh, British Council, BRAC, CARE Bangladesh, JAAGO Foundation, Plan International in Bangladesh, Practical Action in Bangladesh and Save the Children in Bangladesh. There are also others, including specialised institutions, such as the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), which is the country’s sole labour institute that works on protecting workers’ rights. In addition to capacity building and supporting the trade unions, BILS also has training, advocacy and education programmes, and promotes decent work practices which concern some of the SDG targets directly.

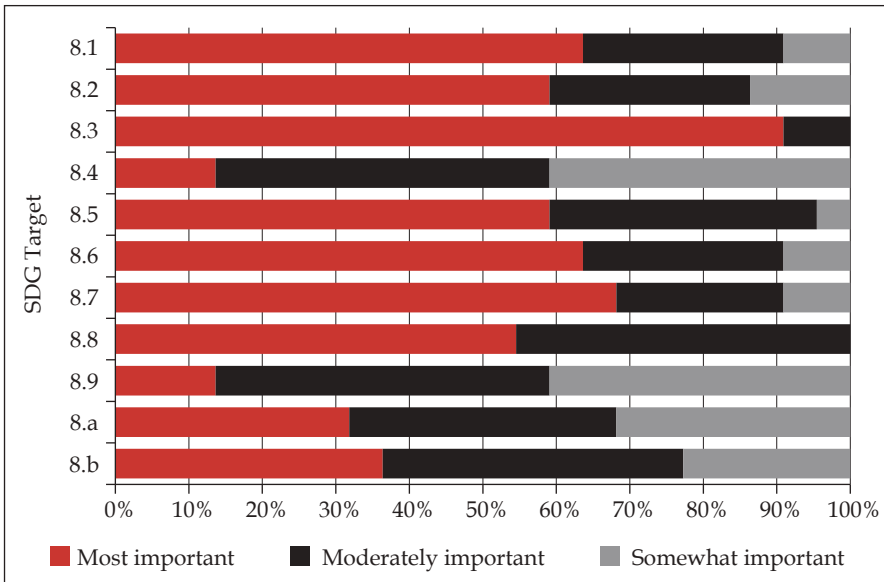
Of the SDG 8 targets, CSOs are involved more closely in activities that involve sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and addressing issues of youth unemployment in Bangladesh (Table 8). A quick survey was carried out to identify the priority targets in SDG 8, testing cognisance of the local context in Bangladesh. Members of the Citizen’s

Table 8: CSO involvement concerning SDG 8 targets

	More involved	Less involved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable economic growth • Full and productive employment • Youth unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher economic productivity • Resource efficiency in consumption and production • Protection of labour rights and promoting of safe working environment • Sustainable tourism • Child labour • Access to financial institutions

Source: Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh (2016).

Figure 1: SDG 8 priorities in Bangladesh: Results from survey



Source: Survey of Platform members.

Platform mentioned Targets 8.3, 8.7 and 8.1 as the three top most important targets. Figure 1 presents the results of the survey.

Civil society initiatives and projects focusing on SDG 8

As was noted earlier, a large number of CSOs in Bangladesh are involved in a host of activities that relate to various targets of SDG 8 to various extent. Here we present a snapshot of activities of a select set of organisations which are contributing to attainment of Goal 8 targets.

BRAC is one of the leading organisations, which has adopted a multidimensional but integrated approach in Bangladesh, and subsequently, in its global programmes to achieve the ambitious targets articulated in SDG 8. BRAC has seven programmes covering areas such as, graduation of the ultra-poor, employable skills for decent work, access to essential services for hard-to-reach population, mainstreaming of financial services to improve financial inclusion of the underserved, ultra-poor and marginalised communities, pro-poor urban development, universal access to healthcare, nutrition, and water and sanitation. BRAC also has two social enterprises that work on lifestyle products, dairy items and food products.

BRAC activities relate to both formal and informal segments of the economy. BRAC identifies occupations in demand, and imparts skills that are short in supply by working in partnership with market actors and employers. It offers technical and vocational training, enterprise and institution-based apprenticeships, and also entrepreneurship and enterprise development support, particularly for start-ups in the informal economy. Institute-based training focuses on classroom-based training. BRAC programmes work closely with large industries and government-funded projects. Its migration programme works to equip migrants with employable skills and also provides various support services to returnee migrants. Ultra-Poor Graduation and Microfinance Programmes of BRAC are geared to providing income-generating opportunities for the beneficiaries. BRAC Social Enterprises extend support to a large number of individuals – micro entrepreneurs, farmers and producers – in the form of tools and resources which help them to participate in the various economic activities, in a more productive way. It helps to establish vital links across value chains to raise market viability. Social mission of BRAC is to establish inclusive ecosystems which improve participation of both producers and consumers in the economic life. All these activities advance the cause of Goal 8.

Among others, ActionAid, BRAC, Swisscontact and Save the Children International focus on raising youth participation in the formal workforce and creating access to opportunities for the marginalised people. The focus is on

In Focus: Apprenticeship model modernised to serve school dropouts and youth

Implementing organisation: BRAC

SDG relevance: Targets 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6

In the backdrop of about 2.2 million young people entering the workforce every year, it is not surprising that 75 per cent business leaders in Bangladesh was of the opinion that providing decent opportunities is one of the most important challenges facing contemporary Bangladesh. At the same time, they felt that availability of skilled workers has emerged as a key concern. Youth unemployment rate is at 9 per cent, while youth underemployment rate is at 20 per cent. Providing appropriate skills to these young people is a task of utmost urgency.

BRAC has drawn insights from the traditional master-apprentice system and came up with the Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR) programme. This involves a six-month apprenticeship training, which equip school dropouts and young people (aged 14–18) from ultra-poor and disadvantaged families with technical, vocational and soft skills. These include financial literacy, customer relationship management and social awareness raising. Consequently, the trainees become work-ready through a combination of theoretical and on-the-job training. Cost of training is eliminated by placing pairs of young apprentices at the workplace of their trainers who are referred to as Master Crafts Persons.

As of December 2018, about 30,000 apprentices has graduated from the STAR programme. It has helped reduce early marriage by 62 per cent, and increase income and employment by six times. Since the model identifies specific skills that are short in supply and caters to occupations that are currently high in demand, the job placement rate among the participants is as high as 95 per cent. The project is conducted in line with the National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework – this ensures that all learners are officially certified. STAR proactively works to ensure equal opportunities and inclusion of groups that tend to be excluded from the labour market, e.g. persons with disabilities, transgender people, religious and ethnic minorities. Proper identification of the marginalised people is made possible through door-to-door survey and verification process. Thanks to STAR's impact, BRAC has now signed a partnership agreement with the GoB to deliver the programme nationwide. The government has included a formalised approach to the implementation of the jobs agenda; apprenticeship strategy is being pursued in accordance with this.

STAR graduates can take business incubation support from BRAC's another project, titled Promoting Business Incubation for Small Entrepreneurs. Graduates are also able to switch industry by learning any of the 25 demand-based trades through a fee-based three-month apprenticeship training under the guidance of a Master Crafts Person. Trained youth can upload their digital resume in Kormo, which is a digital job-matching platform which connect interested employers with prospective job-seekers.

skills development for pursuing income-generating activities, and promoting workplace safety guidelines.

In Focus: Education for youth empowerment

Implementing organisation: Save the Children International
SDG relevance: Targets 8.1, 8.2, 8.3

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world with about 165 million people. Over 50 per cent of the population is younger than 24 years. Studies show that while unemployment rate in Bangladesh is relatively low at 3.6 per cent, underemployment accounts for about one-fourth of the workforce in Bangladesh. Besides, many children and adolescents work in hazardous and unsafe conditions.

Save the Children International's Education for Youth Empowerment (EYE) programme works to empower adolescents and youth in Bangladesh by building their skills and capabilities. The programme also partners with businesses and employers to help youth and adolescents to transition to decent work and become active citizens. Young people who have dropped out of school and would otherwise have remained unemployed, are provided with employability skills training. Accelerated education component of EYE model has been approved and are being implemented by the GoB in 10 city corporations targetting 50,000 out-of-school children living in urban slums. Its vocational training component has been approved and are being implemented by the government in 90 upazilas targetting 25,000 rural adolescents and youths. Between 2016 and 2018, this model has reached 284,385 youths, out of which 80 per cent have been placed in decent jobs of various types. As of 2018, the model was able to reach 500 employers in the informal sector and 100 formal sector corporation.

Adolescents and youths from marginalised communities, who would have otherwise gotten into menial underpaid jobs, are provided with vocational skills training which improve opportunities for their decent employment and higher earnings. The programme has partnered with reputed private sector corporations which have agreed to enrol trained youth as apprentices in their organisations. In addition, youth are empowered through participation in various youth clubs, youth initiatives, and also through different transferable life skills.

The programme's sustainability has been ensured, thanks to active engagement of communities, employers and the youth. The EYE model has been adopted by the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) through piloting and scaling up of its Urban Slum Children Education Program and Pre-Vocational Training Program under Reaching Out-of-School Children project.

In Focus: Tech-based innovations in dairy value chain

Implementing organisation: CARE Bangladesh

SDG relevance: Targets 8.2, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8

With the maturing of the dairy market in Bangladesh, there has been a significant rise in the demand for better-quality milk from the milk-processing industry. However, catering to this growing market calls for improvements of the dairy value chain at various stages, including cow-rearing, availability and use of quality inputs, milk collection with digital fat-testing facilities, and a marketing process equipped with proper preservation system. Through these improvements in the dairy value chain, farmers are able to access high-value market and receive fair price for their products. The additional income helps them raise productivity of cattle rearing.

Supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Strengthening the Dairy Value Chain Project of CARE, Bangladesh works with about 52,697 households in 11 districts in north and northwest Bangladesh. The results have been remarkable – farmers' income has increased by 164 per cent, productivity has increased by 75 per cent, and milk consumption rose by 40 per cent. The project also created employment opportunities for men and women as livestock health workers, artificial inseminators, milk collectors, input shop-owners, grass sellers, milk by-product sellers and cattle-feed sellers.

CARE's Digital Fat Testing initiative helped the farmers to get fair market price and ensured access to high-quality input market. CARE connected the farmers with national-level input suppliers through a network of branded shops called *Krishi Utsho*, a CARE-owned franchised input supply system. This is a win-win solution for all the involved parties across the dairy value chain, as each is contributing to the business of the other.

Practical Action has brought innovation to the rural sector of the economy by creating decent employment opportunities and improving livelihood of rural and marginalised communities. Sustainability of the programme is being ensured through effective partnerships with key stakeholders.

In Focus: Reducing unemployment among rural youth through non-farm jute enterprise development

Implementing organisation: Practical Action in Bangladesh

SDG relevance: Targets 8.5, 8.6

As is well known, poverty in Bangladesh is predominantly concentrated in the rural areas. Many people in the rural areas have difficulty in meeting the minimum livelihood requirements and they are primarily dependent on

(Box contd.)

(Box contd.)

agriculture for jobs and income. Creating income-generating opportunities in rural areas is thus, important to attain the targets of SDG 8 in Bangladesh.

Practical Action has come up with an alternative non-farm solution to improve income of rural poor through creating employment opportunities in the jute sector. The project titled Poverty Reduction through Inclusive and Sustainable Markets is geared to enhancing skills and raising employability of workers and entrepreneurs involved in cottage and small enterprises. The idea is to enhance competitiveness of enterprise and income potentials of the involved stakeholders. Activities are concerned with both jute products and light engineering value chains. A modern jute fibre extraction machine – *Aashkol* – was developed as part of this project. The machine not only reduces associated labour costs by half and helps produce better-quality processed jute, but also contributes to eco-friendly waste management and operations relating to the packaging sector and jute fibre processing. The technology is less water-intensive, and is appropriate for drought-prone areas. The machine was developed locally for improving the threshing process; it is easy to maintain and upgrade.

As part of the project, government-run Technical Training Centres offer training to the rural youth in a number of trades, including industrial sewing and operations of mechanical, electrical and driving machines. In addition to this, an ICT-based job portal has been set up, which allows access to job-related information for over 3,000 young men and women, including the extremely poor and persons with disabilities. To ensure that persons with disabilities are an integrated part of the model, Practical Action has partnered with ADD International to help include the marginalised communities in entrepreneurship development and job creation programmes. This successful model has been adopted by government-run Technical Training Centres, Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Jute Diversification Promotion Centre, and government's agriculture hotline *Krishi Call Centre*.

ActionAid Bangladesh has been implementing three projects which are directly aligned with SDG 8 targets – Action for Impact, Bangladesh Firestarter Initiatives, and Sustainable and Responsible Action to Make Industries Care. These projects aim at providing productive economic opportunities and decent work for the young women and men through access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and entrepreneurship and employment opportunities. The projects are also geared to promote workers' rights and the decent work agenda, particularly for young women and men.

The British Council implements a project titled Active Citizen, which encourages inter-cultural dialogues towards social inclusiveness. It is

In Focus: Women's Café – An oasis for RMG workers

Implementing organisation: ActionAid Bangladesh

SDG relevance: Target 8.8

RMG workers are able to enjoy their rights only on a limited scale; they are hardly allowed space to raise their voice at workplace. Workers hardly get any time for recreational activities because of workplace and family responsibilities. Democratic space for workers is also gradually shrinking. This is also because they are often not aware of their rights and entitlements under the labour law. Absence of trade unions, lack of negotiation and communication skills also add to the situation.

For addressing the attendant challenges, Women's Café was established with the help of ActionAid Bangladesh and support from the European Union. This is an innovative approach to create a breathing space for female factory workers. ActionAid has established 25 such Women's Cafés in workers' slums and in areas adjacent to selected industrial areas. These also allow trade union members, women peer leaders and workers to mobilise in favour of the common goal of safeguarding workers' rights and securing entitlements of workers.

The café fosters a learning environment and offers a wide range of services. Female RMG workers come to the café to acquire knowledge and information-related to labour law and workers' rights, receive healthcare and legal aid, and share personal news with peers.

The plan is to reach a total of 10,000 workers over the three-year project period. For sustainability, when the project funding ended, the cafés were put to other uses through opening of retail and tailoring shops and beauty parlours for workers. Five hundred and fifty women peer leaders, trained through the project, are now able to use their skills to support the management of the cafés. Factory management has benefitted through reduction in number of disputes and increase in business productivity, while becoming more gender-sensitive and more aware of the needs of employee welfare.

working with partner organisations to train participants in skills which will help to bring social change. Another project is International Skills Partnership, which brings skills experts from different countries to train people who are endowed with TVET skills, particularly non-technical skills, including communication in English.

Access Bangladesh Foundation was able to create a remarkable example of how decent job opportunities could be opened for persons with disabilities. The jobs cater to specific needs of these persons and allow them to earn income to help them make a decent living.

In Focus: Giving voice to migration-related grievances**Implementing organisation:** British Council**SDG relevance:** Target 8.8

A large number of aspiring migrant workers in Bangladesh come back to the country empty-handed and are exploited by ill-motivated middlemen. In absence of any help to address their grievances, the expatriates become frustrated and demoralised.

British Council has supported various CSOs to establish Migration Grievance Management Committees (MGMCs). These committees have brought the involved stakeholders on a common platform. The committees deal with migration-related grievances and complaints at the local level, raise migration-related awareness among the population, and provide necessary information for aspiring migrants. Some of the district offices of the project's field-level partners are also acting as Migration Information Support Centres, engaging the MGMC members. The model has proven itself to be effective because of large local-level coverage, and thanks to the influence of the CSOs who run the MGMCs.

MGMCs receive capacity building support which strengthens its ability to protect labour rights and access to justice and needed information. In a survey conducted in September 2018 to assess the level of satisfaction among the service recipients of MGMCs grievance management support, over 95 per cent of the respondents were either 'highly satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the project outputs. The concept of this project is in the process of being handed over to the GoB.

In Focus: Young persons with disabilities to create opportunities for self-employment in undertaking green businesses**Implementing organisation:** Access Bangladesh Foundation**SDG relevance:** Targets 8.3, 8.5, 8.6

Persons with disabilities, more particularly those belonging to the youth cohort, face significant discrimination when it comes to accessing employment opportunities. Challenges lie on both the demand and the supply sides. Most conventional jobs are designed in a way that puts a person with disability at disadvantage. As a result, they are often unable to attain necessary skills and knowledge, and this is the reason why they often fail to compete successfully with other job applicants.

Inspired by the spirit of LNOB, Access Bangladesh, with support of the ILO and the Canadian Government, has created a model to engage unemployed youth with disabilities in self-employment programmes by engaging them in 'green

(Box contd.)

(Box contd.)

business' (mushroom cultivation, seed production, supply chain business, etc.). Mushroom cultivation is one of the few trades which is relatively more suitable for persons with disabilities (both male and female), since it is home-based, involve repetitive processes and require simple instructions. These jobs are thus suitable for persons with intellectual and mental disabilities, and can be learned easily. For example, to undertake mushroom cultivation, it requires limited funding and land. Also the production cycle is not very long, making it a venture with reasonable risk for persons with disabilities.

Project beneficiaries receive training through technical support from government's Mushroom Development Institute. A mushroom marketplace has been set up at the institute, thanks to the project's advocacy component-related activities. Each beneficiary receives direct support in the form of materials worth about USD 200 for setting up the business. The beneficiaries become part of cooperative societies and get access to organised wholesale and retail markets. They can earn about USD 60 to USD 180 per month. The Ministry of Agriculture invites the organisation to display its products in the annual agriculture fairs.

Engagement of the private sector in the 2030 Agenda

By all counts, the private sector is a key NSA in the implementation of the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda recognises that “private business activities, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation.” Indeed, not only SDG 8, but also SDG 9 on Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 17 relating to Partnerships for the Goals are some of the 2030 Agenda areas that call for direct engagement of the private sector.

Building dynamic, sustainable, innovative and people-centred economies, which promote decent work for all, is central to the 2030 Agenda, and is the key focus of Goal 8. And active engagement of the private sector is essential to realising this focus. Enterprises and companies are to contribute to sustainable development not only by creating job opportunities, but also by ensuring that these jobs respect workers' rights and decent work environment remains a priority concern of the business.

Role of the private sector in advancing Goal 8 in Bangladesh

In the context of implementing SDG 8, the private sector is expected to play an important role, more specifically, by leading the efforts at job creation and by ensuring that the jobs are decent. The private sector of Bangladesh will need to play the lead role by building competitive supply-side capacities and

Table 9: Resource needs of private sector in the context of the SDGs

Type of Support	Nature and Source
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government - International organisations - Private sector-initiated fund
Non-financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information infrastructure - Awareness build-up - Policy

Source: Rahman (2018).

through innovation and technological upgradation of enterprises. The sector is also expected to contribute by pursuing production practices that are worker-friendly, resource-efficient and sensitive to the environment. As illustrated in Table 9, appropriate support – both financial and non-financial – needs to be provided to the private sector actors, so that it is adequately equipped and appropriately capacitated to undertake this responsibility.

Private sector of Bangladesh accounts for the major share in the GDP and in investment in Bangladesh, holding about 80 per cent of the GDP and three-fourths of the total investment (BBS, n.d.). GoB-private sector partnership must be strengthened to attain Goal 8 targets through policy support, allocation of resources, creating conducive business environment and promotion of institutional good governance.

Employment in the private sector. Private sector plays the key role in employment creation in Bangladesh. Total number of enterprises as per census 2013 was 7.8 million, employing more than 24.5 million people in large, medium, small, micro and cottage enterprises (Ibrahim, 2016). Table 10 presents the share of employment in different sectors in 2013 and 2015, and the relevant projections for 2030.

Developing SMEs. The Industrial Policy 2016 formulated by the Ministry of Industries focuses on the importance of partnership between public and private sectors.⁴ The policy emphasises on the need for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to create sustainable and inclusive growth through generation of productive employment. The objectives are to

⁴While drafting the Industrial Policy, the government took technical support of the Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), a public-private dialogue platform supported by three leading business chambers in the country (i.e. Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI), Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCCI)).

Table 10: Employment generation and projections by sector

(Thousands)

Sector	2013	2015	2030 (Projection)
Agriculture and food-processing	1,910	2,146	5,143
RMG	2,997	3,367	8,070
ICT and software	76	85	204
Pharmaceuticals	79	88	212
Leather and leather products	91	102	245
Light engineering	408	458	1,098
Jute and jute goods	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Ibrahim (2016).

create new entrepreneurs, mainstream women in the industrialisation process and establish international market linkages. Availability of financing remains a concern for the SMEs, since a significant part of the required financing is geared towards the larger companies. Some of the banks and non-bank financial institutions are contributing to public-private partnerships (PPPs) by providing access to finance, at times through syndicated finance. In recent times, special focus has been put on SME financing and the sector has been put under close monitoring and supervision of the Bangladesh Bank. However, the scope and scale of such support is rather limited, and must be increased. Availability of financing for middle-range enterprises is often lacking (the so called missing middle). There is a need to address this gap on an urgent basis.

Skills development. Bangladesh needs to upgrade the contribution of human resources to economic growth, from 18 per cent to 25 per cent by 2021, and ensure that people receive the necessary trainings as envisaged under the National Technical Vocational Qualification Framework. Skills upgradation is central to raising the earnings and the living standard of the workers. Of particular importance here is, imparting training to people from the marginalised groups (women, transgender people, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups). A mismatch between available skills and market demands has emerged as a major concern in the discourse on SDG 8. Attaining the targets of Goal 8 in Bangladesh hinges critically on the success of efforts in narrowing down the prevailing demand-supply gaps.

Advancing sustainability and environment-friendly practices. The 10-Year Framework on Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) is a global framework for action to enhance international cooperation and accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and

production patterns in both developed and developing countries.⁵ Indeed, Target 8.4 of the 2030 Agenda calls for the implementation of the 10YFP, as it warrants improvements in global resource efficiency in consumption and production, and this is expected to help attain this target. While some countries have already established respective frameworks in view of this, Bangladesh initiated the consultation process in 2018, in order to develop its own 10YFP. Once this has been done, the framework will play an important role to support green growth and promote the cause of circular economy in Bangladesh (UNDP, 2018). This initiative also relates to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

It is worthwhile to note in this connection that, a number of companies in Bangladesh are actively working to advance green technology and lower the operational costs in view of this. Export-oriented enterprises, particularly in the RMG sector, often driven by global compliance requirements, are the pioneers in promoting sustainable production. According to the US Green Building Council, Bangladesh has the highest number of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green garment factories. A LEED-certified factory building consumes about 25–30 per cent less water and energy, and the buildings also face relatively low levels of structural hazards. At present, there are 67 green garment factories in Bangladesh, 13 of which are LEED Platinum; another 280 are in the pipeline for certification (Dhaka Tribune, 2018).

Ensuring workplace safety in the RMG sector. In the post-Rana Plaza period, the RMG industry has seen an increase in the number of initiatives seeking to improve workplace safety. There has been several important policy changes and significant remediation works have been carried out by the two buyers' platforms, the Accord and the Alliance. Relevant associations of the employers – Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) – also took important initiatives to improve working conditions at the enterprise levels. One example is the training programme, Essentials of Occupational Safety and Health, undertaken in partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and ILO. As part of this programme, 114 members of BGMEA and BKMEA were trained as master trainers; the programme also delivered occupational safety and health awareness training to managers and supervisors. Over 8 lakh factory workers were trained as part of this programme.

⁵For more information on the 10YFP, see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=1444&menu=35>

In Focus: Sudokkho

Implementing organisation: DBL Group

SDG relevance: Targets 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6

DBL Group could be cited as an example of a private sector organisation contributing towards the implementation of Goal 8. The group supplies quality apparels to globally renowned retailers, and has a skilled workforce of more than 35,000 employees. DBL works with international development partners, such as CARE, ILO and UNICEF for skills development of workers. Mention may be made of *Sudokkho*, which is a skills development programme for sewing operators. The programme caters to capacity building of factory-based training centres, and also supports the apparels industry to develop innovative and sustainable training modules. The purpose is to help employees acquire skills leading to employment in higher paying semi-skilled and skilled jobs. There are also a number of projects that focus on various issues, including women's health and hygiene, community empowerment and disability inclusion.

BUILD – a public-private platform. Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) is working as the research and advocacy support partner and secretariat for the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), which is headed by the Principal Secretary. PSDPCC has representation from 13 trade and businesses supporting ministries and five leading private sector bodies. BUILD receives advisory support from the Advisor to the Prime Minister for private sector and investment. It provides policy inputs to the government for private sector development and for creating a level playing field for investment. Its activities relate to five specific thematic areas: trade and investment, taxation, SME development, sustainability and green growth, and financial sector development. BUILD, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industries, organises dialogues on industrial policy that cover all the divisions of Bangladesh. The objective is to get feedbacks from relevant private sector players, practitioners and academicians. All the 690 quick win reforms suggested by BUILD have been accepted by the government; 35 per cent of the reforms have already been implemented. The reform initiatives advocated by BUILD have been contributing to promoting sustainable investment opportunities.

For example, the gazette circulated by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) stating that a fully (100 per cent) foreign-owned company can increase capital up to Tk. 100 crore without any permission of BSEC, was the result of BUILD's advocacy. This is a key reform to facilitate investment in Bangladesh and attract FDI. BUILD is now advocating for implementation of

this policy, not only for foreign investors, but also for local and joint venture investors, provided all requirements are met. This will help raise paid-up capital without harassment.

Mainstreaming the SDGs in private sector initiatives. The review process for preparing this report revealed lack of adequate information and data concerning the various aspects of the country's private sector. This is particularly true for the non-RMG segment of the private sector. The need to align corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities with the SDG 8 and the other relevant targets has also been revealed in the course of undertaking this exercise. This alignment will help in ensuring attainment of Goal 8.

6. Challenges and way forward

Concerted efforts on the part of the government, civil society and the private sector actors are needed for realising the SDGs in Bangladesh. Based on the multi-stakeholder consultations and the desk research conducted for this study, following are some of the recommendations related to SDG 8, which will hopefully advance the cause of implementing the goal in Bangladesh.

Creating a database of organisations, projects and activities. This review highlighted the need for a comprehensive understanding about 'who's doing what' in relation to the SDG 8 target areas. More information is needed to draw insights as regards what the CSOs and the private sector are doing at the local level. Such a database can strengthen effective collaboration between these important actors, and also raise efficacy of the partnership with the government. The database can help identify where emphasis will need to be put to attain SDG 8 targets as we move towards the 2030 timeline.

Advancing SDG 8 with a collective voice. Coordination and collaboration between the different actors working in SDG 8 areas in Bangladesh must be strengthened further. Collaboration between the government and NSAs must be taken advantage of to the fullest to attain the targets, by leveraging each other's strengths and through better coordination and collaboration. Till now, the scope has been rather limited and weak. There is a need for greater efforts to align private sector's CSR activities with Goal 8 targets.

Developing a framework for capturing NSA contribution. There is a need to develop a framework for improved reporting as regards contribution that NSAs are making to realise the Global Goals, including SDG 8. It is worth

investing in this endeavour not only to capture the role of the NSAs, but also to strengthen government–NSA partnership to achieve SDG 8.

Ensuring inclusion at the core of all interventions. CSOs working with the vulnerable groups should invest more time to identify effective interventions for raising income opportunities of the ultra-poor and the marginalised communities. They should be more closely involved to facilitate access of the left-behind groups to training and placement services at affordable costs. Development partners should assess market demand for the various models of training – be it on philanthropic or cost recovery basis, and leverage the more effective ones through targetted support to NSAs. The low rate of female labour force participation remains a concern in Bangladesh, and should be addressed not only by imparting training and placement services, but also by addressing the various cross-cutting issues. More efforts should be targetted at addressing violence against women at workplace and home, establishing care-giving facilities and ensuring safe mobility of women. Where feasible, state and NSAs should jointly explore how technology could help by way of better targetting and reaching the vulnerable groups. As implementing actors, CSOs are well-placed to bring grassroots experiences and evidences to advocate for greater inclusion and mainstreaming of the marginalised groups in national policies and action agendas.

Targetting and collaborating to streamline skills development efforts. CSOs should strengthen the process of consultation with the private sector prior to designing appropriate skills development initiatives. This will help reduce the prevailing demand–supply gaps in the job market. Allocation of more resources to enhance employability of the vulnerable people will be required. This will also help address the LNOB aspiration in the context of Goal 8. A robust national monitoring and auditing system will need to be put in place to assess progress. Maintaining a database of participants and their training records will facilitate targetted job placement.

Matching technological advancement and skills development. With the global advancement being made in technology-related areas, including artificial intelligence (AI)-equipped automated systems, the labour market has been undergoing changes at an unprecedented pace. Indeed, many traditional jobs are becoming, and will become, redundant. The ‘fourth industrial revolution’ is making it necessary that countries invest in creating a workforce that has the capacity to adjust to the new demands of the job market. Here, CSOs need to work with the government’s National Skills Development Authority to identify interventions and facilitate innovations in view of the

emerging job needs in the national and global job markets. A retooling of the labour force in this backdrop has emerged as an urgency. In this regard, new opportunities in e-commerce, business process outsourcing and sustainable tourism should be properly explored. Recycling industries and enterprises that follow eco-friendly practices will need to be promoted through policies and incentives.

Address problems concerning returnee workers and internal climate-induced migrants. To ensure that no one is left behind, both returnee and internal migrants should be considered with due importance in national strategies. Some organisations have started to work on reintegration of returnee migrant workers; some of the female returnees are survivors of violence and need special care. CSOs and the government should strengthen efforts to promote alternative work opportunities for those at risk of environmental hazards and disasters.

Ensuring decent work. The Decent Work Agenda in Bangladesh is led by the ILO and the tripartite constituents (the government, workers' organisations and employers' organisations) under the Decent Work Country Programme (2017–2020). Both employers and worker representatives have important roles to play to ensure that workers' rights are respected and enforced. Efforts should be taken to improve workers' well-being, both at the workplace and beyond. Sectors with highest concentration of female workers, such as the RMG, need to be monitored closely to ensure that women's rights, including health rights, are adequately secured.

Customising and mainstreaming financial instruments to enhance financial inclusion. Indicators related to SDG Target 8.10 show that some progress has been made as regards the number of bank branches and ATMs. However, there is a need to have a better understanding as regards how these services are being accessed by different socio-economic groups in the country. Innovative financial services, such as intelligent microfinance products and services (such as bKash), must be incentivised. There is a need for greater focus on how to further mainstream innovative financial instruments through supportive policies and incentives.

Creating favourable business climate to attract more investment and promote job creation. Business climate is an important factor, which induces private sector to go for investment, which in turn, creates jobs. Government should acknowledge that potential of the private sector and the CSOs will be realised only when there is a supportive business environment. Examples

cited in the preceding sections show that the role of private sector and NGOs/CSOs could be highly complementary and mutually strengthening in creating decent jobs in the market. This partnership can be more effective when government policies are supportive. There is a need for effective GoB-private sector-NGOs/CSOs triangulation to attain the targets of Goal 8 in Bangladesh.

Protection of intellectual property rights is necessary for innovation.

In going forward, government must ensure that appropriate laws and regulations are put in place to protect intellectual property rights. As Bangladesh comes out of the LDC status and goes ahead in its middle-income journey, these issues will become important for attracting FDI and also for global market access. Success of Bangladesh's efforts at economic growth and job creation will hinge on its ability to ensure compliance and implement obligations with respect to intellectual rights and other obligations. Failure here will have adverse implications on attaining Goal 8 targets. The GoB should align the domestic laws with international laws in view of this, and private sector should also be ready to play its part in this regard.

References

- BBS. (2018). *Labour Force Survey 2016-17*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/LatestReports/LFS_2016-17.pdf
- BBS. (n.d.). *GDP of Bangladesh*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <http://www.bbs.gov.bd/site/page/dc2bc6ce-7080-48b3-9a04-73cec782d0df/->
- Bhattacharya, D. (2018). The Uncomfortable Truth: Recent Economic Growth Performance of Bangladesh. Presented at the *Abdul Ghafur Memorial Lecture 2018*, organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), held on 4 November, in Dhaka. Available at: https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Abdul-Ghafur-Memorial-Lecture-2018_The-Uncomfortable-Truth-Recent-Economic-Growth-Performance.pdf
- Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. (2016). *CSOs in SDG Implementation in Bangladesh*. Citizen's Platform Brief No. 4. Dhaka: Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. Available at: https://bdplatform4sdgs.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/policy-brief-4-CSOs-in-SDG-Implementation_workshop-outcome.pdf
- Democracy Development Programme. (2016). *The Roles of Civil Society in Localising the Sustainable Development Goals*. Position paper prepared for the African Civil Society Circle. Available at: https://www.gppi.net/media/KAS_CSO_2016_Localizing_SDGs.pdf
- Dhaka Tribune. (2018, March 2). Bangladesh has the most green RMG factories. Available at: <http://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2018/03/02/bangladesh-green-rmg-factories/>
- Fukuda-Parr, S. and Hegstad, T. S. (2018). *'Leave No One Behind' as a Site of Contestation and Reinterpretation*. CDP Background Paper No. 47. ST/ESA/2018/CDP/47. New York: Committee for Development Policy (CDP), United Nations (UN). Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/post/CDP-bp-2018-47.pdf>
- GED. (2015). *Seventh Five Year Plan (FY2016 - FY2020): Accelerating Growth, Empowering Citizens*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning

Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/aee61c03_3c11_4e89_9f30_d79639595c67/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf

GED. (2017). *Bangladesh Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2017: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World*. A report on progress of SDGs implementation of Bangladesh submitted to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) of the United Nations (UN). Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://www.sdq.gov.bd/public/img/upload/resources/5d39814178ea7_doc_file.pdf

GED. (2018). *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20(1).pdf)

Ibrahim, A. (2016). "The Role of Private Sector in Implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh." Presented at the dialogue on *Role of Private Sector in SDG Implementation*, organised by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) and Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, held on 2 October, in Dhaka. Available at: <https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Role-of-Private-Sector-in-SDGs-Implementation.pdf>

Khatun, F. (2019, 31 March). How much has the youth gained from growth? *The Daily Observer*. Available at: <https://cpd.org.bd/how-much-has-the-youth-gained-from-growth-fahmida-khatun-2/>

Oxfam and Development Finance International. (2018). *The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2018*. Joint report prepared by the Oxfam and the Development Finance International. Oxford: Oxfam GB. Available at: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620553/rr-commitment-reducing-inequality-index-2018-091018-en.pdf>

Rahman, M. (2018). "Realising the Demographic Dividend in Bangladesh: Promoting Female Labour Force Participation." Presentation made at the dialogue on *Promoting Female Employment in Bangladesh for Realising Demographic Dividends*, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), held on 9 May, in Dhaka. Available at: <https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/>

uploads/2018/05/Presentation-Realising-the-Demographic-Dividend-in-Bangladesh-Promoting-Female-Labour-Force-Participation.pdf

World Bank. (2018). *Jobless Growth? South Asia Economic Focus* (Spring 2018). Washington, D. C.: World Bank Group. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/825921524822907777/pdf/125779-PUB-PUBLIC.pdf>

UNDP. (2018, 13 December). *Roadmap for responsible consumption and production in 10 years*. Press release. Dhaka: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh Office. Available at: http://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/11/25/SDG12_roadmap.html

UNESCAP. (2018). *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in South Asia: Key Policy Priorities and Implementation Challenges*. New Delhi: South and South-West Asia Office, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Available at: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/UNESCAP%20-%20SRO-SSWA%20SDG%20Report_Sep2018.pdf

Reducing Inequality in a High-Growth Scenario (SDG 10)



Anchor organisation

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)

Co-anchor organisation

Oxfam in Bangladesh

Associate organisations

Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)

Avijan

Bandhu Social Welfare Society

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum (BIPF)

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP)

CARE Bangladesh

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)

Dhrubotara Youth Development Foundation (DYDF)

JAAGO Foundation

Nagorik Uddyog (NU)

Naripokkho

Steps Towards Development (Steps)

Lead authors

Shoeib Shazzad Khan, Senior Coordinator, Programme, and
Rezwan-Ul-Alam, PhD, Director, Knowledge Management, MJF

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report is an output of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The Goal-Group 10 of the Platform prepared this report to provide a critical view on the progress made under SDG 10 – Reducing Inequalities – from the perspective of non-state actors, including key implementation challenges and relevant recommendations for heading forward.

The authors are especially grateful to Mahfuza Akter Mala, Senior Programme Officer, Oxfam in Bangladesh, Afrina Binth-A Ashraf, Manager-Program, ASF, Banani Biswas, General Secretary, Avijan, Jana Goswami, Director, Advocacy, BMP, Umme Farhana Zarif Kanta, Director - Policy Advocacy & Human Rights, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Ahmad Sadequul Amin, former Coordinator - Agriculture & Value Chain, CARE Bangladesh, Md Asaduzzaman, Head, Economic Development Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Afrin Sultana Chowdhury, Advisor, Programme Development and Resource Mobilisation, JAAGO Foundation, Monjurul Islam, Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, Nagorik Uddyog, Samia Afrin, Project Director, Naripokkho, Chandan Kumer Laheri, Programme Coordinator, Steps, Nazmul Haque Ome, National Affairs Secretary, DYDF, and Sanjeeb Drong, General Secretary, BIPF, for providing valuable inputs for this report.

The authors also deeply acknowledge the continued guidance of Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, MJF and Core Group Member of the Platform in designing the structure and finally editing the report.

Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, CPD and Core Group Member of the Platform, provided detailed review and feedback on the draft report. The authors are immensely grateful to him. Thanks are also due to

Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues from CPD, the Secretariat of the Platform for their support and cooperation throughout the report preparation process.

The authors hope that this report will be useful to those who are committed towards implementing the agendas of SDG 10 in Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

In recent times, issues of inequality, of both income and wealth, have been attracting heightened attention of both development practitioners and policymakers. At the same time, the discourse on reducing the inequalities and the quest for solutions in this regard, have also gained traction. In this backdrop, the aspiration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reduce inequality, in all forms, within and across countries, as articulated in the Goal 10, has emerged as a key concern in the context of attaining the SDGs by 2030. The goal also urges all governments to pursue proactive policies and undertake appropriate measures to reduce inequality and ensure inclusion of all citizens in economic and societal development, regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or other status. Indeed, attaining the SDG aspiration of *leave no one behind* (LNOB) critically hinges on the attainment of the targets of Goal 10. In the backdrop of the prevailing high-growth scenario of Bangladesh of eight-plus-per-cent annual growth of gross domestic product (GDP), but with rising income and wealth inequality, Bangladesh's progress in Goal 10 areas demands special attention. This report reviews the state of inequality in Bangladesh, in its various dimensions, and in this connection, examines the progress Bangladesh has made in the first four years of SDG implementation. In view of this, the paper examines the role of the non-state actors (NSAs) and GO-NGO (government-non-government organisation) partnerships in this regard. It looks at the progress being made with regard to the various targets of Goal 10, and offers insights on how to move forward to achieve the targets by 2030. With their extensive reach and capacity to access the marginalised groups, the NSAs in Bangladesh are playing a critically important role in complementing the work being carried out by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) towards a more inclusive economy and society in light of the SDG 10. As this report will testify, Bangladesh's NSAs, including the NGOs, private sector, civil society and community groups, have been making significant contribution to attain the various targets of Goal 10, and if Bangladesh is to achieve the targets by 2030, their future contribution will be very important.

Background

SDG 10 commits countries to take concrete actions to reduce income inequality, fight social, political and economic exclusion, confront discrimination, and address inequalities in opportunities and outcomes. The goal urges the national governments to put in place policies, both at macro and micro levels, that would reduce inequalities in all its forms, and

calls upon the international community to undertake reforms in global governance to help countries attain the targets. As is known, SDG 10 includes seven targets, four of which address inequality within countries, and three address inequality across countries. In addition, there are three targets which are means of implementation. Of the 11 associated indicators, eight are quantifiable, while the rest three are not.

Goal 10 is a cross-cutting aspiration; according to the World Bank, there are 60 targets across the various SDGs that are directly or indirectly linked to reducing inequality (World Bank, n.d.a). Of the 14 international instruments governing various aspects of human rights, the Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) has found SDG 10 to have links to nine (OHCHR, n.d.). This indicates that a comprehensive and synergistic approach will be needed, if Goal 10 targets are to be attained by 2030.

It is pertinent to recall here that, according to Article 19 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, removing social and economic inequality through equitable wealth distribution among citizens, and ensuring equal opportunity and participation of women in all spheres of national life, are constitutional obligations of the Bangladesh state (GoB, n.d.). There is a general agreement among the policymakers and development practitioners that, high levels of inequalities is not only morally unacceptable, it can also have adverse implications on future economic growth by undermining the fight against poverty and through rising social tension. In various policy pronouncements and documents, successive governments in Bangladesh, since independence, have set the target of reducing inequality as a major objective of the country's development plans and programmes. However, this goal has been only partially achieved. In the Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP) of Bangladesh (2016–2020), the government has demonstrated sensitivity to the issue of increasing income inequality by identifying inequality reduction as a key challenge confronting the country. The Plan reiterates the government's commitment to reverse the rising trend of inequality through policies, institutions and programmes that are geared towards reducing the existing income gap among the various groups (GED, 2015b). However, the fact remains that income inequality has been on a rise during the Plan period. According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of 2013, the Gini coefficient of income inequality was 0.45; according to HIES 2016, it has risen to 0.48.¹ This rising trend has also been acknowledged in GoB's SDGs

¹Gini coefficient is a measure to capture income or wealth inequality on a scale of 0 to 1, in which 1 represents perfect inequality and 0 signifies perfect equality.

Progress Report 2018 (GED, 2018b). Indeed, during the 2010–16 period, income inequality has also manifested itself in the growing rural–urban divide. This state of affairs has been characterised as both ‘disquieting and overwhelming’ in a recent report by the think tank Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).²

It needs to be appreciated that, over the past years, Bangladesh has been able to significantly reduce the share of population living below the national poverty line and hardcore poverty line. Both government policies and NSAs have played an important role in this. According to the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Inclusive Development Index (IDI) 2018, Bangladesh ranked 34th among 74 emerging economies; its record is better than that of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in South Asia (WEF, 2018). The IDI measures countries’ economic performance based on eleven dimensions, in addition to the GDP. It has three pillars: growth and development, inclusion and intergenerational equity. As per the report, on a scale of one to seven, Bangladesh scored 3.98 in the IDI, with one being the worst and seven being the best (The Daily Star, 2018b). On the other hand, a recent global report ranked Bangladesh at 148th among 157 countries in the Global Index 2018 of Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) (Oxfam and Development Finance International, 2018). According to the World Bank, Bangladesh is one of the 34 countries where income growth of the poorest was slower than the national average for the period 2009–2014 (World Bank, n.d.b). On the contrary, Bangladesh topped the list of countries in 2018 that saw the fastest growth in the number of ultra-net-worth people, with the number rising by 17.3 per cent between 2012 and 2017 (Wealth-X, 2018). As a media commentator has rightly observed: “real inequality is likely to be worse because the richest in our society are reluctant to reveal their actual wealth and income” (Ahasan, 2018). As per the Leave No One Behind Index 2018 published by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Bangladesh’s overall score has been defined as only ‘partially ready’ in terms of data, policy and finance. Reducing vulnerability and strengthening resilience in the face of disaster and climate change will add to the challenges Bangladesh will be facing in future (ODI, 2018).

This state of affairs underscores the need for accelerated and coordinated actions to reduce income inequality in the country, and obligates both state and NSAs to renew their efforts in this context.

²See, CPD (2018b).

Objective, methodology and scope

The broad objective of this report is to capture the manifold activities and diverse initiatives that Bangladesh's NSAs, including NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector have been undertaking towards attainment of the various SDG 10 targets. It also highlights the lessons learned and challenges faced in this context. Activities carried out by the NSAs pertaining to Goal 10 are indeed varied. While many NGOs work across targets, some focus particularly on issues that concern the marginalised groups in the society. Rights-based CSOs are more focused on Targets 10.2, 10.3 and 10.7. The private sector of Bangladesh has been making an important contribution by creating jobs and by undertaking income-augmenting activities. Advocacy groups and think tanks are pursuing the cause of partnership in various global fora. This report draws on what members of Goal-Group 10, set up on the initiative of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, have been doing in Goal 10 areas. The Goal-Group members include some of the most active NGOs in the country who are involved in Goal-10-related activities. Their rich experience in Goal 10 areas serve as the basis of this report. The role of other NSAs, including the private sector, community groups and CSOs have also been captured to the extent possible. However, understandably, not all activities, pursued by all the involved players, could have been captured in this report. The actual contribution of NSAs is indeed, much richer and more diverse.

A consultation workshop was held with participation of Goal-Group members tasked to prepare this report. The purpose was to identify the modalities to collate the needed information. An agreed format for reporting by the NGOs was developed, which included thematic backgrounds, relevant indicators, programmatic engagements, population covered, achievements, learnings, challenges, case stories, policy gaps and recommendations for attaining the targets by 2030.³ The anchor organisation, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), also consulted pertinent secondary sources prepared by the GoB, CSOs, besides United Nations (UN) documents concerning various aspects of implementation of the SDG 10.

³Reports were received from Nagorik Uddyog (NU), Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP), Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), Avijan and Indigenous Peoples Development Society (IPDS).

2. Priorities of Bangladesh for SDG 10

It needs to be conceded that reduction of inequalities and attainment of Goal 10 will largely hinge on public policies and expenditures. NSAs can only complement those efforts. Bangladesh has a long way to go if inequality is to be reduced in line with SDG aspirations. As was noted above, SDG 10 is focused on reducing inequality within and among countries, underpinned by the spirit of LNOB. Reducing inequality targets is to be geared to progressively achieving and sustaining income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate which is higher than the national average. This would eventually raise the share of bottom 40 per cent in the GDP. SDG 10 also sets the target of empowering the marginalised and promoting social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of the background.

As was noted, while Bangladesh's progress in terms of economic growth has been impressive, this has not been the case concerning reduction of income inequality. Indeed, this has gone up, as was mentioned earlier. According to HIES 2016, income share of the poorest 5 per cent of the country's population was 0.23 per cent in the total income, a sharp fall from that of 2010 (0.78 per cent). In contrast, the share of income for the richest 5 per cent rose to 27.99 per cent, up from 24.6 per cent in 2010 (Ahasan, 2018). The poorest 10 per cent of the population received 1.01 per cent of the total national income in 2016; this was 2 per cent in 2010. In comparison, the richest 10 per cent of the population accounted for 38.16 per cent of the national income in 2016; this was 35.84 per cent in 2010 (The Daily Star, 2018a). Along with this, wealth inequality has also been on the rise. Indeed, the situation has been far worse in this case. According to CPD estimates, wealth inequality in terms of Gini coefficient stood at a staggering 0.74, whereas according to HIES 2016, the Gini coefficient for income inequality was 0.48 (Ahasan, 2018). It is generally felt that, when the Gini coefficient is higher than 0.5, a country could be in the danger zone with higher risk of social unrest. Bangladesh is near to this threshold.

At present, more than 35 million people live under the poverty line in Bangladesh, a country of about 168 million people; the number of people living below the extreme poverty line is about 15 million. It is apprehended that the rising income inequality could make future efforts at reducing poverty increasingly difficult. This is underpinned by the difference in what people earn and inherit, but more fundamentally, this originates from inequality in access to opportunities and unequal sharing of resources. Sobhan (2010) argues that the sources of structural injustice will need to be addressed head on, if inequality is to be reduced. This injustice is rooted in unequal

access to assets, unequal participation in the markets, unequal access to human development and unjust governance (Sobhan, 2010). Greater access to economic and social opportunities, and a more meaningful participation in the political process that supports this, are crucial to reverse these disturbing trends. Factors that shape and perpetuate unequal privileges and neglect welfare of the poor and the disadvantaged groups ought to be addressed through an effective GO-NSA partnership. The emerging gaps in opportunities and accesses need to be narrowed through targeted measures, if SDG 10 is to be attained in Bangladesh by 2030 (Mujeri, 2018).

A major problem in Bangladesh is the low level of public expenditure on human development. Public expenditure on education is a mere 2.4 per cent of the GDP. Indeed, some developing countries, such as Argentina and South Africa spend 6 per cent of their respective GDPs on education, in line with what has been suggested by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden and Norway spend even higher amount on education (6.8 per cent and 6.5 per cent of GDP, respectively). Countries in the region, such as Malaysia and Indonesia spend 5.8 per cent and 4.6 per cent of respective GDPs on education. Public expenditure in Bangladesh on health is similarly low – at only 1.1 per cent of the GDP. Researchers have also drawn attention to issues of both quality and equity in the context of public spending on health and education in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2014). Lack of access in this regard not only perpetuates inequality, but also puts the attainment of SDGs 1 and 2 (which respectively concern elimination of poverty and hunger) under threat.

It is also to be noted that, public spending on social protection in Bangladesh is low, at only 2.2 per cent of the GDP; if civil service pensions are excluded, the share comes down to a mere 1.6 per cent of the GDP. Furthermore, there are serious concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the spending. It is generally found that, countries with high social security expenditure tend to have more equitable and inclusive societies. For example, in some of the Scandinavian countries in Europe, spending on social security is significantly higher, which has helped establish a more equitable and just society in those countries. On average, European countries spend 12–19 per cent of respective GDPs on social protection, mainly in the form of income transfers to the low-income and vulnerable families (Ahmed, 2014). Bangladesh will have to go a long way to reverse the current situation.

In Bangladesh, the government has assigned the General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission to lead the efforts concerning Target 10.1.

The idea is to progressively increase and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.⁴ GED is also the lead agency for Target 10.4, which relates to adopt policies, particularly fiscal, wage and social protection policies, which will enable progressive move towards a more equitable society.

Local Government Division (LGD) has been assigned as the lead agency for Goal 10.2, which relates to empowering and promoting social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin or religion by 2030. Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is the lead for Goal 10.7, tasked to ensure protection of migrant workers' human and labour rights. In this connection, domestic policies relating to the vulnerable groups and their inclusion in social and economic spheres and global policies to safeguard and secure the interests of the migrant workers, will play an important role in attaining the relevant targets.

The government has estimated that, between 2017 and 2030, Bangladesh will need an additional amount of Tk. 196.4 billion (USD 1.97 billion) over each five-year planning cycle, to implement various activities to attain SDG 10.

Indeed, budget for FY2018-19 has allocated only 1.6 per cent of the GDP for social safety net programmes (barring pension). According to CPD, total allocation for pension accounts for 35 per cent of the total social protection budget; per capita allocation for pension continues to dwarf that of all other social protection programmes (CPD, 2018a). All considered, this amount is well below what has been mentioned in the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) prepared by the GED; according to the NSSS, the budget for social protection was planned to increase, taking it up to 3 per cent of the GDP by the end of the 7FYP (i.e. FY2019-20).⁵

According to Bangladesh Health Financing Profile 2017 of the World Health Organization (WHO), the out-of-pocket expenditure on health in Bangladesh is 71.82 per cent of the GDP as against that of government expenditure (only 0.39 per cent) (WHO, 2018). This clearly indicates the need for higher domestic

⁴This is the Palma ratio, which has been chosen as an SDG indicator to monitor reduction of inequality.

⁵When the pension schemes are excluded from this allocated budget, allocation for the marginalised stands at Tk. 42,217 crore (Tk. 64,656 crore - Tk. 22,439 crore). However, there are other allocations for marginalised communities (for reducing vulnerability (Tk. 5,591 crore) and for housing (Tk. 4,963 crore)). Consequently, total allocation amount for the marginalised communities comes to Tk. 52,771 crore, which is about 11.35 per cent of the total budget.

resource allocation to achieve the targets of SDG 10. It is true that budgetary allocation for health in nominal terms has been on the rise for recent years. However, the share stands at only 0.9 per cent of the GDP, the lowest among the 21 countries of South, Southeast and Southwest Asia, for which data was collected (Dhaka Tribune, 2018b). To compare, the WHO guideline suggests allocation of 4–5 per cent of the GDP for health purposes (Daily Sun, 2018). In view of the escalating medical costs, lack of access to health services remains an everyday reality for many citizens, particularly for the low-income groups. Indeed, health emergency is a major cause of poverty for many families. And also, a large part of inequality in Bangladesh originates from the lack of access to affordable health services.

In addressing the growing inequality and disparity, GoB has made a number of commitments in implementing policies and programmes which were formulated after the adoption of SDGs in 2015. The government has been pursuing a pro-poor development strategy, as pronounced in key policy documents. The strategy aspires to blend promotion of economic growth with reduction of poverty and inequality. Policies that aim to reduce inequality include: employment generation and enhancement of labour productivity and wages; development of human capital, i.e. education and training, health and nutrition, with greater access for poor; development of lagging regions; increased spending on social protection and improving its effectiveness; expansion of microcredits and loans to small and medium enterprises (SMEs); emphasis on agriculture and rural development; undertaking tax reforms and focusing on progressive personal income taxation.

The earlier mentioned NSSS (2015) is designed to address the trinity of challenges: poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation (GED, 2015a). Implementation of the strategy is expected to help lower income inequality and contribute to higher growth by strengthening human development. The government has also taken special programmes for many marginalised communities. In the budget for FY2018-19, the government has significantly increased the volume and coverage of the social safety net. The allocation for this is 2.55 per cent of the GDP (Dhaka Tribune, 2018a). This emphasis has continued in the budget for FY2019-20 as well. Indeed, in a welcome move, an allowance for persons with disabilities has been newly introduced in the budget for FY2019-20 (The Daily Star, 2019). To generate more job opportunities, the government has recognised the central role that will need to be played by the private sector of the country (Daily Sun, 2019). The spectacular successes of readymade garments (RMG) sector contributing more than four-fifths of the country's total export is a well-known example in this regard (Dhaka Tribune, 2017).

Measurement of inequality is difficult in absence of relevant national-level disaggregated data. Hence, the GoB has to do a lot more to address the data deficit in connection with Goal 10. It may be mentioned here that, Bangladesh has national data for Indicators 10.1.1 and 10.4.1, while metadata for 10.2.1 and 10.3.1 are yet to be finalised (GED, 2018a). For example, Target 10.1 requires specific data and appropriate tool to measure the progress in reducing inequality. Targets from 10.2 to 10.7 call for generation of qualitative data to measure progress: inclusion of marginalised and excluded communities, enactment of pro-equality laws and policies, strengthening of monitoring system, enhancement of voices of the poor. In absence of real time data, monitoring progress at disaggregated levels has become difficult. Data related to Goal 10 will have to be generated on a regular basis to measure and monitor progress as regards the various targets. The government must invest the required resources in this regard.

3. Engagement of NSAs in delivering Goal 10

The NSAs, particularly the NGOs, have an important role to play in Bangladesh's way of attaining the aspirations reflected in Goal 10. Bangladesh's NSAs have been making important contribution in this regard through advocacy and awareness-raising programmes, by holding concerned authorities accountable and demanding greater transparency, and by being actively involved in activities that concern and advance the interests of the marginalised groups in particular. Bangladesh's development partners are supporting the NGOs and other actors in this regard. However, more focused policies and programmes which will have relatively higher impact on reducing inequality need to be identified. Better governance, well-run institutions, effective measures against transfer of income and wealth in the form of rent seeking, corruption in public procurement and spending, measures to combat illegal land-grabbing and tackling of corruption in the delivery of public services will be needed to address the root causes of inequality in Bangladesh (GED, 2018b).

The NSAs in Bangladesh have been contributing to attain Goal 10 targets, as was noted earlier, through a host of avenues. Advocacy and awareness-raising role of the NGOs and CSOs is pertinent to attract the attention of policymakers to the issues of inequality. They are contributing by ensuring that the government is held accountable for its policies and actions towards reducing inequality and ensuring distributive justice. The actions and initiatives in this connection are informed by three considerations: responsibility, answerability and enforceability. Responsibility entails that those in

positions of authority have clearly defined duties and performance standards which enable a transparent and objective assessment of their behaviour. Answerability demands that public officials and institutions present logical justifications for their actions and decisions to those whose interests are affected, particularly the marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society. Enforceability requires that public institutions and government officials abide by established standards, and enforce rule of law, and when needed, relevant authorities ensure that proper corrective and remedial actions are taken to mitigate grievances and address violations of laws and regulations. The three elements of accountability are not mutually exclusive, but interlinked. It is thus very important, that the roles and responsibilities of the government agencies are clearly defined, particularly in terms of the answerability and enforceability dimensions concerning the SDG 10 (Mujeri, 2018), since it is the most vulnerable that suffer the most because of lack of proper attention and actions. The LNOB aspirations, in relation to Goal 10, can only be attained if the concerned government bodies are serious in reaching the marginalised in the context of Goal 10. The NGOs and other NSAs in Bangladesh are working with the government, and independently, in view of this.

The following provides a snapshot of the multidimensional activities of some of the NGOs (who were members of Goal-Group for SDG 10 and were involved in preparing this report), which are geared particularly towards addressing the various aspects of SDG 10.

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)

MJF, through its partner organisations, targets the most marginalised people to assist them to access various services and improve their lives. It has successfully created conditions that have empowered people, reduced discrimination and inequality, and helped build confidence, so that they can speak out against exploitation and abuse. Services provided by MJF include health, education and legal assistance. Thousands of young girls have been saved from early marriage through its interventions. In communities where its partner organisations are working, discrimination and inequality has reduced at family and society level. Children from indigenous communities have been able to access education in their mother tongue, *dalit* (untouchable) and physically challenged children have been enrolled in mainstream education system. In the MJF project areas, it has been possible to effectively implement accountability at the local-level institutions offering various services. This way, MJF is contributing to address access deficits with a view to creating a more equitable and just society in Bangladesh.

Advocacy activities of MJF

- Drafting and advocacy for comprehensive land laws
- Implementation of disability law/rules
- Adoption of Anti-Discrimination Act
- Adoption of sign language in the legal framework
- Land commission for plain-land *adivasis* (indigenous communities)
- Amendment of fisheries laws
- Trust of Neuro Developmental under Disability Act

Striking anecdotes

“This is the first in the history of Keshobpur uazila that dalit students have enrolled in the higher studies at the University of Dhaka” – Arjun Das, Keshobpur, Jessore

“A piece of land means something great to me! I can earn my own living and can feed my three sons!” – Halima, Depukhali, Debhata, Satkhira

“Being a person with disability is not a problem for me. I have got training and now I am running my own business. I am self-dependent.” – Lucky, Atapara, Bogra

“Getting out of a brothel is like finding a way to the heaven! I feel like a free bird now!” – Lima, Bagerhat brothel

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)

The core programmes and projects of DAM are microfinance, beggar rehabilitation, Enhancing Resources and Increasing Capacities of Poor Households towards Elimination of their Poverty (ENRICH), Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) and Shamerto (Sustainable Skill and Employment in Small Scale Agro-Food Processing). The target population of these programmes and projects are people living in poverty, minorities groups and new migrants in urban areas, environmental migrants and people with disabilities. By creating opportunities to enhance income of the marginalised groups, DAM is contributing to attain a number of Goal 10 targets.

Bandhu Social Welfare Society

Key activities of Bandhu Social Welfare Society relate to conducting policy advocacy, offering legal support, networking, implementing education

A story

“For the last two years, I have been eagerly trying to get admission in class VIII under Open University. I was refused several times due to my *gender identity*! I felt discriminated by our education system, since there are options to disclose oneself as of different gender. After starting job with Bandhu, one of my colleagues visited Open University at Lalbagh with me. After a long conversation, finally they were motivated, and allowed me to get admission in class VIII in their programme. Now I am very happy, and feeling empowered as getting to be part of mainstream education!”

programmes with students, pursuing communication with the government, media advocacy and imparting skills to marginalised communities, such as *hijras* and third gender. The organisation works with 35 community-based organisations (CBOs) of hijra/third gender in 23 districts, addressing at least 1,500 people. It is actively involved in advancing the interests of all hijra/third gender community people through targetted policy advocacy.

Nagorik Uddyog (NU)

NU addresses rights of the *dalits*, a caste-based and excluded group in Bangladesh. NU facilitates the Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement, spearheaded by the members of dalit communities. Thanks to its activities, there is greater awareness now about dalit issues. At both national and local levels, budgetary allocation for the dalit communities has seen some rise in recent times. However, for an inclusive society, much more will need to be done to strengthen the voice of those who are left behind.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP)

A major focus of BMP is to conduct policy advocacy for women workers in various occupations, including garments factories, brickfields, rice mills and road construction. BMP also works with dalit and *harijan* (a scheduled caste) women to help them claim their rights and entitlements. BMP organises national- and local-level movements against torture, rape and killing of adivasi women, dalit women and vulnerable women. BMP also organises national dialogues on a variety of issues that concern the interest of women, including safe migration of women migrant workers, two-finger test, uniform family code, domestic violence act, sexual harassment and dowry.

Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)

To address various issues concerning the disparities faced by acid survivors, ASF has taken up programmes, such as family assistance, education support, income generation, advocacy and promoting access to safety nets. The purpose is to ensure that acid survivors are getting the required services and resources for improving livelihoods and reducing poverty. ASF's multidimensional and multi-stakeholder prevention campaign has contributed to significant reduction in the number of acid attacks over the years. Some survivors are working in various organisations (NGOs and private sectors), government offices, schools, garments factories, and are also engaged in doing business. Through its activities, ASF is contributing to reduce discrimination against one of the most vulnerable groups in the Bangladesh society.

Avijan

Avijan is a dalit-focused NGO, working exclusively for upholding the rights of the dalits, especially dalit women in Bangladesh. The organisation is engaged in grassroots-level policy advocacy and local-level campaigns and movements. It is dedicated to raise voice of dalit women for claiming their rights and dignity. Avijan is engaged in the campaign for adopting Anti-Discrimination Act, running pre-primary schools for dalit children at the grassroots level, organising free medical camps for dalits in their colonies, facilitating dialogues to eliminate caste system, organising training programmes for dalit women's leadership, promoting income-generating activities, running cultural centres, and providing legal assistance.

Indigenous Peoples Development Society (IPDS)

IPDS is an organisation which works to engage local indigenous people's initiatives and traditional institutions to raise voice of the adivasis in claiming their rights and entitlements to services, resources and culture. IPDS also focuses on the policy issues that affect adivasis, particularly those who live on the plain-lands. IPDS tries to involve local government authorities and union councils to ensure that the interests of its target groups are safeguarded and addressed. IPDS works for awareness building, capacity enhancement, skills attainment, advocacy, lobbying, accessing ancestral land and forest, attaining indigenous rights, and creating national movement in support of the marginalised dalit groups.

Naripokkho

Naripokkho is a membership-based women's activist organisation working for the advancement of women's rights and entitlements, while building resistance against violence, discrimination and injustice. Naripokkho's work is focused on the following four inter-related thematic areas: equality and the political empowerment of women; violence against women and women's human rights; women's health and reproductive rights; and communal harmony. Based on the experience from a project on reproductive rights and women health, Naripokkho developed a programme titled *Sharir Amar, Shiddhanta Amar ebong Jouna Adhikarbodh* (My Health, My Decision and Sexual Rights) in 1987. Under this programme, Naripokkho has been systematically conducting research on various health and reproductive issues, undertaking advocacy and lobbying activities with the government and international agencies, and creating awareness among agencies and citizens of Bangladesh. Naripokkho's activities are thus, very much aligned with various targets of Goal 10.

Target areas

To attain Target 10.1, the GoB has adopted a number of initiatives to progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average. NGOs and the private sector in Bangladesh have targetted activities concerning the various areas. These include microcredit programmes for the poor, health and education programmes for dalits and the vulnerable, skills training for the underprivileged, to name only a few. NGOs in Bangladesh are particularly contributing to government's ongoing efforts at human development with emphasis on alleviating the prevailing access gap for the poor. NGOs have undertaken several capacity development programmes, including vocational trainings for facilitating livelihood activities for different marginalised communities, particularly focusing on the youth. In this regard, local-level micro-entrepreneurship programmes have achieved commendable success. Concrete steps are being taken to improve the economic status of vulnerable and excluded women. NGOs are also engaged in activities in support of the government's efforts to strengthen social inclusion through various awareness-raising programmes. Many of the NGO initiatives, both of awareness-raising and income-augmenting nature, are being carried out in the lagging regions of the country. Some of the private sector enterprises are also implementing targetted programmes to offer income-generating opportunities

to the vulnerable and the physically challenged. To cite a specific example, Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF), in collaboration with disability organisations and development partners, is providing specialised skills training for persons with disability. It is also organising events to connect potential job-seekers with prospective employers. Through this initiative, as many as 360 persons with disability have received job placement in various enterprises in 2017 and 2018. However, this is still limited in scope, and needs to be further scaled up.

Complementing government's efforts, NGOs and CSOs are investing a lot of efforts in attaining Target 10.2, which urges for empowerment and promotion of social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity and origin, religious, economic or other status. Indeed, among the various targets of SDG 10, CSOs and NGOs in Bangladesh are relatively more actively engaged in activities geared towards attaining Target 10.2. Many CSOs have specific programmes for the marginalised people, such as dalits, fisher-folks, hijras/third gender, MSMs, AIDS patients and for disabled persons. Some gender-focused national networks, such as BMP, MJF, ASF and others have been lobbying with the government for full ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and are actively engaged in programmes and advocacy initiatives for gender equality and women's empowerment across all spheres of life and activities. Majority of the NGOs in Bangladesh have programmes for reducing gender inequality, particularly concerning the vulnerable and the excluded women. These include access to education for girls, knowledge and skills development for women to augment income, building self-confidence and promoting the cause of higher status of women and girls in the family and society. Many NGOs are actively involved in promoting access to justice, creating mass awareness on gender equality and undertaking advocacy for appropriate laws to protect girl children and women.

A key intervention of many NGOs relate to formulation, revision and implementation of laws and policies to ensure that the poor and the excluded have access to government resources and services. This is key to attaining the Target 10.2. NGOs are working for implementation of laws that are geared towards reduction of violence and discrimination, and enforcements of rights that promote the cause of decent work leading to improvement of living standards and livelihoods of the marginalised. Many NGOs have been pressing for the enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Act, which has been lying with the Ministry of Law waiting to be tabled as a Bill (The Independent, 2018).

As regards Target 10.4, a number of NGOs are working on fiscal policies and tax justice as a means of promoting fair redistribution of income and wealth, and towards progressive reduction of inequality. They are advocating for reforms of the taxation system with emphasis more on resource generation through direct taxation. A number of CSOs, including think tanks, are actively involved in global campaigns which are geared towards reducing inequality across countries through innovative taxation and greater and preferential market access for the least developed countries (LDCs).

In line with the aspirations of Targets 10.5 and 10.6, a number of NSAs in Bangladesh are playing a proactive role in various global fora and pursuing the cause of greater voice and adequate representation of low-income countries in various multilateral trade and financial institutions. They are calling for greater voice in the decision-making process of these institutions. In this context, mention may be made of the role played by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, and leading think tanks such as the CPD. A number of NSAs, such as NGOs and think tanks, are actively pursuing the cause of democratisation of multilateral institutions and special and differential treatment (S&D) for low-income countries in global trade, aid and investment flows.

A number of NGOs in Bangladesh are contributing to attain Target 10.7, which relates to facilitating safe migration. Their works involve advocating for planned migration policies, and monitoring of GoB policies in support of safe migration. For example, MJF started to work on safe migration in 2006, and supported BRAC in setting up the first Safe Migration Facilitation Centres in Bangladesh. It is working with stakeholders to raise awareness among people and communities, and also helping migrant workers by imparting skills-enhancement trainings. Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) is actively engaged in promoting safe migration by pursuing advocacy campaigns to secure and safeguard the interests of migrant workers in home and host countries. A number of NGOs in Bangladesh are advocating for safe and responsible migration and reduction of migration costs.

4. Key challenges and lessons learnt

Four years of NSA involvement in various activities concerning attainment of Goal 10 in Bangladesh reveals some useful lessons. The experience also shows that a number of challenges will need to be addressed if the targets are to be achieved by 2030.

Lessons learnt

- An active and coordinated engagement of key NSA stakeholders, including NGOs, private sector, CSOs, media, community and social support groups could play a catalytic role in protecting the rights of the marginalised groups. In this connection, persons with disabilities, dalits, adivasis and sex workers are particularly identified as vulnerable, and NGOs are most effective when working with such groups. Societal, rather than organisation-centric initiatives and campaigns will be needed, if a radical breakthrough is to be made in changing their status quo and attaining the target of Goal 10.
- Livelihood support programmes pursued by NGOs, such as skills training, asset transfer and creation of income opportunities are relatively more effective ways to support the poor and other marginalised communities, including the hijra/third gender. These groups are able to access their rightful government entitlements more effectively when they get the support of the NGOs, particularly at the local levels.
- Strategic support for the SMEs could be an important tool to reduce inequality through creation of job opportunities for the poor. In this connection, remittance-backed SMEs in the rural communities could be supported and promoted to create jobs and alleviate poverty. A blending of targeted financial support and imparting of necessary skills and training is more effective for SMEs development, where NGOs can complement the government efforts in an effective way.
- Reciprocal relationship between NGOs and local administration could be mutually reinforcing and rewarding in raising the efficacy of Goal 10 implementation. This removes the bottlenecks that hinder accessing of government services and resources, and in protecting the rights of the marginalised and the excluded people of the locality.
- There is a need for a Land Commission to be set up and Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act to be enacted to help the adivasis access their ancestral land and forest resources, and exercise their rights to practice customary laws. Without the support of appropriate laws, effectiveness of NGO interventions in this regard will be limited.
- Without a platform that ensures effective participation of the various indigenous people's organisations in national policy-making and planning as regards issues that concerns their interests, aspiration of an equitable and inclusive society in Bangladesh will remain unrealised. Without addressing the issues of adivasis and other marginalised groups who suffer from continuing backwardness, the LNOB spirit of the SDGs will remain

unachievable. NGOs are more effective when they are able to build up strong campaigns to pursue the cause of those who tend to be left behind.

Challenges to be addressed

- Community-specific data on dalit, harijan, hijra/third gender, *bede* (a nomadic ethnic group) and other caste-based minority groups are not available at present. Consequently, neither their contribution to the national development can be properly measured, nor whether their situation is changing appropriately assessed. In light of the SDG spirit of Data Revolution, there should be a targetted effort to generate disaggregated data for the marginalised groups, from various dimensions. NGOs should demand that initiatives are taken by policymakers, on an urgent basis, to address this data deficit.
- Ensuring safety and security of girls and women, at home and at workplaces, remains a major task if Goal 10 is to be achieved. Indeed, safety of children has emerged as a key concern in Bangladesh in recent times. NGOs will need to pursue the cause vigorously and demand accountability from concerned authorities.
- The women and the poor face formidable challenges in accessing credit. Women from marginalised communities have even greater difficulty in this context. NGOs should be more vocal in their demands in this connection, since credit should be considered as a right. Indeed, availability of credit could play an important role in raising the income level of the poor in light of SDG 10.
- Ensuring the rights of the indigenous people is key to building an inclusive society in Bangladesh. A broad-based coalition will need to be forged to ensure that their rights are established in light of the LNOB aspirations. National NGOs should take more initiatives to raise the capacity of indigenous organisations to enable them pursue their causes.
- Inclusion of hijra/third gender community in the society and the workplace remains a challenging task. There is also lack of clarity concerning the definition of the 'Third Gender'. NGOs' advocacy work in this connection needs to be further strengthened.
- A number of existing policies need to be changed if inequality is to be reduced, and the NGOs will have to be more vocal in challenging such policies. For example, shrimp-culture-related policies go against the interests of the landless people. Under the present policy, landless people are not entitled to cultivate *khas* (government-owned) land within the shrimp cultivation enclosures. NGOs should demand that such discriminatory policies must change as these go against the spirit of Goal 10.

5. Way forward with policy recommendations

In a welcome development, issues of reducing inequality and inclusiveness in general, and addressing these from the perspective of the marginalised groups in particular, are gaining increasing traction in both government and the NSAs circles in Bangladesh. There is a general consensus that the current rising inequality could harm the cause of future development of the country. While many of the pro-poor policies pursued by the government do foster inclusive growth and promote the cause of poverty reduction, more proactive initiatives and interventions are required to have larger impact on reducing inequality in Bangladesh. Following are a few suggestions as a way forward in this connection. Success of these will largely hinge on an effective GO-NSA partnership.

- Ensure access of all people, particularly the poor and the disadvantaged, to quality education and adequate health services. To achieve this, the shares of public expenditure in education and health and nutrition will have to be raised to at least 4 and 2 per cent of the GDP, respectively.
- A separate table showing annual allocation under the caption of 'Expenditure to attain the LNOB aspiration' should be a regular feature in the national budget.
- Appropriate policies in support of ending gender inequality, in all its dimensions, has to be adopted. There should be a recognition that many of the inequalities in the society originate from gender discrimination. Gender budgeting needs to be more specific and concrete, with targets, milestones and monitoring tools. Mass campaigns should be conducted to change stereotype views about women. Contribution of women to the national economy, including through unpaid works, needs to be given due recognition. Indeed, a new accounting system to measure the national income should be adopted to address this lacunae.
- Public spending on rural infrastructure, such as rural roads, rural electricity, irrigation, flood control and salinity control needs to be increased for creating income-generating opportunities in the lagged regions. Cultivation of high-yielding and climate-change-tolerant rice varieties will need to be prioritised, and diversification of agriculture to high-value crops will need to be promoted. This will help increase growth rate and average labour productivity in agriculture, and will have positive impact on rural wages, which in turn, will help to reduce inequality between urban and rural areas.

- Marginalised and excluded people, particularly women, should have adequate access to credit and microcredit to stimulate higher income generation and accumulation of assets by women.
- Implementation of the government's action plan based on the NSSS needs to be fast-tracked for more inclusive, pro-poor and pro-vulnerable growth.
- Private sector should make more investment in skills development of particularly the women workers. Private entrepreneurs should be incentivised to provide on-the-job training to meet the growing needs for higher skilled workers. This will lead to productivity enhancement and higher wages for workers. Targetted programmes should be initiated to ensure that women are not left out in the drive for technology upgradation. Private sector-NGO partnership could be mutually rewarding in this context.
- Overseas migration of workers should be managed in such a manner that it promotes pro-poor growth. Migration should be mainstreamed in the national development strategy. Skills development programmes should be strengthened and tuned to overseas market demands. Steps should be taken in the areas of international certification and mutual recognition of skills with appropriate participation of home and host countries. Safe and decent work for female migrant workers should be prioritised. An efficient and inclusive governance framework for labour migration should be put in place. Legal frameworks should be updated and enforced to safeguard the rights of migrant workers, and as part of the strategy of inclusive growth. Deepening of GO-NGO collaboration will contribute to attaining SDG 10 targets in this connection.
- NSA advocacy for progressive fiscal policies should be further strengthened. Advocacy work should be geared towards reducing both income and wealth inequalities.
- For establishing a society based on equality and inclusivity, there is a need for improved governance and capacity building of institutions that have the responsibility to service the needs of the poor. NGO advocacy should target these institutions to make them accountable to the stakeholders.
- Active participation and fair representation of indigenous people in relevant decision-making bodies related to implementation of the SDGs must be ensured. Right to land and resources, maintenance of cultural heritage, identities, practices and traditional means of livelihoods ought to receive due priority in this connection. Organisations of indigenous groups and communities must be given importance and their voices ought to be heard with due attention.
- NSAs should be given an opportunity to be engaged in monitoring and reporting, and in holding the relevant government agencies accountable,

for SDG implementation. Policymakers should ensure that government agencies are tuned to this demand for transparency and accountability.

- Government should ensure that NGOs and CSOs can be more proactively engaged in budget-related discussions. The voice of NSAs should be given due importance, particularly in view of more resource mobilisation and better resource allocation, so that equity considerations remain prominent in the budget formulation.
- The government should consider setting up of a comprehensive database that will contain detailed information concerning the various marginalised communities. Such a database should be able to tell whether the LNOB aspirations and the targets of creating a more equitable and inclusive society in line with SDG 10, are being attained.
- Steps should be taken, on an urgent basis, to finalise the draft Anti-Discrimination Act and enact it. This will create a strong legal foundation in favour of attaining SDG 10 in Bangladesh.
- Initiatives should be taken by the political parties to give membership to the dalit people. In local- and national-level elections, seats should be reserved for them based on their numbers. This will give them an opportunity to raise their voice in elected fora and have it heard.

6. Conclusions

While Bangladesh's impressive success in terms of sustained economic growth has attracted wide attention of the global development community, a serious concern has emerged as regards growing inequality within the country. More coherent policy attention ought to be given to issues that are of interest to the disadvantaged and the marginalised population. One should also keep in mind that inequality could potentially lead to polarisation and erosion of social cohesion, which could in turn, result in instability and social unrest. It is important that existing policies should target beyond the averages and policymakers should monitor what is happening at the grassroots level. It is important to keep in mind that income inclusion, social inclusion and political inclusion are all interdependent. Bangladesh has signed a number of international conventions, including the CEDAW and conventions for safeguarding the interests of the children and the vulnerable. Existing laws in Bangladesh need to be adequately aligned with these international conventions. These commitments and obligations should be considered as integral to attaining the targets and aspiration of SDG 10.

It has been stressed in the preceding sections that for social inclusion and intergenerational mobility, education plays a defining role. Here, accessibility

is an important factor for the physically challenged children. Though many schools have accessibility with wheel chair, most schools lack such facility. This needs to be addressed.

An important challenge concerns rights of the poor to land. The land laws of Bangladesh stipulates that government-owned lands will be given/leased to the landless people for them to use this asset to improve their life and livelihoods. However, in most cases, it is observed that the powerful people in the society take advantage of loopholes in the law and often grab the public land for their own benefits. Here appropriate actions are needed for amendment and enforcement of the law.

Adverse impact of government's fiscal policies and measures with the overriding dependence on indirect taxes, falls disproportionately on the relatively poorer sections of the society. More emphasis should be put on resource mobilisation through direct taxation and appropriate use of the resources for raising the living standards of the poor people and reducing inequality.

People living in remote areas face additional challenges that exacerbate their difficulties and lead to deepening of inequalities. Due to unplanned migration and consequent inadvertent urbanisation, more and more people are ending up in the slums. Many have been subject to climate-change impacts, and were uprooted and relocated to slums. Slum poverty has emerged as a major driver of inequality in Bangladesh. Special programmes should be implemented in urban slums with support from NGOs to address urban and peri-urban poverty.

As has been pointed out in the preceding sections, it is time for Bangladesh to have an in-depth look at the dynamics of not only income equality, but also of other forms of inequalities, such as asset and wealth inequalities. Political commitment to address these emerging concerns will play an important role, if Bangladesh is to attain targets of Goal 10. Transparent and accountable governance and more space to enable the NSAs to contribute more effectively to socio-economic-cultural development of the common people of Bangladesh will be important in this regard. It is generally recognised that, NSAs are more effective in accessing the marginalised and in working with people with vulnerabilities. If they are taken in confidence, and are able to work effectively in their own domains and in partnership with the government, Bangladesh can justifiably aspire to be an equitable and inclusive country by 2030, in the image and spirit reflected in Goal 10.

References

Ahasan, N. (2018, 12 May). Why Bangladesh's inequality is likely to rise. *The Daily Star*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/economics/why-bangladeshs-inequality-likely-rise-1575079>

Ahmed, S. (2014). *Addressing the Challenge of Income Inequality in Bangladesh*. PRI Working Paper Series No. 6. Dhaka: Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI). Available at: <http://www.pri-bd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Working-Paper-Series-No.-6.pdf>

CPD. (2018a). "An Analysis of the National Budget for FY2018-19." Presentation made the press briefing on *National Budget 2018-19: CPD's Analysis*, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), held on 8 June, in Dhaka. Available at: <https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CPD-Presentation-on-Analysis-of-the-National-Budget-for-FY2018-19.pdf>

CPD. (2018b). "State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY2017-18 (First Reading)." Presentation made at the press briefing on *State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY2017-18 (First Reading)*, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), held on 13 January, in Dhaka. Available at: <https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/IRBD-FY2018-First-Reading-Presentation-final-13012017.pdf>

Daily Sun. (2018, 30 June). Health sector needs increased allocation. Available at: <http://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/49882/Health-sector-needs-increased-allocation>

Daily Sun. (2019, 10 January). FM assures private sector of helping in job creation. Available at: <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/363081/2019/01/10/FM-assures-private-sector-of-helping-in-job-creation>

Dhaka Tribune. (2017, 8 November). Private sector responsible for 78% of development in Bangladesh. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/development/2017/11/08/private-sector-development-bangladesh>

Dhaka Tribune. (2018a, 7 June). Budget FY19: Social safety net widens with additional benefits for freedom fighters. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/economy/2018/06/07/budget-fy19-social-safety-net-widens-with-additional-benefits-for-freedom-fighters>

Dhaka Tribune. (2018b, 29 June). Budget allocations for health, education continue to shrink. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2018/06/29/budget-allocations-for-health-education-continue-to-shrink>

GED. (2015a). *National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <http://socialprotection.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/National-Social-Security-Strategy-English.pdf>

GED. (2015b). *Seventh Five Year Plan (FY2016 - FY2020): Accelerating Growth, Empowering Citizens*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/aee61c03_3c11_4e89_9f30_d79639595c67/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf

GED. (2018a). *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/dc350cdc_4c6d_4a81_b72a_3afe082187ac/Monitoring_and_Evaluation_Framework_of_SDGS_Book_Proof.pdf

GED. (2018b). *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: [http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20(1).pdf)

GoB. (n.d.). *Laws of Bangladesh*. Dhaka: Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections.php?id=367&vol=§ions_id=24567

Mujeri, M. K. (2018, 18 September). Rising inequalities in Bangladesh. *The Financial Express*. Available at: <https://www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/rising-inequalities-in-bangladesh->

ODI. (2018). *'Leave No One Behind' Index 2018*. Briefing note. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12304.pdf>

OHCHR. (n.d.). *SDG-related Human Rights*. Geneva: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Session5_OHCHR_SDG_HR_Table.pdf

Oxfam and Development Finance International. (2018). *The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2018: A global ranking of governments based on what they are doing to tackle the gap between rich and poor*. Joint report prepared by the Oxfam and the Development Finance International. Oxford: Oxfam GB. Available at: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620553/rr-commitment-reducing-inequality-index-2018-091018-en.pdf>

Sobhan, R. (2010). *Challenging the injustice of poverty: Agendas for inclusive development in South Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publication Ltd.

The Daily Star. (2018a, 26 July). Income inequality hinders inclusive growth. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/income-inequality-hinders-inclusive-growth-experts-1611118>

The Daily Star. (2018b, 24 January). WEF Development Index: Bangladesh ahead of most of its neighbours. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/wef-development-index-bangladesh-ahead-most-its-neighbours-1524265>

The Daily Star. (2019, 2 April). All physically challenged to get allowances from next budget: PM. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/no-more-negligence-autistic-persons-pm-1723777>

The Independent. (2018, 21 April). NHRC sends draft to govt. Available at: <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/146679>

Wealth-X. (2018). *Ultra Wealthy Analysis: The World Ultra Wealth Report 2018*. New York: Wealth-X. Available at: https://www.wealthx.com/report/world-ultra-wealth-report-2018/?utm_campaign=wuwr-2018&utm_source=pardotsocial&utm_medium=social&utm_term=wuwr-2018-organic-social

WEF. (2018). *The Inclusive Development Index 2018: Summary and Data Highlights*. Geneva: World Economic Forum (WEF). Available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Forum_IncGrwth_2018.pdf

WHO. (2018). *Health Financing Profile 2017: Bangladesh*. New Delhi: Regional Office for South-East Asia, World Health Organization (WHO). Available at: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259640/BAN_HFP.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

World Bank. (n.d.a). *Reducing Inequalities: SDG 10 Progress and Prospects – Concept Note*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank Group. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2018/12/17/reducing-inequalities-progress-and-prospects#3>

World Bank. (n.d.b). *SDG Atlas 2018 – 10 Reduced Inequalities*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank Group. Available at: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/sdgatlas/SDG-10-reduced-inequalities.html>

Improving Capacity for Effective Climate Action (SDG 13)



Anchor organisation
ActionAid Bangladesh

Co-anchor organisations
International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
WaterAid Bangladesh

Associate organisations
Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha
Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)
Enfants du Monde (EdM)
Practical Action in Bangladesh
Save the Children in Bangladesh

Lead authors
Tanjir Hossain, Lead- Resilience and Climate Justice, and
Syeda Lamia Hossain, Programme Officer, ActionAid Bangladesh

Co-author
Shaila Shahid, Senior Advisor- Climate Change, DRR and Gender, ICCCAD

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report has emerged from an initiative of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The Goal-Group 13 set up by the Platform has prepared the report to provide an overview of the progress made in Bangladesh in the context of SDG 13 – Climate Action. The specific objective of the report is to capture the contributions of non-state actors in Bangladesh in implementing the targets of SDG 13. The report has identified key implementation challenges in this connection, and has come up with a set of concrete recommendations in moving forward.

The report was anchored by ActionAid Bangladesh with ICCCAD and WaterAid as co-anchors. A number of other organisations including Save the Children, Brotee, DAM, EdM and Practical Action in Bangladesh have extended valuable support to this endeavour as associate organisations.

The authors would like to express their heartiest gratitude to a number of colleagues who have made important contribution by sharing case studies and technical inputs which have enriched the report significantly. They are: Marjana Chowdhury, Program Manager- Climate Resilience, and Mohammad Abdul Basit, Programme Officer-Engineer from WaterAid Bangladesh; Md. Badrul Alam Talukder, Manager - Climate Change, Save the Children in Bangladesh; Afsari Begum, Senior Specialist - DRR, Practical Action in Bangladesh; Tapas Ranjan Chakraborty, ICT and Development Coordinator, Oxfam in Bangladesh; Md. Rafiqul Islam, Deputy Director, Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha; Mizanur Rahman Bijoy, Executive Director, Network on Climate Change, Bangladesh; Shamim Arfeen, Executive Director, An Organization for Socio-Economic Development. Authors are particularly thankful to Shababa Haque, Coordinator for SDG and Climate Action, ICCCAD, for providing valuable editorial support. They are also grateful to

all the organisations who have shared useful data and information which have enriched the report.

The authors sincerely appreciate the excellent support and cooperation extended by Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues from the CPD – the Secretariat of the Platform. They would also like to thank all the stakeholders, including government officials, media and private sector, for their valuable inputs and insightful comments during the consultation workshops. The authors would like to put on record their sincere gratitude to Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh, for overall supervision and guidance in preparing this report.

Finally, the authors would like to extend their immense gratitude to the many organisations and committed citizens who are working to advance SDG 13 and making valuable contributions to make Bangladesh an environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient country.

1. Introduction

Background

The past five years were the five warmest years since record-keeping had begun in the late 1800s. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the planet earth has experienced 42 straight years (since 1977) of above-average global temperature (Rice and Weise, 2019). This has been, to a large extent, caused by human activity; more particularly, because of pursuing the fossil fuel-driven model of development on a continuing basis. Consequently, global temperature has been rising in a way that has been unprecedented in human history.

Between 1998 and 2017, the world has experienced 4,148 floods, 2,049 storms, 563 earthquakes, 405 extreme weather events, 347 droughts and some 1,000 other disasters of different nature, such as wildfire and landslide. This has resulted in direct economic losses valued at about USD 2.9 billion, of which climate-related disasters had been the major cause in 77 per cent of the cases. However, this is only a fraction of the costs as the majority of low-income countries do not provide economic data in their disaster reports, and valuation of indirect losses are not adequately reported. The World Bank has estimated that the real cost to the global economy originating from humanitarian crises is a staggering USD 520 billion per annum, with disasters pushing 26 million people into poverty every year (UNISDR and CRED, 2018).

Between 1994 and 2013 disasters have claimed 1.35 million lives, which is almost 68,000 lives on average every year. Two hundred and eighteen million people were affected annually, on average, by disasters of different types. Data shows that flooding, which has been on the rise both in terms of frequency and intensity due to climate change, was the main cause behind majority of the disasters taking place during this time period. It accounted for 43 per cent of all recorded events and affecting nearly 2.5 billion people. Storms were the second-most frequently visited type of disaster, causing the death of more than 244,000 people and costing USD 936 billion in recorded damages (CRED and UNISDR, 2015). Further studies reveal that because of the consequences of climate change, conflict and disasters, more than 113 million people across 53 countries have experienced acute hunger, which called for a large amount of resources to be deployed for urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance in 2018 (FSIN, 2019).

Over the last two decades, Bangladesh, one of the most at-risk countries in the world to adverse impacts of climate change, has suffered significant economic and non-economic losses due to adverse climate affects. The attendant challenges pose a serious threat to the country's future journey and its ambition of becoming a developed country by 2041. During the period of 1995 to 2014, Bangladesh was one of the top six countries which were most adversely impacted by climate change-induced shocks and stresses. During this period, a total of 222 large-scale disasters had hit Bangladesh, costing over USD 2.44 billion of economic losses; average annual death toll was approximately 725 (Kreft et al., 2016). During the period of 2008 and 2013, a total of 151,274 people were displaced due to the sudden onset of disasters (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015). A 30-year projection of climate change impacts on countries identifies Bangladesh as one of the most risk-prone countries in the world. The causes include further rise in temperature and the consequent increase in air temperature and precipitation and humidity (Verisk Maplecroft, n.d.). These would result in increased number of natural disasters in future, and these are likely to be of greater intensity which could displace millions of people.

Addressing climate change: SDGs in action

As is well known, the 17 Goals and the 169 associated targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in New York in September 2015. The SDGs reflected an ambitious aspiration of the global community towards a transformational developmental pathway with the commitment to *leave no one behind* (LNOB) embedded in the goals. This universal call promised to take targeted actions to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that people lived in peace and enjoyed prosperity. While the goals come with formidable challenges, they also open up doors for unprecedented possibilities and opportunities. Most importantly, if the SDG aspirations are to be realised, the journey must be a collective effort with participation of governments, non-government actors, private sectors and all citizens, to be supported by both domestic and foreign resources.

SDG 13: Climate Action

SDG 13 is a unique goal that deals with the adverse impacts of climate change and has a cross-cutting link with the other SDGs. The goal includes five targets and eight indicators (Annex 1). Climate change, it needs to be recognised, is a global challenge which is not bound by national borders. Addressing these challenges calls for solutions that need to be coordinated

at the international level to help the developing countries move towards a low-carbon economy (UN, n.d.). There is a wide recognition that attainment of many of the SDGs hinges on the success of combating climate change. The Paris Agreement on climate change has set the stage to address climate-related challenges with help of various adaptation and mitigation efforts, and these pave the pathway for attaining many of the SDGs. Thus, an integrated approach will be required, whereby implementation of the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) will leverage each other, and be able to create significant opportunities for affirmative synergies. Indeed, such an approach could be a powerful driver to attain the SDGs at the national level.

Progress made in view of climate action

To address the attendant vulnerabilities, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has identified the following areas of interventions to tackle the adverse impacts of climate change.

- Food security, livelihood and health protection (including water security)
- Comprehensive disaster management
- Coastal zone management, including salinity intrusion control
- Flood control and erosion protection
- Building climate-resilient infrastructure
- Increased rural electrification
- Enhanced urban resilience
- Ecosystem-based adaptation (including forestry co-management)
- Community-based conservation of wetlands and coastal areas
- Policy and institutional capacity building

Bangladesh's track record in addressing climate-related challenges has been positive and impressive. Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018, prepared by the General Economics Division (GED), Bangladesh Planning Commission, reported the followings in this connection: "Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population (Indicator 13.1.1) has fallen over the years. Now it stands at 12,881 with a target of 6,500 by 2020 and 1,500 by 2030. Given the track record of Bangladesh in disaster management, this target will not be difficult to achieve. MoDMR (the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief) has prepared Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies of Bangladesh (2016–2020) in line with the Sendai Framework which will be helpful in this regard. In facing the climate change scenarios, Bangladesh is well-prepared with a number

of climate change-related strategies, plans and actions. Through BCCTF (Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund), it has spent around 2,700 crores of taka over the last 8 years in climate change adaptation. Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 has been formulated primarily to address climate change adverse impacts and ensuring availability of water for safe multi-uses” (GED, 2018c).

In 2018, Bangladesh also received financial support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for the following two projects:

- Global Clean Cooking Program – Bangladesh; Removing barriers impeding development of a sustainable market for the adoption of improved cooking stoves in Bangladesh; and
- Enhancing adaptive capacities of coastal communities, particularly of women, to cope with the impacts of climate-induced salinity.

However, notwithstanding the plans and the impressive success it has achieved, Bangladesh will have to go a long way if the targets and indicators of Goal 13 are to be attained by 2030, and the non-state actors (NSAs) in Bangladesh will need to play a proactive role for this to be the case.

2. Objective and methodology

The objective of this report is to stock-take the progress made by the civil society organisations (CSOs) in addressing climate change in line with the targets of SDG 13. The objective is also to identify the key challenges in this regard and come up with actionable recommendations.

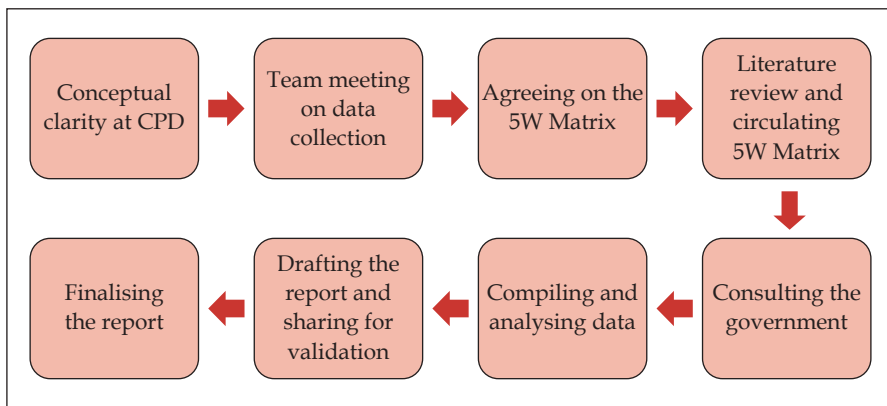
Methodology

The task of preparing the report was initiated with a meeting organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the Secretariat of the Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, where representative from a selected set of CSOs were invited to take part. CPD shared the objectives and scope of the exercise at this meeting. The focus of the report was finalised through a participatory and interactive process. ActionAid Bangladesh was selected as the anchor organisation for preparing the report, while International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and WaterAid were selected as co-anchors. Other organisations which were part of the Goal-Group 13 included Save the Children, Brotee, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Enfants du Monde (EdM) and Practical Action in Bangladesh. A kick-off team meeting was organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, where members agreed to a 5W Matrix to collect data on contributions made by various CSOs towards SDG 13.

The team first carried out an extensive literature review to collect the needed information for preparing the status report. This was followed by consultations with key government stakeholders. The authors also reviewed the experience of some of the other countries where similar work was undertaken – for example, the report by the Government of Kenya on the Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was closely examined to draw insights as regards SDG-related policies and planning in the context of Bangladesh. The report assessed the progress made by Kenya in implementing the SDGs. It shows how the Kenyan Government is engaging with other stakeholders, including the CSOs and the private sector in the process of implementing the SDGs (Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2017). Another example was the civil society report on the implementation of the SDGs in Nepal, prepared by Nepal SDGs Forum (NGO Federation of Nepal, 2017). The objective of the report was to acknowledge the efforts of different stakeholders towards implementation of the SDGs in Nepal, identify the strengths and challenges in this regard, and suggest the way forward for collective actions for further improvement. In addition, the authors also reviewed documents of Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD, n.d.) for a better understanding of the role of CSOs in SDG implementation.

Data and information collected through literature review, 5W Matrix exercise and interviews with government stakeholders were compiled and analysed to prepare the report. The findings were shared with CSOs and relevant government entities for validation. The initial draft was shared with the CPD for feedbacks and comments. Flowchart 1 summarises the various steps in preparing the SDG 13 status report.

Flowchart 1: Process of Goal-Group 13 report preparation



Scope of the report

To address climate change impacts, a large number of CSOs in Bangladesh are working in a diverse range of areas, including adaptation and mitigation from national to local levels. Many of these organisations are working in partnership and in consortium with other organisations. Since many CSOs are also working in similar areas, it is important to stock-take and understand the contribution of the CSOs to get a wholesome picture about what is being done to attain the Goal 13 targets in the country. However, although many of these organisations maintain websites, information regarding their SDG-related activities was not easy to glean from these sources. Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) lay out adaptation and mitigation strategies to raise climate resilience; however, these mainly focus on government priorities in addressing climate change impacts. The authors have tried their best to collect relevant information and data in spite of the aforementioned limitations. An attempt was made to collect relevant data and information pertaining to the activities of these organisations.

The report covers a number of elements:

- A stocktaking of activities by non-government organisations (NGOs)/ international NGOs (INGOs) and CSOs which are contributing to attaining the SDG 13. This also includes activities in other SDG areas that play a role in, and contribute to, achieving the targets of SDG 13;
- Document engagement of CSOs with the GoB in various spaces;
- Capture lessons by drawing insights from on the ground evidence;
- Suggest possible ways forward.

3. Prioritisation of SDGs by the GoB

It is generally recognised that Bangladesh has been able to set an example, and is well ahead of many other countries when it comes to disaster management. Bangladesh's Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP) (2016–2020) has made an attempt to integrate the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. This testifies to prioritisation of the SDGs by the GoB in its policies and plans. The government has also adopted a *whole of society* approach to ensure wider participation of the NGOs, development partners, private sector, media and the CSOs in the process of formulation of the Action Plan and implementation of the SDGs. To lead the process, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has constituted an SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee. The Committee has been

entasked to monitor and facilitate implementation the SDGs Action Plan. To ensure effective implementation of the SDGs, the government has taken the following steps:

- **Mapping of ministries.** The GoB has carried out an exercise to identify the responsibilities of the various ministries and agencies in connection with SDG implementation. Lead, co-lead and associate ministries have been mapped against goals and targets of the SDGs. This mapping exercise is expected to reduce duplication of efforts, strengthen synergies and help formulate the required action plans (GED, 2016).
- **Data gap analysis.** Bangladesh Planning Commission has conducted a review of available data to monitor SDG implementation. The exercise reveals that Bangladesh has adequate data for 70 indicators and partially available data for 108 indicators. There is a need to devise new ways for data mining and data generation for the remaining 63 indicators (GED, 2017).
- **National monitoring and evaluation framework.** Bangladesh has prepared a monitoring and evaluation framework for SDGs implementation. This framework has a macro-level web-based data repository system to facilitate data collection, analysis, progress-tracking and reporting (GED, 2018a).
- **Action plan to achieve SDGs.** The government is preparing an action plan for implementation of the SDGs in alignment with the 7FYP. Respective ministries are working towards translating the targets into actionable projects/programmes/activities (GED, 2018b).
- **Needs assessment and financing strategy.** Bangladesh has estimated the financing needs for SDGs implementation with a view to mobilising domestic and external resources to underwrite the envisaged activities.
- **Assimilation of SDG targets in Performance Agreement.** Bangladesh has introduced Annual Performance Agreement (APA), a results-based performance management system, across the whole spectrum of the public sector to assess the individual as well as ministries/agencies performance. This is expected to raise accountability with respect to SDG implementation in Bangladesh.

Alignment of national instruments with SDGs

Bangladesh has a large number of policies, frameworks and plans in place to guide the development process, more particularly when it comes to disaster management. The Planning Commission reports that the national development policy – the 7FYP, formulated in 2015 – was designed by keeping the SDGs in the perspective. An assessment conducted by the GED of Bangladesh Planning Commission shows that about 33 per cent of SDG targets

are fully aligned with national and sectoral development plans, while another 21.9 per cent is partially aligned with national plans (GED, 2016). GED has also identified the ministries and divisions which will be involved in implementing particular targets of the SDGs.

However, a study conducted with support of the Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals reveals that, of the 209 indicators examined, data was available for 128 indicators in Bangladesh (61.2 per cent) (Rahman et al., 2016). This included both readily and not readily available data, which indicates that data availability in Bangladesh for the purpose of SDG implementation and monitoring is less than satisfactory. One also finds that issues related to the SDGs have not been adequately addressed in the long-term Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (Khalequzzaman, 2018). An assessment, conducted by Save the Children and Centre for Policy Development, indicates that SDG 13 is better integrated in the 7FYP, although resource allocation was not adequate in view of the needs of implementing the SDGs (Table 1).

Table 1: Alignment-allocation status for different SDGs

Alignment with the SDGs	Better allocation	Less allocation
Better integrated	SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 7	SDG 2, SDG 13
Less integrated	SDG 9	SDG 3, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 14, SDG 15, SDG 16

4. Contribution of Bangladesh CSOs towards SDG implementation

Prior actions by CSOs

Climate change affects everyone. However, factors such as geographical location, gender, social barriers and inequitable power relations make certain groups disproportionately more exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change. In 1991, a cyclone hit the south-eastern side of Bangladesh with approximately 250 km/h wind speed, accompanied by a storm surge of about 6-metres. When it comes to vulnerability, it was observed that women are more susceptible than men when such disasters strike. As a study by Asaduzzaman (2015) shows, in the Cyclone Gorky in 1991, out of the 140,000 deaths, women outnumbered men by a ratio of about 14:1. In general, women in Bangladesh tend to have limited access to assets – physical, financial, human, social and natural capital (such as land). Women do not have a strong say as regards decision-making in such areas as credit, agricultural inputs and technology adoption, agricultural-extension and training services. This significantly undermines the capacity of women to adapt to changing situation

(Aguilar, 2009). Another example of the differential impact of climate change can be seen in the lives of indigenous/ethnic minorities. Weak social and political linkages and dependence on environment and natural resources for living make them extremely vulnerable. For example, women from *bede* (river gypsies) communities are being seriously threatened by climatic change, as they live in ecologically fragile areas which are not able to provide them with adequate plants, herbs and animals (e.g. snake) which are essential for their livelihood (UNDP, 2016). In addition, poverty and unequal distribution of resources are accentuating the challenges that are posed by climate change.

INGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh primarily work in those areas which could bring social policy and household-level changes. Policy-level changes mostly focus on economic, institutional and environmental betterment for building resilience to disaster and climate change. These actions are cross-sectoral, and contribute to the attainment of majority of the SDGs because of the way these are designed and implemented. Community-based actions, participation and community-led interventions are the key elements in their strategies. Majority of the projects and programmes are focused on reducing poverty through community empowerment and addressing inequalities in the society. There are a number of projects which focuses from local to global levels with the intention of stimulating policy changes based on field-level evidence. These projects, implemented in partnership with other NGOs/networks, advocate in favour of process justice and distributive justice across institutions, and by informing policies.

Key focus of the CSOs can be categorised within (but not limited to) the following major sectors:

- Resilience building through actions to deal with disaster management impacts
- Food security, health and social protection
- Piloting mitigation actions
- Addressing loss and damage from climate and disaster events
- Displacement and migration
- Women, young people and children's engagement in disaster and climate change actions
- Awareness, policy advocacy and international engagement

CSOs in programme delivery and policy interventions

Based on response collected through the 5W matrix exercise and consultation with the CSOs (INGOs and CSOs which have contributed in this regard are

listed in Annex 2), it is found that non-state stakeholders (NSAs) have been traditionally involved in a diverse range of activities, including those related to climate change, disaster management and resilience building. However, regrettably, only a few INGOs provided inputs for the 5W matrix developed for this report. As a result, a limitation of the study is that it is based on only the few responses that were received. The activities of the CSOs may be broadly categorised in three groups of actions, which, it should be noted, are interlinked.

- a. **Programme interventions:** These mostly concern both hardware and software interventions, such as excavating ponds for sweet water, promoting climate-resilient agriculture and capacity building of women and young people in Goal-13-related areas.
- b. **Policy advocacy:** The advocacy initiatives are both proactive and reactive. Some of the initiatives are undertaken at the local level which connects both national and global initiatives. A number of CSOs have been engaged from the very beginning with the Conference of the Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). At the global level, the CSOs work closely with the GoB, voicing the demand for greater climate action to limit global warming to 1.5°C and asking for adequate support for adaptation programmes in the least developed countries (LDCs). CSOs are also actively involved at the national level with activities related to the various streams of climate-related actions.
- c. **Research and awareness:** This is one of the major areas where CSOs in Bangladesh have a long track record of involvement. There are a few thousand NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) in the country which are registered under different government authorities. Many of these are working to raise awareness of the various communities as regards climate change and disaster impacts. Indeed, this has led to significant positive changes in areas and practices involving early warning systems and community-level flood/cyclone shelter management. It needs to be appreciated and acknowledged that CSOs in Bangladesh in partnership with experts, academicians and other stakeholders, have generated extensive knowledge on climate change, both as regards programme implementation and on policy matters.

Interventions by the CSOs

The following section provides some snapshots of CSO involvement in Goal 13 areas.

Women and young people's leadership in taking climate action at community level

As was noted earlier, disasters tend to impact women and young girls disproportionately. At the same time, it is the women who are often the first responders in any crisis. CSOs' engagement in getting women and young people in leadership position to address climate change is thus, of heightened importance. This is reflected in the manifold activities they are undertaking. Many CSOs are focusing on bringing transformative women leadership, women and young people's income generation and women and young people-led emergency responses. For instance, Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS), based in Patuakhali, has set up and trained a women-led emergency response group, which took a number of initiatives



“Water logging is not a problem anymore! My production is safe!”

Jamila Begum
Kulotia Union
Monirampur, Jessore

Jamila Begum is now producing seasonal vegetables in her yard. So far, she has produced 154 kg of different varieties of vegetables from sack gardening and has earned Tk. 10,780. She is now earning and saving money from her garden to ensure a better future.

Every year due to heavy rainfall her family had to face water logging in their yard. She lost her vegetables which used to be cultivated through conventional methods. Her yard remained unusable for long periods. Her family suffered from lack of income as well as nutrition. She had to borrow money for subsistence living, which sometimes pushed her family into even a bigger crisis as she found it hard to pay back the loan.

“I thought it would be difficult and won't be profitable. But when I started I realised that I am doing something different. The plants are getting better soil nutrients and I am getting better yields. The only challenge is that we have to get better saplings which will ensure better yield for us.”

following Cyclone Mahasen. Breaking social barriers, women came out and conducted needs assessment, procured materials from market, and built houses. CSOs are working to raise women's representation in different fora to address gender-based violence in the aftermath of natural disasters. Many have reported working on strengthening the role of women and young people in policy advocacy and influencing women's empowerment at household and community levels.

Climate-Resilient Sustainable Agriculture

Impact of climate change on food security is diverse. According to a flood bulletin issued by the Department of Disaster Management, a total of 591,647 hectares of aman paddy in 32 districts were affected by the floods of 2017. Drought in the north and salinity in the south are affecting agriculture, compelling people to migrate due to loss of livelihood opportunities.

Data from the CSOs illustrate that almost 20,000 farmers, including 11,000 women farmers, are practicing Climate-Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA) with support of ActionAid Bangladesh. Activities of CRSA include compost preparation, vermin compost use, local seed production and reservation, organic pesticide preparation, use of saline-tolerant seeds and fertilisers. Practical Action and Shushilon are jointly working on sack gardening and providing agro-met services through digital weather board and voice messages. They are facilitating access to information and advisory services through *Krishi Call Centres*. Oxfam is working on adaptive agriculture and applications. Other areas where CSOs are working include, but are not limited to, promotion of socially inclusive and sustainable agricultural intensification, reducing climate vulnerabilities through advanced agricultural technology in the southwest coastal region, providing agriculture inputs support (seeds, fertiliser, etc.) to vulnerable farmers and a number of other areas.

Diversified livelihoods (mixed approach based on ecological services and non-ecological services)

Capacitating people with diversified livelihood options can help them better combat the adverse impacts of climate change, and also discourages migration. Many INGOs and CSOs are imparting technical training to youth and community people on repairing and building electrical devices, welding and carpentry. Mechanical training for repairing motorcycles and hardwares, such as computers, are also being provided by some organisations. Bangladesh Association for Community Education (BACE) has reported about distribution

of tailoring equipment and providing training and establishing hatchery facilities for women and young people. Oxfam, through its partners, has set up diversified producer groups for dairy products, sunflower, hogla mat and duck. These programmes equip people for undertaking alternative activities in case their livelihoods are lost because of adverse effects of climate change.

Strengthen capacity of the community to understand climate change impacts, appreciate the need for disaster risk reduction and build resilience through engaging women, young people and children

A number of organisations are working towards strengthening the capacity of communities to assess implications of climate change and disaster risks. Activities focus on dissemination of early warning systems to communities and enhancement of adaptive capacity. For example, Practical Action is implementing a project titled Child Centered Climate Change Adaptation which has helped children and caregivers to improve knowledge about climate change through trainings, meetings, workshops, day observations, mock drills in schools and communities with participation of girls, boys, men, women, persons with disability. The project also worked with children and caregivers, so that they can get engaged in local-level adaptation planning process of Community Risk Assessment (CRA). Rupantar, a local NGO, has worked on developing context-specific technology, approach and adaptive planning suitable for Shyamnagar upazila in Satkhira district.



Khushi is receiving first prize of the art competition (NDPD-2018) from District Administration

“I am in class 8 at Metro Police Line High School, Khulna. I am also a member of Ghashful Child and Youth Club, which is established under the Child-Centred Climate Change Adaption (CCCCA) project of Save the Children, which is funded by the Australian Government, with support from local NGO, Prodipan. I have been a member since the time our organiser started to work with our community and got me enrolled in

(Box contd.)

(Box contd.)

the project. This club is situated at Bastuhara Colony of ward no 9. From the very beginning of the project in my community, I have participated in project activities with great enthusiasm, which included sessions and meetings at club and in various competitions (art, quiz, essay and poem writing, etc.) organised to observe different days. By participating in these activities, our knowledge level about climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and environmental issues has been raised significantly. Our knowledge and capacity have also been enhanced through our club activities. This is an ongoing process. The child club is our learning platform. We learn about our rights and we are taught about child-led advocacy” – says Khusi.

Promote context-specific alternative solutions through adaptation and mitigation interventions

A number of NGOs are working on implementing projects dealing with solar lamps and eco-friendly stoves. The Voice of South Bangladesh reported that they have distributed solar water disinfection technology for 5,000 women-headed households.

Enhancing resilience of seagoing traditional fisher community of climate-exposed southwest Bangladesh

The southwest coastal region of Bangladesh is a climate hotspot and one of the most vulnerable regions in the world, affected by frequent natural disasters, such as cyclone, sea depression, tidal surge, high tide, salinity intrusion, river bank erosion, etc. Around 0.35 million people of this region are involved in fishing in the estuaries of rivers and the Bay of Bengal. Recently, the number of cyclones and sea depressions has increased significantly, which is creating more and new risks for traditional seagoing fisher-folks. While fishing in the sea during depressions, the fishers either have to come back without any catch, or they are compelled to take risks which could cost their lives. In some cases, they are washed out to sea by force of wind and tide. When they get rescued by marine forces of neighbouring countries, the fishermen are incarcerated as illegal intruders. Eventually, they have to sell assets to repay the loans taken before their trip from the local *mahajans* (moneylenders). They are then often forced to involuntarily migrate to urban slums due to debts and poverty. Ethnologically, this community, named *Malo*, is an extremely marginalised occupational group, which is excluded from the mainstream of development process. Generations after generations, these people have been contributing to our food security and economic growth, but they continue to live in inhuman conditions.

In this backdrop, An Organization for Socio-Economic Development (AOSED) came up with the idea to form climate-resilient fishing community. The

(Box contd.)

(Box contd.)

organisation is working in five villages (Hitampur, Baka, Debduar, Mahmudkati and Ramnathpur) of Paikgachha upazila in Khulna district. The organisation is working to ensure long-term livelihood safety and improvement of living standard of the Malo people. With the aim to reducing loss of lives and livelihoods of the seagoing fishing population, AOSED converted vehicle-tracking devices into vessel-tracking devices for establishing an information technology (IT)-based, effective and user-friendly Early Warning Response Mechanism. Since 2015, AOSED has been maintaining live communication with these people during sea-fishing season in the Bay of Bengal (Bangladesh part) from its Central Monitoring Hub (established in AOSED Head Office), and sharing weather information with the fishermen.

Additionally, AOSED has conducted several trainings on DRR and mock drills on emergency evacuation. More than 1,500 seagoing fishers were able to get knowledge and build capacity in relevant areas. More than 128 seagoing fishing boats were supplied with different types of equipments, such as life jackets, life buoys, signal lights, compass and mobile phones. The initiative has been able to enhance safety and security of fisher-folks. Also about 950 women members of fisher communities have received trainings on proper health-hygiene and nutrition. Two hundred and fifty extremely poor women fishers have been provided with income-generating activity support for livelihood improvement. In addition, this community was provided with easy access to safe drinking water through two Reverse Osmosis water plants set up in two villages. Although, this intervention is the first of its kind in the area, fishers have adapted to the new technology very well, and the benefits have been appreciated by the stakeholders.

Policy engagement

Historically, the GoB, particularly the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), MoDMR and Ministry of Planning have been interacting with the CSOs on a regular basis to get inputs for formulation of new policies and amendment of existing policies. These ministries, as also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had extensive consultations with the CSOs and members of civil society during the SDG formulation stage. On several occasions, they have drawn on CSO experience when reviewing and designing various policies and plans. For example, the MoEFCC which led the review of BCCSAP, included a number of scientists and researchers in the team to provide expert suggestions. Furthermore, several consultations were carried out by the MoEFCC, where wider stakeholder groups including the private sector, took an active part. In addition, a roadmap for developing the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) was prepared in 2015, which was supported by the Norwegian Government. As part of this initiative, the CSOs have taken part in several consultations.

Advocacy work of Network on Climate Change in Bangladesh (NCCB)

Network on Climate Change in Bangladesh (NCCB) works to influence climate policy towards achieving climate justice, both nationally and globally. Policy advocacy initiatives are primarily focused on adaptation, loss and damage and financing climate actions to address the needs of the most vulnerable people, particularly women and children.

During the 2010–2015 period, NCCB and its members had organised a series of division- and national-level consultations for implementation of the BCCSAP. Between 2015 and 2018, NCCB was closely involved to ensure better governance of national climate funds, justice and equity in policies, capacity building of local government bodies. It supported communities to develop Local Area Adaptation Plans (LAAPs) in their respective localities and to raise people's voice on several urgent climate-change-related issues (e.g. NAP, climate migration, transparency in managing climate funds, etc.). NCCB also worked to enhance the role of media in dealing with climate-related issues.

As a result of the aforesaid initiatives, LAAP was included in the NAP Road Map (2015), and CSO demands were taken into cognisance in preparing the Revised BCCSAP. At present, NCCB has launched an advocacy campaign initiative to demand that the NAP process is more participatory, gender-sensitive, and takes into consideration ecosystem sustainability. NCCB has also been playing an important role through its lobby and advocacy campaign works to increase resource allocation to the most vulnerable areas. Despite the high political control over climate fund management and lack of willingness of concerned government authorities (e.g. Bangladesh Climate Change Trust) to change the procedures, thanks to the evidence presented by the CSOs (including NCCB) and media, in recent years the BCCTF authority agreed to increase allocations for the most vulnerable areas. In this process, the demand for amending the Climate Change Trust Act 2010 has also gained some traction in policy discussions. NCCB, jointly with 42 other CSOs, has formed a platform, Bangladesh Climate Action Forum (BCAF) and placed a nine-point demands to the political parties. The platform has urged the political parties to make a commitment to address climate change in their election manifestos. Political parties have indicated their interest to take appropriate actions in this regard. Indeed, some have included them in their respective election manifestos.

CSOs in Bangladesh have been closely involved in the formulation of some of the key plans and policies of the country involving climate change impacts. These include Climate Change and Gender Action Plan (CCGAP), establishment of a National Mechanism to address Climate Induced Disaster Loss and Damage (NMLnD) and development of an NDC. CSO representatives were also members of the advisory body of the National Designated Authority for Green Climate Fund.



INGOs and CSOs, including various networks, have proactively facilitated policy and practice changes in implementation of the government plans and projects. GoB has recently published Climate Budget for 20 ministries. CSOs, through a consultative

process, offered their opinions regards this initiative. The CSOs welcomed the initiative and suggested that the government should include provisions which will enhance the efficacy of climate finance utilisation and raise the quality of expenditure.

There are number of organisations which are working in the area of monitoring expenditures of the BCCTF, and appropriateness and effectiveness of the money spent. Their findings are based on ground-level investigation and reporting and community consultations. The findings are then communicated to the relevant ministries. It is to be noted that the media also plays a significant role in holding the concerned authorities to account.

Climate budget tracking

ActionAid Bangladesh and the ICCCAD have taken a joint initiative to advocate for a more accountable and transparent national climate budget process.

In 2017-18, the government published its first climate budget report, mainstreaming climate change into development. It is hoped that the broadening of the scope from six ministries/divisions (as noted in the Climate Protection and Development: Budget Report, 2017-18) to 20 ministries/divisions (as envisaged in Climate Financing for Sustainable Development, 2018-19) will contribute to endeavours to ensure climate-resilient and sustainable development in Bangladesh. Giving due recognition to government's various initiatives, ActionAid Bangladesh and ICCCAD, with support from Action on Climate Today, produced a report titled, Civil Society's Response to Bangladesh Climate Budget. The report was based on analysis, discussions, demands and recommendations from the CSOs. The report was launched at the Finance Division in November 2018 with the expectation that it will contribute to putting in place a more accountable and transparent budgetary system.

In various global fora, the INGOs and CSOs of Bangladesh have been playing a supportive role to the work of the GoB. Since 2015, the CSOs, as in earlier years, has continued to support the GoB stance, which called for greater global accountability in funding of the various climate actions and initiatives. Adaptation actions and technology transfer for the LDCs may be particularly mentioned in this connection. In many cases, the CSOs have lent their voice to issues such as those concerning demands for compensation arising from loss and damage, where for various reasons, the government's voice in concerned negotiations tend to be rather muted.

Globally, through different networks and partnerships, INGOs and CSOs are trying to generate additional funds in favour of implementation of

CSOs' role in establishing the NMLnD

Bangladesh is widely recognised as a role model for addressing the consequences of climate change-induced disasters. It is well-known that the impacts of climate-induced disasters are significant with high loss and damage. Indeed, this is a harsh reality facing Bangladesh today. Bangladesh has taken several initiatives, including establishment of Climate Change Trust Fund and the BCCSAP. With its robust legal policies and frameworks and systematised government structure, the country is trying its best to battle intense, frequent and uncertain disasters which visit the country every year.

Since the complex nature of loss and damage demands specific regulatory framework, the global community decided to establish the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage to address the attendant concerns. However, disaster loss and damage must also be addressed by taking into account the particular country contexts. This would mean that Bangladesh needs to adopt specific rules and regulations to address the challenges by taking into cognisance concrete context, specific nature of vulnerabilities and the socio-economic scenario facing its population.

After the unpacking of the WIM in 2016, MoDMR, along with ActionAid Bangladesh, ICCCAD, CARE Bangladesh and Nature Conservation Management, prepared a scoping paper to showcase the work which was carried out till then, and also to explore the potentials of the NMLnD in Bangladesh. The paper was prepared through consultation workshops involving relevant stakeholders, held both at local and national levels. The paper was also presented by ActionAid Bangladesh and ICCCAD at the COP 22 in 2016 at Marrakech, where comments were offered by international stakeholders. Based on the consultations, a concept note and a draft technical assistance project proforma (TAPP) were prepared. These were presented at a side event of COP 24 in 2018 at Katowice, organised by the ActionAid Bangladesh and ICCCAD. A short-term project will soon be taken up by MoDMR, in partnership with ActionAid and ICCCAD, to establish the NMLnD.

climate change and disaster risk reduction plans of action. Post 2015, it is being observed that funding for skills development and adaptation actions has reduced significantly. CSOs in Bangladesh have been working with their partners in developed countries to demand that the needed funds are mobilised and allocated towards climate actions.

Over the years, a number of NGOs, research institutions and networks, such as the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Bangladesh Center for Advance Studies (BCAS) and Climate Action Network South Asia (Bangladesh Chapter) have been working on tracking GCF. They are also advocating for establishment of a national financial architecture for addressing the needs of the most climate vulnerable communities in Bangladesh. For example, some of the recent initiatives by BCAS have focused on advocating in favour of ecosystem-based resilient livelihoods. It is also implementing pilot projects that promote child-centred adaptation and DRR in Bangladesh.

Research and awareness

Awareness raising among the most vulnerable communities to climate change and disaster impacts, as part of capacity building, is the most common areas of intervention by the NGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh. As part of capacity building, the NGOs invest a major part of their respective project funds for identifying local/contextual solutions, which are socially acceptable and economically viable. Action research projects focus primarily on women, young people and children who are the most vulnerable groups in the society. There are projects which particularly focus on developing people-centred technological solutions, such as the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Technology Park (by Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh) and Weather Information Board for Farmers (by Practical Action in Bangladesh). There are also several initiatives which concern investing in solar-based adaptation and mitigation interventions, in partnership with private sector start-ups, geared to identifying market-based solutions. The GoB and the CSOs have also been working with farmers to develop climate-resilient sustainable agriculture practices in local contexts.

Some of the research- and policy-based INGOs and research institutions have been engaged in academic research works to create evidence on critical environment-related issues. These include research on loss and damage, displacement and migration, and appropriate transparency mechanism for fund allocation for climate change-related projects. As regards responding to disasters, the NGOs, in collaboration with the GoB, have been undertaking

joint needs assessment in post-disaster situation. The purpose is to develop a comprehensive response plan and design appropriate and effective financial allocation measures.

There are a number of networks on DRR and climate change, including young people's and women's network on climate change. These networks facilitate knowledge generation, as well as provide a platform for undertaking joint advocacy on issues related to climate change and resilience. There are also a number of active CSO networks with regional and global linkages (node/

Technology for addressing the basic needs

Shima Bawali lives in Khona Khatail village situated in Pankhali union under Dacope upazila, Khulna. This is primarily a coastal area. Saline intrusion is highly visible in these coastal parts of Bangladesh. Both ground water and surface water have been severely saline-affected due to earlier natural disasters involving floods and storms, such as Cyclone Aila in 2009. In recent years, local residents have managed to cultivate and produce crops using advanced saline water resistance methods. However, scarcity of safe drinking water remained a major problem in this area.

Shima Bawali is a 35 year old female resident of this area who lives with her two children. She is also an owner of a small grocery shop in the village outskirts. It was already burdensome for her to look after her household with young children and run her shop at the same time. She was distressed to see that her children as well as other people of her community suffered from various skin allergies, stomach illness and water-borne diseases due to regular drinking of saline water. Water from ponds and canals were saline-contaminated. To get pure water, people often travelled to distant areas, which was quite time-consuming and troublesome. All these disturbed Shima Bawali. In order to deal with the problem and reduce the harmful effects, she and 44 other female residents created a women's committee, named Khona Khatail Mahila Samity. Sixteen women of the organisation also made regular subscriptions.

The purpose of their efforts was to help the community people and reduce their sufferings. The Shomity established a Reverse Osmosis plant in the area with support WaterAid and the HSBC. This plant introduced water filtration which takes out the saline out of the water and turns it into water that is pure and safe for drinking. The plant is aimed to benefit over 1,300 residents of 300 households in the area. Thanks to the plant, water will be available for local people and people from adjacent communities at a very low-price. Shila Bawali and all the other members of this community hope that this plant will reduce scarcity of pure and safe drinking water and help them live a healthy life. The initiative has given the community a new ray of hope. Their standard of life has improved now that the quality of water was better. Also, more customers are coming to Shila's grocery shop now.

chapter). Some of these are Climate Action Network South Asia, Global Network of CSOs for Disaster Reduction, Disaster Forum, Network on Climate Change and Bangladesh Youth Net for Climate Action. Recently, the Youth Net for Climate Action led the Climate Strike Movement, which is a global initiative of school children which works for climate justice. Additionally, organisations such as ActionAid are at present facilitating a social media campaign with letters from children on local disasters that highlight economic and non-economic losses and damage caused to life and livelihoods.

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), a private sector initiative, has conducted a number of studies on energy efficiency and issues related to environmental protection. The studies and actions include battery-run three-wheelers in Bangladesh, establishment of USD 200 million GTF by the Bangladesh Bank to support green re-financing in textile and leather sectors, raising supplementary duty on three hazardous chemicals and regulating water use and water pollution in Bangladesh. These studies also map out responsibilities. It is worth mentioning that Bangladesh has 67 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green factories certified by the United States Green Building Council. Of these, 13 were platinum rated, seven of which have been ranked among the top 10 green factories in the world (New Age, 2018).

Key lessons learned

Information was sought from more than 100 NGOs/INGOs on key lessons learned. One of the major shortcomings of this exercise was that given the number of INGOs and CSOs working in Bangladesh and their extensive work to address climate change through various actions, the time for the exercise was rather limited. Figure 1 suggests that over 50 per cent of the responders are working on adaptation areas, whereas over 15 per cent are focusing on mitigation actions; 31.6 per cent of these are involved in projects and actions that address both adaptation and mitigation. The activities could be further categorised based on priorities: awareness, advocacy work, research and technology development and others. Figure 2 shows the activities related to interventions as was responded. Awareness and livelihood-related activities are the top two major interventions by the NGOs, which, by and large, links with adaptation interventions. A number of NGOs are working in advocacy areas that concern both adaptation and mitigation interventions.

Looking at the information collected, it is also found that significant effort is being put on empowerment of women and young people and on capacity building in terms of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

Figure 1: Focus of interventions

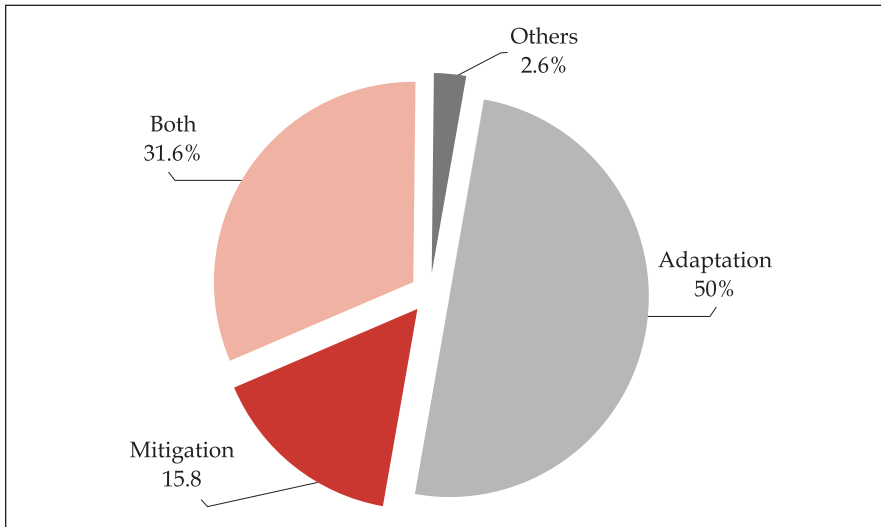
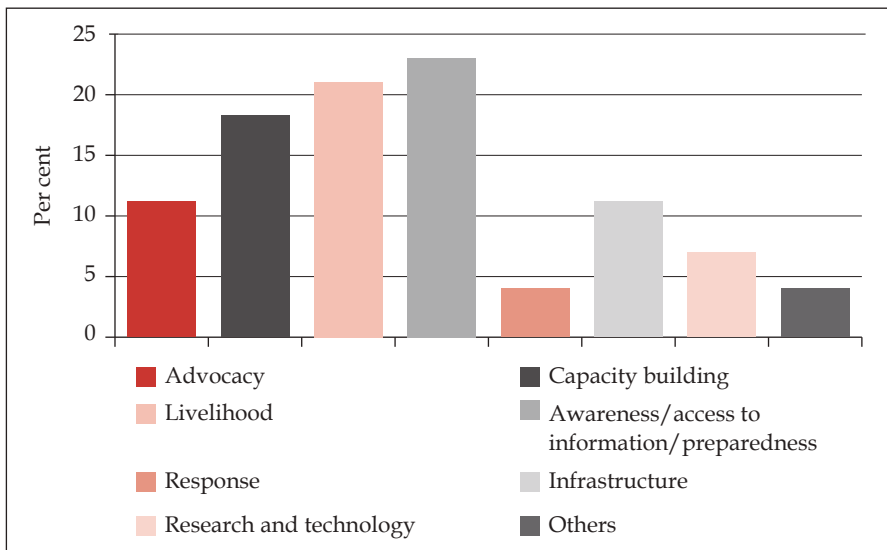


Figure 2: Activities related to interventions



and response. CRSA, centering on women in particular, have been effective in many cases. However, actions involving diversification of livelihood could be further expanded. While a few of the organisations have done an impressive job by bringing technological change, through climate technology park and solar-based solutions, there is need for more innovation. More targeted support is needed from the developed countries if this is to happen.

Addressing the ‘leave no one behind’ aspiration

SDG concept of LNOB was adopted with the aim to cater to the needs of all people – irrespective of gender, profession, caste, race, sexual orientation, etc. The study finds that in terms of attaining the objective of LNOB, there are many shortcomings. For instance, according to the Department of Social Services, there are about 10,000 transgender people across the country (Dhaka Tribune, 2018); however, there is no data on transgender children. There is also lack of interventions to protect the transgender community who face social ostracisation and discrimination on a regular basis. As a matter of fact, transgender community is struggling to exercise their basic rights. As would be expected, their capacity to handle climate change is far worse than other groups.

While the idea of women empowerment has gained traction, there was no information on the work of women who are involved in professions that are looked down by the society, for instance, the sex workers. Although research studies and also the media have highlighted how climate change is pushing women and young girls into such professions, there is hardly any work that focus on capacity building of these marginalised communities to address consequences of natural disasters. It is said that disasters do not discriminate, but relief and recovery practices do (Thuringer, 2016). Consequently, ensuring that these excluded groups have equal access to resources and steps are taken to enhance their capacity to address climate change impacts – should receive greater attention from both the GoB and the NSAs.

5. Challenges and limitations

One of the major limitations of the present report is that only a limited number of INGOs shared data and information as regards projects and programmes they are involved with in relevant areas. The report, thus, has not been able to capture the entire range, scale and magnitude of the work that are being carried out by INGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh in SDG 13 areas. The time available for data collection and preparing the report was also not adequate. Furthermore, majority of projects tend to be designed in consideration of the larger objective of reducing risk that the communities face. NGOs and CSOs do not necessarily address one specific indicator. As is known, many of the interventions are of cross-cutting nature. As a matter of fact, a large number of interventions not only contributes to SDG 13, but also have positive implications for SDGs 1, 2, 5 and some of the other goals. The report has not been able to capture the richness of the impacts that these programmes have in attaining the SDG 13.

The other challenge was related to capturing the contribution of projects specific to climate actions. While a lot of relevant data and information is available at the global level, not much information is available at the local level in Bangladesh. Positive outcomes originating from various climate-related projects and programmes are also not adequately reflected in the central database of the government. There is no comprehensive monitoring and reporting system in place to assess progress achieved under SDG 13 targets through the various activities and initiatives undertaken by the NSAs in Bangladesh. There is a need for an appropriate framework to capture the role of the NSAs in this regard.

6. Way forward

Moving forward, based on the findings and the challenges and opportunities which have been identified, it is felt that the NGOs and CSOs need a common space to interact more closely with each other and to identify credible solutions to address the SDG 13, Paris Agreement and the SFDRR, in a comprehensive manner. There is also an emerging need to link NSA efforts more closely with those of the government, for better leveraging and drawing the synergies. This will also give such interventions greater sustainability. It will be important to have a joint monitoring and implementation framework of the GoB and CSOs to track progress in terms of attaining Goal 13 targets, in light of the 2030 Agenda, as also other global agreements on Climate Action.

Without doubt, Bangladesh can claim a wealth of knowledge and technical capacities on climate change and disaster-related interventions. Bangladeshi actors are also well aware of the international strategies and frameworks in place as regards climate-related actions. There is a need to take advantage of this formidable national capacity towards more effective and results-oriented actions in SDG-13-related areas. A framework for sustained participation of all actors, backed by well-documented fields of expertise, could be developed under shared responsibility of the GoB and the NSAs. Based on the review of past successes and failures in reducing disaster risks captured in the Hyogo Framework for action, steps should be taken to identify the learnings and lessons. Efforts should be made to make the actions context-specific to attain better results in areas of mitigation and adaptation. A horizontal learning and sharing platform should be created with a strong focus on knowledge management in the areas of innovation and education. This is needed to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels, which could serve as a strong tool for attaining the targets of Goal 13. Concrete steps should be taken for

collating, documenting and disseminating knowledge about best practices and successful local-level initiatives.

As is known, the SDG is supposed to be a country-driven process, and indicators are to be set by respective governments to report on a voluntary basis. Collaboration between the GoB and the NSAs should be considered as an opportunity both to identify national priorities and towards attaining the various targets. Indeed, attaining SDG 13 targets will critically hinge on the efficacy of GO-NSA (government-NSA) collaboration in climate-related areas. By strengthening accountability, transparency and good governance in implementing the SDG 13 in Bangladesh, NSAs could contribute importantly to the greater cause of attaining sustainable development in Bangladesh. Both the GoB and the NSAs should have a keen interest in building strong partnerships to attain the SDG 13 targets by 2030.

References

Aguilar, L. (2009, 17 June). *How Natural Disasters Affect Women*. Geneva: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Available at: <https://www.iucn.org/content/how-natural-disasters-affect-women>

Asaduzzaman, M. (2015). *Livelihood vulnerability of women in the context of climate change impacts: Insights from coastal Bangladesh*. PhD thesis submitted to the University of Newcastle, Australia. Mimeo.

CRED and UNISDR. (2015). *The Human Cost of Natural Disaster: A Global Perspective*. Brussels and Geneva: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PAND_report.pdf

CSCSD. (n.d.). <http://www.cscsdev.org/> (official website). Ibadan: Civil Society Coalition on Sustainable Development (CSCSD).

Dhaka Tribune. (2018, 28 October). *Life as a transgender child in Bangladesh*. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/feature/people-feature/2018/10/28/life-as-a-transgender-child-in-bangladesh>

FSIN. (2019). *Global Report on Food Crises 2019: Joint Analysis for Better Decisions*. Washington, D. C.: Food Security Information Network (FSIN). Available at: http://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC%202019_Full%20Report.pdf

GED. (2016). *A Handbook: Mapping of Ministries by Targets in the Implementation of SDGs Aligning with 7th Five Year Plan (2016-20)*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/19da51a5_b571_4158_bcae_efc3e798c1f7/AHandbook-Mapping-of-Ministries_-targets_-SDG_-7-FYP_2016.pdf

GED. (2017). *Data Gap Analysis of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/3acbc97e_6ba3_467b_bdb2_cfb3cbbf059f/Final_Data-Gap-Analysis-of-SDGs_Bangladesh-Perspective_23_02_2017.pdf

GED. (2018a). *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/dc350cdc_4c6d_4a81_b72a_3afe082187ac/Monitoring_and_Evaluation_Framework_of_SDGS_Book_Proof.pdf

GED. (2018b). *National Action Plan of Ministries and Divisions by Targets in the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB).

GED. (2018c). *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: [http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20(1).pdf)

Khalequzzaman, M. (2018). Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100: Is it compatible with the SDGs? In Islam, M. S. and Khalequzzaman, M. (Eds.) *Sustainable Development Goals and Bangladesh Environment* (pp. 38–58). Proceedings of the Special Conference on Sustainable Development Goals & Environment, held on 14–15 January 2017, in Dhaka. Dhaka: Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Bangladesh Poribesh Network (BEN). Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322836153_Bangladesh_Delta_Plan_2100_Is_it-Compatible_with_the_SDGs

Kreft, S., Eckstein, D., Dorsch, L. and Fischer, L. (2016). *Global Climate Risk Index 2016*. Briefing Paper. Bonn: Germanwatch Available at: <https://germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/publication/13503.pdf>

Ministry of Devolution and Planning. (2017). *Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in Kenya*. Nairobi: Ministry of Devolution and Planning, Government of Kenya. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15689Kenya.pdf>

New Age. (2018, 1 March). 7 out of world's top 10 green units in Bangladesh. Available at: <http://www.newagebd.net/article/35805/7-out-of-worlds-top-10-green-units-in-bangladesh>

NGO Federation of Nepal. (2017). *Nepal SDGs Forum: Connecting People for Development Justice*. Civil society report on implementation of SDGs in Nepal.

Kathmandu: NGO Federation of Nepal. Available at: <https://gcap.global/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2.-NEPAL-CSO-report-on-SDGs-Implementation-Nepal.pdf>

Norwegian Refugee Council. (2015). *Community Resilience and Disaster-related Displacement in South Asia*. Oslo: Norwegian Refugee Council. Available at: <https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/resilience-and-disaster-related-displacement-in-south-asia.pdf>

Rahman, M., Khan, T. I., Sadique, M. Z. and Sabbih, M. A. (2016). *Addressing the Deficits: An Action Plan for Data Revolution in Bangladesh*. Southern Voice Occasional Paper 34. Dhaka: Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals. Available at: <http://southernvoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SV-OP-34.pdf>

Rice, D. and Weise, E. (2019, 21 April). 99.9999% chance humans are causing global warming, and other science-based facts on climate change for Earth Day. *USA Today*. Available at: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/04/21/earth-day-2019-climate-change-humans-global-warming-weather-rising-water/3507125002/>

Thuringer, C. (2016, 22 August). Left Out and Behind: Fully Incorporating Gender Into the Climate Discourse. Posted on *New Security Beat*, blog of the Wilson Center's Environmental Change and Security Program. Available at: <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2016/08/left-behind-fully-incorporating-gender-climate-discourse/>

UN. (n.d.). *Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts*. New York: United Nations (UN). Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change-2/>

UNDP. (2016). *Enhancing Women and Girls Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in Bangladesh*. Annex VI (c) of the Green Climate Fund Funding Proposal by the Indigenous People's Planning Framework. New York: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Available at: [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/News/2016/FP-UNDP-011116-5724-Annex%20VI%20\(c\).pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/News/2016/FP-UNDP-011116-5724-Annex%20VI%20(c).pdf)

UNISDR and CRED. (2018). *Economic Losses, Poverty and Disaster: 1998–2017*. Geneva and Brussels: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

(UNISDR) and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). Available at: https://www.preventionweb.net/files/61119_credeconomiclosses.pdf

Verisk Maplecroft. (n.d.). *Climate Change Vulnerability Index 2018*. New York: Verisk Maplecroft. Available at: <https://www.maplecroft.com/risk-indices/climate-change-vulnerability-index/>

Annexes

Annex 1: SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts – Targets and indicators

Target	Indicators
13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies 13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people 13.1.2 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies
13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	13.2.1 Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other)
13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	13.3.1 Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula 13.3.2 Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions
13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible	13.a.1 Mobilized amount of United States dollars per year starting in 2020 accountable towards the \$100 billion commitment

(Annex 1 contd.)

(Annex 1 contd.)

Target	Indicators
13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg13>

Annex 2: List of organisations which provided information in the Goal-Group exercise

1.	ActionAid Bangladesh
2.	An Organization for Socio-Economic Development
3.	Association of Voluntary Actions for Society
4.	Bangladesh Association for Community Education
5.	Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies (BCAS)
6.	Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA)
7.	Bolipara Nari Kalyan Somity
8.	Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha
9.	Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)
10.	Christian Aid
11.	Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS)
12.	Center for Disability in Development
13.	Community Participation and Development
14.	Dalit
15.	Democratic Budget Movement
16.	Helioz
17.	International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
18.	Kendrio Krishok Moitri
19.	Manab Mukti Sangstha
20.	Nagor Daridra Basteebashir Unnayan Sangstha
21.	Network on Climate Change, Bangladesh
22.	Oxfam in Bangladesh
23.	Pollisree
24.	Practical Action in Bangladesh

(Annex 2 contd.)

(Annex 2 contd.)

25.	Prodipan
26.	Rupantar
27.	Save the Children International
28.	Shushilan
29.	Solidarity International
30.	Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)
31.	Uddipan
32.	USS-Nilphamari
33.	Village Education Resource Center
34.	Voluntary Association for Rural Development
35.	WaterAid
36.	Waterkeepers Bangladesh
37.	Young Power in Social Action

Ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)



Anchor organisation

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

Co-anchor organisations

Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha

Nagorik Uddyog (NU)

Associate organisations

Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)

ActionAid Bangladesh

Bandhu Social Welfare Society

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)

British Council in Bangladesh

HEKS/EPER

JAAGO Foundation

Naripokkho

World Vision Bangladesh

Lead authors

Shahzada M. Akram, Senior Programme Manager, and

Juliet Rossette, Programme Manager, TIB

Marufia Noor, Project Manager, NU

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report has been prepared at the initiative of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The report has been prepared by Goal-Group 16 of the Platform to provide a critical view as regards the progress achieved in Bangladesh from the perspective of non-state actors concerning SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The objectives are to identify key implementation-related challenges in this context and provide recommendations in going forward.

In preparing the report, important contributions were received from a large number of stakeholders. They included Nahid Sharmin, Deputy Programme Manager, Md. Mostofa Kamal, Deputy Programme Manager and Md. Sahidul Islam, Deputy Programme Manager of TIB, Md. Rafiqul Islam, Deputy Director, Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha, Selina Ahmed Ena, Executive Director, ASF, Maheen Sultan, Member, Naripokkho, Afrin Sultana Chowdhury, Advisor, Programme Development and Resource Mobilisation, JAAGO Foundation, Md. Mozahidul Islam, Programme Coordinator and Selina Akhter Keya, Programme Manager, PIDIM, and Israt Jahan Biju, former Programme Manager, PIDIM of HEKS/EPER, Md. Korban Ali, Deputy Manager – Youth Representation, ActionAid Bangladesh, Shara Arzooman Chowdhury, Senior Officer (legal talk), Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Taqbir Huda, Research Specialist, BLAST, Md. Zahidul Kabir, National Coordinator, Social Inclusion and Policy Analysis, and Shabira Nupur, Deputy Director Advocacy and Justice for Children of World Vision Bangladesh, and Md. Abdur Rahaman Khan, Project Manager – Society, British Council in Bangladesh. The authors would like to sincerely thank all of them for their support and valuable inputs, which have enriched the report.

The authors of the report and Goal-Group 16 team members are particularly thankful to Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, CPD and Core Group Member of the Platform, for his critical feedbacks on an earlier draft of the report. Colleagues at the CPD, the Secretariat of the Platform – Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, Anis Pervez, former Additional Director and Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate – deserve high appreciation for their excellent support, guidance and cooperation throughout this exercise.

Finally, the authors would like to express their gratitude to all the organisations and citizens across Bangladesh who are committed to advancing the cause of implementing SDG 16 in Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

It is worthwhile to recall that, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is a set of 17 aspirational Global Goals (UN, n.d.a) and 169 targets, adopted in 2015 by all the 193 member-states of the United Nations (UN). The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action that emphasises the core principles of peace, people, planet, prosperity and partnership that seeks to strengthen universal peace, prosperity and freedom. The goals cover three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, while the driving principle of the goals is to *leave no one behind* (LNOB).

The global community has adopted SDGs to complete the unfinished development agendas of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), address new aspirations and meet sustainability challenges within the span of one and half decades. One of the key distinctive features of the SDGs, as against the MDGs, is that the newly proposed development goals are universal in nature. Building on the success and momentum of the MDGs, the new Global Goals cover additional grounds. All UN member-states are expected to work towards a sustainable world that secures and safeguards the interests of the future generations. In short, these new goals are universal in nature and reflect the interests of all countries, whereas the MDGs were geared towards actions in the context of the developing countries only (UN, n.d.c).

Secondly, the fundamental difference between the SDGs and the MDGs (as regards which, Bangladesh has achieved commendable progress) is the paradigm shift in favour of qualitative aspects of implementation rather than just the quantitative aspects. The pledge of an inclusive society, leaving no one behind, accountable and inclusive institutions and fundamental freedoms can only be achieved through higher levels of participatory governance and good governance that upholds the principle of zero-tolerance for corruption. Indeed, these lofty aspirations concerning governance, accountability and anti-corruption, captured under the Goal 16 of the SDGs, are not merely stand-alone targets but are to be mainstreamed and embedded in each of the 17 SDGs (Iftekhharuzzaman, 2017).

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member-states to conduct regular national reviews of progress made towards the achievement of the various

goals through an inclusive, voluntary and country-led process. Every year, member-states who choose to do so, volunteer to report on respective national progress at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) of the UN. Bangladesh has presented its Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2017, where status of implementation of Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17 in Bangladesh was reported (GED, 2017a). In 2019, the HLPF took place in July in New York, to cover Goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17. Bangladesh did not present VNR this year.

There is no denying the fact that peaceful, just and inclusive societies are necessary factors to achieve the SDGs. People everywhere need to be free of fear from all forms of violence. They must feel safe as they go about their lives, irrespective of their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation. In order to advance the SDGs, we need effective and inclusive public institutions that can deliver quality education and healthcare, fair economic policies and inclusive environmental protection (UN, n.d.b). According to the UN, many regions of the world suffer acutely from armed conflicts or other forms of violence which occur within societies and geographical boundaries. Advancements in promoting the rule of law and access to justice are uneven and varies across the countries. However, this is not to say that some progress is not visible in relation to promoting public access to information, albeit at a slow pace, and in terms of strengthening of institutions that uphold human rights at the national level.¹ However, much more remains to be done if Bangladesh is to achieve Goal 16 to its fullest measure.

It has been argued that, SDG 16 is both an end in itself and a crucial means and enabler of delivering sustainable development in all countries. It is in fact seen by many commentators as being *the* transformational goal, which is key to deciding whether the SDGs will be achieved or not (FDSD, n.d.).

Attempts to assess progress of Bangladesh in terms of achieving Goal 16 are not many. One recalls that the status of different targets and indicators under Goal 16 have been presented in the last report of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) on the annual progress of the SDGs. It can be seen from the report that of the 23 indicators of the 12 targets under Goal 16, official government data is available only for eight indicators of six targets (GED, 2018b). According to another report, data are readily available (green) for four, partially available (yellow) for five, and not available (red) for 14 indicators (GED, 2018a).

¹For details, see UN (2018) and UNECOSOC (2018).

According to the SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2017, the progress in terms of achieving Goal 16 is under the red category with score of 54 out of 100. The overall score of Bangladesh was 56.2 with the country ranked at 120th out of 157 countries (Bertelsmann Stiftung and SDSN, 2017).

In 2017, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) carried out an independent appraisal as regards Bangladesh's preparedness and progress and to identify the challenges, in view of attaining SDG 16 (TIB, 2017b).² The study concluded that, although Bangladesh has achieved a good state of preparedness in terms of having legal frameworks in place and institutional architecture has also been put in relevant institutions related to the National Integrity Strategy (NIS), significant gaps exist between declarative aspirations and implementation and practices of relevant laws and policies. Concerning access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms, the report found that despite the legal and institutional structure (as distinct from many other countries), in reality the right to information is yet to be fully implemented in Bangladesh. Violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, by different organs of the state remained a sad reality. Oftentimes, these entities took advantage of legal loopholes in existing laws and regulations to violate the provisions of the legal system in place.

Objective of the paper

At the *National Consultation on the Progress of SDGs in Bangladesh in the context of HLPF 2019* organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh a decision was taken to prepare six status reports as regards implementation of the six goals which were to be reviewed at the 2019 HLPF. The reports were to be put together by six Goal-Groups (set up by the Platform). These status reports were to feed into the preparation of the overview report, which was to be launched later towards the end of 2019.

The Goal-Group working on Goal 16, "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" was one of the aforesaid six groups. Goal-Group 16 included 12 partner organisations – TIB, Brotee, Nagorik Uddyog (NU), Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), ActionAid Bangladesh, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bangladesh Legal Aid

²The study covered four of the SDG 16 targets (16.4, 16.5, 16.6 and 16.10) out of 12. The targets were selected as these are more directly related to preventing corruption and establishing good governance. Even among the selected targets, the issues that do not fall directly under the purview of preventing corruption and establishing good governance, were not covered in the research.

and Services Trust (BLAST), HEKS/EPER, Naripokkho, The British Council, JAAGO Foundation and the World Vision Bangladesh.

Scope of the paper

The report intends to cover the following areas:

- Assess the progress of Goal 16 in Bangladesh, including relevant policies, institutions, data and budget.
- Capture the lessons learnt—best practices and challenges, which have been identified based on implementation of partner organisations’ programmes and initiatives in the concerned areas.
- Assess the way forward for more effective delivery of Goal 16 in Bangladesh and to identify the concrete steps which the government should take and the non-state partners need to pursue towards implementation of Goal 16 in Bangladesh.

Methodology

A meeting of Goal-Group 16 members was held at the TIB (acting as the anchor organisation for this group) on 12 February 2019 to plan the preparation of the review report. Tasks were distributed at this meeting among the partner organisations. Drawing on the inputs from the organisational reports received from partner organisations and subsequent discussions, the present report was drafted by the TIB, Brottee and NU following the guidelines provided by the Platform.

In preparing this report, the team has drawn inputs from relevant literature on national and international data and various related indices; surveys and research reports which dealt with various aspects of SDG implementation were also consulted. Secondary information pertaining to Bangladesh have been taken from a range of sources, such as the Household Income Expenditure Survey (HIES) of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), different sectoral reports of the GoB and publications of civil society organisations (CSOs).

Feedbacks on the structure and content of the report were sought from participants of the four consultative meetings with key stakeholders organised by the Citizen’s Platform: international development partners (on 6 March 2019), government functionaries (on 7 March 2019), local media (on 9 April 2019), and the private sector (on 11 April 2019).

It should be noted here that there is a dearth of data concerning the contribution of CSOs involved in implementing various programmes in Goal-16-related areas. While every effort was made to collect information from Goal-Group 16 members, concrete activities being implemented by the CSOs that are not members of the Platform could not be covered in this review process. This is a limitation of the present study.

2. Priorities of Bangladesh for Goal 16: Initiatives and achievements

GoB has taken a number of steps towards SDG implementation at the national level. The government has adopted the *whole of society* approach to ensure wider participation of the non-government organisations (NGOs), private sector, media and CSOs and development partners in the process of designing the action plan for implementing the SDGs. To spearhead the process, the SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee has been constituted at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to facilitate the implementation of SDGs Action Plan (GED, 2017d). The General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission under the Ministry of Planning is the SDG focal point, in-charge of the national SDG implementation process. The Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister was designated as the Convener of the SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee, with the GED acting as the Secretariat.

It needs to be recognised that, a number of measures have been undertaken with a view to implementing the SDGs in Bangladesh. These include mapping of the ministries with assigned tasks as regards SDG implementation³, data gap analysis⁴, development of a national monitoring and evaluation

³See GED (2016a). The lead, co-lead and associate ministries against each target of the SDGs have been mapped out under this exercise. This document is expected to reduce duplication of efforts, enhance synergy and help formulate action plans.

⁴See GED (2017b). Bangladesh Planning Commission conducted a review of various means of data generation in the country. The review has identified state of availability and status of data generation in Bangladesh concerning various indicators of measuring the achievement of SDGs. This analysis serves as the basis for tracking the SDGs implementation and achievements in Bangladesh. It is also playing a central role in formulating a monitoring and evaluation framework for SDGs.

framework⁵, development of an action plan to achieve SDGs⁶, and development of a needs assessment and financing strategy.⁷

As may be recalled, even prior to the adoption of the SDGs, Bangladesh had developed a decadal ‘National Sustainable Development Strategy’ in 2013, which also included a strategy to improve the state of governance in the country. The objectives of the good governance strategy as presented in the document were geared to ensure – an effective parliamentary system; sound law and order; pro-people and efficient public service delivery; independent, free, transparent and accountable legal and judicial system; strengthened local governance; and a corruption-free inclusive society with social justice in all fairness. The objectives focused on strengthening institutional capacity, reforming key institutions, controlling corruption, enhancing efficiency of planning and budgeting, financial sector monitoring, promoting e-governance, ensuring access to information, and reviving values and ethics in the society (GED, 2013).

Progresses achieved till now

Target 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

Some improvements are observed with regard to Target 16.1. It was reported that in 2015, the rate of homicide victims per 100,000 population dropped to 1.8, with 1.4 for male and 0.4 for female (Indicator 16.1.1 on number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age). Over the past couple of years this indicator registered an annual average decline of 4.26 per cent (GED, 2018b). However, according to World Data Atlas, the homicide rate for Bangladesh was 2.5 cases per 100,000 population in 2015, with the rate

⁵The SDG Tracker (<http://a2i.pmo.gov.bd/data-to-policy/sdg-tracker/>), developed under the Access to Information (a2i) initiative of the PMO of Bangladesh, has been tracking Bangladesh’s progress towards attainment of national development goals, particularly the SDGs, through a macro-level web-based information repository.

⁶See GED (2016b); the government has developed this action plan for implementation of the SDGs in alignment with the ongoing Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP).

⁷For details, see GED (2017c). Bangladesh may require around USD 928.48 billion worth of additional resources for full implementation of SDGs. Of this, USD 796.09 billion would come from domestic sources and USD 132.39 billion from external sources for the period 2017–2030. The annual average total additional spending required would be to the tune of USD 66.32 billion. The annual average additional amount required from foreign grants and aid and foreign direct investment (FDI) is USD 2.55 billion and USD 6.91 billion, respectively, while domestic spending need was estimated at USD 56.86 billion.

fluctuating significantly in recent years.⁸ According to Bangladesh Police data, in 2018, the total number of homicide cases in Bangladesh was 3,830.⁹

However, as regards to the proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months (Indicator 16.1.3), the performance has been discouraging, with the occurrence of violence being widely prevalent. According to the Violence Against Women Survey 2015, 57.7 per cent of the ever married women experience some form of violence at the hand of their husband. Proportion of women subject to any form of violence over the previous 12 months was found to be 38 per cent (BBS, 2016). Of those, share of women experiencing physical or sexual violence in the previous 12 months was 54.2 per cent and 26.9 per cent, respectively (GED, 2018b). According to another survey, 22 per cent of survey respondents experienced violence or sexual harassment at the workplace while commuting to and from their place of work.¹⁰

According to Amnesty International, at least 671 rape cases were reported by the media in 2016, and about 818 incidents of rape took place in 2017 (Amnesty International, 2017; ASK, 2018a). In 2017, the number of sexual harassment increased in various educational institutions and workplaces. Thus, 255 women (of whom 12 committed suicide) were sexually harassed by miscreants and 303 were tortured for dowry. Of those, 145 were killed and 10 committed suicide. 442 women suffered domestic violence; of those, 270 women were killed by husbands and in-laws, 34 were killed by their own family members, and 58 had committed suicide due to torture. In 2018, the total number of rape victims was 732; of those 63 were murdered and seven committed suicide after rape; 193 women were murdered by their husbands and 116 women were sexually harassed; of those eight committed suicide; 85 women were physically tortured to death for dowry, and 22 women were attacked by acid.¹¹

According to the Global Peace Index (GPI)¹², Bangladesh scored 2.084 and was ranked 93rd among 163 countries in 2018 (see Table 1). According to

⁸<https://knoema.com/atlas/Bangladesh/Homicide-rate>

⁹https://www.police.gov.bd/en/crime_statistic/year/2018

¹⁰The survey was conducted in 2018 under the coalition *Shojag* (Awaken), which included five organisations: BLAST, the Human Rights and Legal Aid Services Programme of BRAC, Christian Aid, Naripokkho (in the lead), and the SNV Netherlands Development Organisation.

¹¹<https://www.askbd.org/ask/category/hr-monitoring/violence-against-women-statistics/>

¹²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Peace_Index

Table 1: Bangladesh in the Global Peace Index (2016–2018)

Year	Rank (Out of 163 countries)	Score (Per cent)
2016	83	2.045
2017	84	2.035
2018	93	2.084

Source: Institute for Economics and Peace (2018).

SafeAround, Bangladesh ranked 88th among 160 countries with a score of 49 out of 100.¹³

However, no government data is available on conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population (Indicator 16.1.2) and the proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live in (Indicator 16.1.4).

Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

There has also been only negligible progress in terms of achieving Target 16.2. It is to be noted that abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence against children are a recurring phenomenon in Bangladesh. According to ASK report, 1,675 children were either killed or subject to cruel torture in 2017. Of those 339 were murdered, 117 committed suicide and 37 died under mysterious circumstances. Besides, 565 children were victims of sexual harassment, rape and stalking (ASK, 2018a). The proportion of young women aged 18–29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18 (Indicator 16.2.3) was 3.45 (GED, 2018b). A baseline survey in 31 districts conducted by World Vision Bangladesh in 2018 showed that 50.8 per cent of children aged 0–4 years and 51 per cent of children aged 5–17 years experienced physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by their caregivers in the past month (World Vision Bangladesh, 2018). True, the government, in January 2017, has adopted the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012 and drafted an implementation roadmap for the 2015–2017 national action plan; however, one notes a decline in government’s investigations, prosecutions and convictions associated with trafficking crimes. The situation calls for appropriate and urgent actions to address the concerned issues.

¹³SafeAround has compiled and analysed data from several public sources to make a Safety Index that allows to rank the world’s countries by safety (100 = perfectly safe; 0 = very dangerous). These sources take into consideration all kinds of threats, such as mugging, crime, road death toll, occurrence of terrorist attacks and wars, to build their own ranking of world’s most dangerous cities. Details available at: <https://safearound.com/danger-rankings/country-danger-ranking/>

On an encouraging note, as of December 2017, the number of victims of human trafficking has come down to 0.58 from the baseline 0.85 in 2015 for 100,000 people. The indicator recorded an average 17.4 per cent decline annually during the 2015–2017 period (GED, 2018b). Bangladesh *Jatiyo Sangsad* (National Parliament) adopted the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 on 27 February 2017; however, it contained a special provision that allows a boy or a girl to get married before reaching the statutory age limit albeit under some exceptional circumstances. It is apprehended that the provision for lowering the age of girls (16 years), though with consent of parents or guardians, could legitimise the current tradition of marrying off girl child at a young age. There is an apprehension that this could increase the rate of child marriage in the country.

Target 16.3: Promote rule of law at national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

Achieving this target is still a far cry in Bangladesh. According to the 2017–2018 WJP Rule of Law Index by the World Justice Project, Bangladesh rose by one position in terms of the overall rule of law performance (from 103 in the 2016) (WJP, 2018). The score places Bangladesh in the rank of 4 among the six countries in the South Asian region, 24 out of 30 among lower middle-income countries, and 102 out of 113 countries and jurisdictions worldwide.¹⁴

According to a study, access to justice in Bangladesh continues to remain difficult, more particularly for the poor and the marginalised. Costs and corruption in all spheres of the system and interference by political forces and powerful social elites make it difficult for the poor and vulnerable groups to access justice. Delays with investigation by the police and frequent court adjournments raise the costs both in terms of lawyers' fees, and also because of lost work and productive hours, not to speak of travel and related costs. Consequently, the majority of Bangladeshis continue to rely on the informal system when faced with conflict or dispute, even when they are victims of a crime. In this regard, the traditional forms of *salish* remain the most commonly used resource, providing cheap, fast and relatively simple means of delivering justice for majority of the citizens (UKAid, UNDP and Government of Bangladesh, 2015).

¹⁴This index measures adherence to rule of law, based on more than 110,000 households and 3,000 expert surveys. Featuring primary data, the WJP Rule of Law Index measures countries' rule of law performance across eight factors: constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice and criminal justice.

In 2015, 72.7 per cent of the women who experienced violence committed by partners never reported their experience to others; only 2.1 per cent victims reported to local leaders and 1.1 per cent sought help from the police. However, since 2015, impressive progress has been achieved in this area. Against an annual target of providing legal aid to 37,000 beneficiaries by 2020 was set, legal aid has been provided to 80,000 beneficiaries in 2017. Thanks to this, a new legal aid support target of 90,000 litigants per year has been set for the year 2020. Up to 2017, 16,000 cases were settled through alternative dispute resolution (ADR), on an average, per year against the Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP) annual target of settling 25,000 by 2020 (GED, 2018b). Available data suggests that currently the proportion of unsentenced detainees remains quite high (79 per cent in 2015) in Bangladesh, about double the target rate for 2030 (GED, 2018b).

Target 16.4: By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime

With regard to this target, progress has not been encouraging. It is true that to prevent money laundering and illicit financial flows, Bangladesh has put in place legal¹⁵ and institutional framework¹⁶ and capacities consistent with international standards and good practices (TIB, 2017b). However, despite the legal and institutional preparedness, a significant amount of financial resources were taken out of the country in recent years; indeed, illicit financial flows have been on the rise over the recent past years. According to the Global Financial Integrity (GFI) report, some USD 5.9 billion was siphoned out of Bangladesh in 2015 through trade misinvoicing only. The GFI found Bangladesh as one of the top 30 of countries, and ranked second in South Asia, as per dollar value of illicit outflows in 2015 (GFI, 2019). Moreover, the Swiss National Bank data indicates that money parked by Bangladeshis in Swiss banks was worth around Tk. 4,064 crore or USD 481.32 million as of 2017 (The Daily Star, 2018a). In November 2017, International Consortium

¹⁵The laws and rules for different entities include: Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 (amended in 2015); Money Laundering Prevention Rules, 2013; and Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prevention Circulars/Guidelines.

¹⁶The institutional framework includes: Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) of the Bangladesh Bank; Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC); Bangladesh Police (Special Branch (SB) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID)); National Board of Revenue (NBR) (Tax and Customs); and Attorney General's Office. Moreover, the National Coordination Committee (NCC) for preventing money laundering and combating financing of terrorism (16 members with the Finance Minister as convener), a Working Committee comprising 23 relevant agencies, and a National Taskforce on Stolen Asset Recovery have also been formed.

of Investigative Journalist published the Paradise Papers¹⁷, which provided evidence that several business people and business houses of Bangladesh have sent money to offshore accounts illegally. Another form of illicit outflow is through programmes, such as the Second Home operated by Malaysia. A total of 3,746 Bangladeshis have availed this investment opportunity, which accounted for 10.5 per cent of the total beneficiaries as of August 2017. Participation of Bangladeshis in this programme was the third largest, following China (9,902) and Japan (4,372) (The New Nation, 2018).

Against this backdrop, only a few concrete steps have been taken by the Bangladesh Government to bring back the money. One pertinent case relates to the heist of money from the Bangladesh Bank. On 1 February 2019, Bangladesh Bank sued Rizal Bank in US court to recover USD 66 million of stolen funds. Bangladesh Bank filed a case with the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York against the Philippines' Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) and others, including several top executives, accusing them of involvement in a "massive and multi-year conspiracy" to steal money (The Daily Star, 2019b). On 10 January 2019, a court in the Philippines convicted a former branch manager (Maia Deguito) at RCBC, of money laundering, in the first conviction over the Bangladesh Bank reserves heist, in which USD 81 million was stolen in February 2016. The Makati Regional Trial Court sentenced Deguito to a jail term ranging from 32 to 56 years, with each count carrying four to seven years. She was also ordered to pay a total of about USD 109 million in fine (The Daily Star, 2019a). However, the money still remains to be recovered.

Target 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

The GoB has recognised combating corruption as critical to progress towards realising the Perspective Plan—Vision 2021¹⁸, the 7FYP¹⁹ and the SDGs. The 7FYP asserts that ensuring good governance requires establishing strong administrations and institutions, and that without a strong anti-corruption strategy, the ability to implement Vision 2021 and the underlying five-year development plans will be seriously compromised.

¹⁷See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradise_Papers

¹⁸In the Vision 2021, it has been asserted that "the Government is determined to confront and root out the scourge of corruption from the body politic of Bangladesh ... (and) intends to strengthen transparency and accountability of all government institutions as integral part of a programme of social change to curb corruption" (GED, 2012).

¹⁹"Promoting good governance and curbing corruption" is listed high among 12 development goals identified by the 7FYP, which also commits to strengthen the democratic governance process to ensure participation of all citizens and sound functioning of all democratic institutions (GED, 2015).

It is to be noted that Bangladesh does have a robust legal²⁰ and institutional²¹ framework to fight corruption. The country became a party to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2007, and since then it has continued to meet the commitments of this Convention through enacting and amending relevant laws and policies. Institutions, including the National Board of Revenue (NBR), the Election Commission (EC), Information Commission, and non-state stakeholders, such as the civil society, media and international community, extend support to the government's efforts at curbing corruption. Non-state actors (NSAs) play an important role in combating and preventing corruption in Bangladesh by playing the role of watchdogs. Their activities need to be adequately appreciated if corruption is to be reduced in Bangladesh.

To be true, the government has taken a number of initiatives in recent times for promoting integrity and good governance. The Executive has formulated guidelines for cabinet meetings (summary formulation and presentation, participation in meetings, and procedures for implementing decisions), published best practices in service sectors, initiated the Access to Information (a2i) project, established the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU), launched video conferencing with deputy commissioners (DCs), and has taken up the initiative to send encouraging mails to the best-performing DCs based on an annual assessment under the National E-Service System (NESS). Union Information Service Centres have been set up, Fortnightly Confidential Report for the DCs has been introduced for purposes of reporting to the Cabinet Division by using Information Exchange Management System (IEMS) (Cabinet Division, 2013). The government has also formulated the Integrity Award Policy 2017 (Cabinet Division, 2017); this award was first given during 2017-2018 for officials from both the field and central levels. Annual Performance Agreement (APA) has been introduced, which is signed between the Cabinet Division and other ministries and departments. An experts' pool for annual performance management in ministries/departments has also been established (Cabinet Division, 2014).

²⁰Major laws and rules applicable for combating corruption include: Penal Code, 1860; Code of Criminal Procedure Act, 1898; Anti-Corruption Act, 1947; Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947; Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004 and Anti-Corruption Commission Rules, 2007; Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979; Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Provide Protection), 2011; and the Crime-related Mutual Legal Assistance Ordinance, 2012. Moreover, GoB has four policies that support transparency and accountability. These include: Right to Information (RTI) policy, NIS, Citizen's Charters and Grievance Redress System.

²¹The major anti-corruption institutions in Bangladesh include the ACC, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG), BFIU of Bangladesh Bank as the anti-money laundering department, the Judiciary, law-enforcing agencies and the parliamentary standing committees.

Moreover, the government has introduced the Public Administration Award in 2015.²² In order to make government jobs more attractive and with the expectation of reducing corruption, the salary and allowances were raised by almost 100 per cent by implementing the Pay Commission 2015 recommendations. The government introduced loan facilities (interest-free Tk. 3 million) for those holding the positions of Deputy Secretaries and above for purchase of cars and also offered a hefty maintenance allowance (Tk. 50,000 per month). Other incentives included Bengali New Year allowance, allowance for buying mobile phone, house loan with minimum interest (5 per cent), increasing pension rate, redefining pensionable job duration (5–25 years), and extending the retirement age (up to 59 years) (TIB, 2019).

However, despite aforesaid changes in the salary scheme and presence of a robust legal and institutional anti-corruption structure, widespread corruption continues to persist in the country, which is reflected in different national and international indices and surveys. According to the nationwide household surveys conducted by the TIB on a regular intervals, it is observed that the proportion of households experiencing corruption and bribery in getting services from both public and private sectors and institutions continues to be quite high. The 2017 survey reveals that 66.5 per cent households became victims of corruption while receiving services from various public and private sectors or institutions; this is almost similar to that of the findings of the 2015 survey (67.8 per cent). However, the extent of bribery paid by households (on an average of Tk. 5,930 for services) was found to have come down in 2017 compared to 2015 (49.8 per cent in 2017 compared to 58.1 per cent in 2015). The nationally estimated amount of bribe paid to different service sectors was found to be Tk. 106,889 million, which is 21.2 per cent more than that of 2015, 3.4 per cent of extended national budget of 2016-17 and 0.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) for the same year (TIB, 2018). Using identical indicators, results of three surveys of 2012, 2015 and 2017 show corruption level remaining the same in almost all sectors.

The perception on the existence and spread of corruption found in different international surveys and indices also reflects a similar picture. In Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2018, Bangladesh scored 26 points on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), ranking 149th from the top out of 180 countries (TI, 2019). It may be noted here

²²On 23 July 2016, 30 officials were awarded for the first time, while 26 officials in 2017, and 39 officials and three institutions were awarded in 2018.

that, Bangladesh has continued to score below 30 since the development of this index, indicating the country being a corruption-prone one.²³

Two other indicators – World Bank’s Control of Corruption and World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Assessment of Irregular Payments and Bribes – paint a similar picture. The World Bank score for Bangladesh was 19.23 for Control of Corruption.²⁴ Of the 15 areas of the business environment, firms in Bangladesh rated political instability to be the most formidable obstacle to their daily operations, followed by electricity, access to finance, and corruption (World Bank Group, 2013). Additionally, 47.7 per cent of the surveyed companies reported bribery incidences (per cent of firms experiencing at least one bribe payment request). According to the Global Competitiveness Ranking, Bangladesh’s score was 28 for the indicator on Incidence of Corruption, and is ranked 120th out of 140 countries for 2018 (WEF, 2018a).

In general, the efforts for tackling corruption in Bangladesh has not been up to the expected mark. The investigation rate compared to complaints was low; and the rate of conviction was no different. The conviction rate of ACC’s cases of corruption during 2012–2015 was below 40 per cent on an average (in 2014, the conviction rate was the highest in four years – 46 per cent). The ACC suffered from backlogs of corruption cases. Corruption investigations by the ACC lacked adequate efficiency and professionalism, which is reflected in the time taken for completing investigations and lack of proper evidence for filing cases (TIB, 2017b).

Over the last few years, the ACC has undertaken a number of initiatives to tackle corruption. The Commission adopted a strategic plan and shared this with stakeholders for feedbacks in 2018. It revised its organogram and proposed establishment of offices in all districts. The proposal has been sent to the Cabinet Division for approval. The ACC has formed its own armed force unit and set up prison cells. It also sent a proposal to the Cabinet Division for approval for engaging district administration in anti-corruption activities. It has also formed an Internal Discipline Unit. The Legal Department of ACC was strengthened – 20 lawyers were excluded from the list of panel lawyers due to lack of a proactive role in pursuing corruption cases. Instead, five young and energetic lawyers have been included in the panel. The ACC

²³Bangladesh was earlier placed at the bottom of the list for five successive years from 2001–2005. The score of Bangladesh has been somewhat static around 24–27 over the period 2011–2018. For details, see Iftekharuzzaman (2019).

²⁴It is a percentile rank among all countries – ranges from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest) rank (World Bank, n.d.).

also introduced a ‘Hotline 106’ for facilitating ready access to prospective complainants. Any complainant can lodge complaints by making toll-free calls at the number.

Some progress has been attained in curbing corruption, thanks to the initiatives taken by the ACC over the last two years. Thus, Tk. 3,590 million has been recovered from the money swindled out of the Basic Bank in 2016. In 2015, the number of allegations received by the ACC was 10,415. In 2016 and 2017, this number has risen to 12,990 and 17,953, respectively. The average conviction rate in corruption cases has also increased. During 2013–2015, the conviction rate had averaged 37 per cent. In 2016 and 2017, the corresponding rates were 54 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively. ACC high officials were instructed to arrest all listed accused corrupt persons. As a result of such a strong position, 182 persons accused of corruption were arrested in 2017. The ACC has identified nine sectors to keep under constant monitoring for corruption. These were education, health, Department of Roads and Highways, Department of Public Works, Chattogram Port Authority, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Income Tax Department, Department of Customs and VAT (value added tax) (ACC, 2018).

However, despite having taken a number of energetic steps, the ACC has not been able to show its ability and political will to take actions against high-level politicians and public officials. Policies related to transparency and accountability in public institutions are being flouted on a regular basis. Willingness of the government to pursue anti-corruption measures is often challenged and questioned by independent observers.

Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

With regard to Target 16.6, Bangladesh may claim good state of preparedness in terms of having legal frameworks and clear institutional arrangements for the NIS institutions. There are many laws in place to ensure effective functioning, transparency and accountability of relevant institutions. The Constitution of Bangladesh clearly spells out the formation, functions and accountability mechanism that should guide the key organs of the state, i.e. the Parliament, Judiciary and the Executive. The Constitution also provides clear direction as regards formation and functions of some the basic institutions, which includes the local government, EC and the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG). However, the Constitution does not directly cover other institutions which are considered in the NIS. Other than the

Constitution, there is a significantly high number of laws and policies which have the determinations of the functions of the said institutions. Major laws that inform the functioning, transparency and accountability of specific institutions are shown in Annex 1.

All NIS institutions are endowed with well-defined institutional arrangement. A few institutions, such as the Parliament, the Executive and Public Administration are endowed with adequate human resources. Some institutions, such as the Parliament, Executive, local government institutions, OCAg, EC, public administration, law-enforcing agencies and ACC also have adequate infrastructure faculties for effectively carrying out their respective assigned roles (TIB, 2017b).

According to the first indicator set against Target 16.6, the selected institutions are expected to have the capacity to make effective use of the resources allocated for their functioning. It is observed that a few institutions, such as law-enforcing agencies, the Executive, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Public Administration and the Judiciary have good capacity to spend the allocated budgets (Table 2).

Table 2: Non-development and development expenditure in FY2016-17*

(Million Taka)

Institution	Expenditure	Budget	Per cent
Parliament	2,310	2,950	78.30
Executive	12,990	14,380	90.33
Judiciary	14,030	16,720	83.91
Local government	153,880	213,220	72.17
Public administration	16,940	20,200	83.86
Law-enforcing agencies	181,710	199,640	91.02
Election Commission	6,320	12,900	49.00
Information Commission	2,461.40	3,500	70.33
National Human Rights Commission	59.87	69.64	85.97

Source: Compiled and analysed from data collected from websites of the Ministry of Finance, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Information Commission.

Note: *Excluding loans and advances, domestic and foreign debts, food account operations and structural adjustment expenditures.

A number of initiatives were taken to increase the effectiveness and efficacy of the courts (TIB, 2017a).²⁵ The Bangladesh Judicial Rules 2017 was adopted for lower court judges (Dhaka Tribune, 2017). The Government Employment Act 2018 and the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre Act 2018 were enacted, while the Model Recruitment Policy 1987 has been updated. Furthermore, as a result of the student movement concerning the demand for reforms of the quota system in public service recruitment process, the government has abolished the quota system for the appointment of first (9 Grade) and second (10 to 13 Grade) class government officers in October 2018 (UNB, 2018).

However, there are significant gaps between the objectives and the implementation and practice of laws and policies in Bangladesh. Subtle gaps are also there in the laws, which create a scope for weak enforceability (TIB, 2017b). Real independence cannot be exercised by the NIS institutions unless laws are formulated and enacted in a way that eliminates the dependency on the signals coming from the executive branch. Many transparency and accountability initiatives are there which are mostly on paper. There are significant gaps in implementation, particularly in the areas of human rights violation, corruption and in holding the powerful political elites accountable. Controlling attitude and practices are evident in the way the executive branch deals with NSAs. There is significant influence and control concerning the work of law-enforcing agencies, ACC, EC, media, civil society and business by way of shaping the legal frameworks, as well as by interference in their activities. Independent institutions suffer from both mistrust and inefficiency because of the way heads and members of institutions are appointed; this is often done on political considerations. Many of the institutions suffer from shortages of human resources and budget, as well as capacity constraints. These undermine the functioning of the institutions as effective, transparent and accountable entities.

For instance, during the Police Week 2019, many police officers have received medals for outstanding service, and this is commendable. At the same time, there were widespread allegations as regards 'biased attitude' and 'unnecessary use of force' on the part of the police on several occasions. Safe Road Movement 2018 and Quota Reform Protest 2018, spearheaded by the students, may be cited in this connection. Many other reports that came

²⁵These include construction of court building project, formation of case management committee, determination of time limit for case disposal, directives for disposal of cases on priority basis, introduction of judicial web portal and use of information technology (IT) in court management, e-judiciary project, introduction of ADR and legal aid services, etc.

out in the media during those events depict a scenario that goes against the spirit of the SDGs.²⁶ The 11th National Parliamentary Election and the City Corporation Elections held in 2018 were highly criticised due to widespread anomalies and violations of electoral code of conduct by the candidates, political parties as well as the ruling government (The Daily Star, 2018c).

A number of regressive legal reforms were undertaken over the last few years. Articles 8, 21, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 43 and 58 of The Digital Security Act 2018 and Article 57 of the ICT Act 2017 are seen to be against the spirit of Article 39 of the Constitution of Bangladesh; indeed, there is an apprehension that these could be misused (Amnesty International, 2018). Furthermore, Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB) has proposed a Bank Reporting Act in April 2018 which will prevent newspapers from publishing reports about corruption and malpractices by banks and financial institutions (The Daily Star, 2018b). The Government Employment Act 2018 was enacted with a provision that requires receiving government permission prior to arresting a public servant. This is discriminatory, and thus against the spirit of the Constitution of Bangladesh. Government's grip over the media has strengthened over the last two years.

Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Several attempts have been made by the government to achieve this target. The share of women in public services (from first class up to fourth class) is around 28 per cent (13,62,298); of the total work force in Bangladesh. Of these, the share of first class women officials is 20 per cent (30,042 out of 154,681); the highest (34 per cent) share is in the second class category (40,563 out of 117,878).²⁷ It may be noted that at present, there are 10 females in Secretary or equivalent level positions, which is 13 per cent of the total staff at this level. In the administration, there are 78 female Additional Secretaries (15 per cent of 533), 97 Joint Secretaries, 202 Deputy Secretaries, 360 Senior Assistant Secretaries and 435 Assistant Secretaries. At the field level, there are one divisional commissioner, six DCs, 20 Additional DCs, 113 Upazila Nirbahi

²⁶A photojournalist was arrested for alleged 'anti-state interview'. During October 2018, a number of 'fake cases' were lodged just before the National Elections of 2018. Up to October 2018, a total of 360,314 individuals were accused and 4,650 were arrested in 4,135 cases all over the country. In some instances of filing these cases, police filed cases against persons who were not present at the scene of the crime, or were abroad or have even been dead already (TIB, 2019). During the 284 days of anti-drug campaign starting in 2018, 312 people were killed in so called 'crossfires' between different law-enforcing agencies and drug dealers (Daily Prothom Alo, 10 March 2019).

²⁷Ministry of Public Administration, Statistics of Civil and Staff, 2017.

Officers (UNOs), and 105 Assistant Commissioners (Land) who are females.²⁸ It may also be noted in this connection, that in 2010, there were 227,114 female staff in government services.

Bangladesh has made significant progress with regard to reducing the gender gap. According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2018, Bangladesh had a score of 0.721 and ranked 48th out of 149 countries globally (WEF, 2018b). Bangladesh was ranked 64th with a score of 0.704 among 145 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2015.²⁹

Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

There has been major progress with regard to achieving this target. According to a survey, 37 per cent of the children under 5 years of age have been registered, while in 2001, registration rate for this age group of children was a mere 10 per cent (BBS and UNICEF, 2015). This was achieved, thanks to the Birth and Death Registration Project under the Local Government Division, launched in 2001 with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). A new Birth and Death Registration Act was adopted in 2004. In 2009, Birth and Death Registration Information System (BRIS) was launched for electronic registration. All these contributed to significant improvements in birth registration for all in the country.

Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms

In ensuring Target 16.10, Bangladesh fares well compared to many other developing countries in terms of legal and institutional structure. Some fundamental freedoms, such as equity, right to life and livelihood, freedom of thought and conscience and freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, and right to property have been enshrined in the Constitution of Bangladesh. Besides, other rights (such as, information right) have been confirmed and affirmed through relevant acts and laws. Bangladesh has either signed or ratified (partially/completely) a number of international declarations and charters regarding various rights.³⁰ Additionally,

²⁸Daily Prothom Alo, 10 March 2017.

²⁹Daily Prothom Alo, 19 November 2015.

³⁰Among them, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers (CRMW), International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention on Labour Rights, are notable.

Bangladesh has adopted the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2009 to promote people's access to information. As per the Act, a statutory independent body has been constituted, which is accountable to the Head of the State. Besides, the Strategic Plan 2015–2021 and guidelines for the implementation of the Proactive Information Disclosure, 2014 have also been formulated.

In the field of information rights, the score and rating of the country have been moderate. According to the Freedom in the World Rating, Bangladesh scored 47 in 2017 and 45 in 2018, out of 100. This means that there exists only 'partially open' freedom of expression in Bangladesh (Freedom House, 2019). The World Press Freedom Index shows that Bangladesh scored 48.36 in 2017 and 48.62 in 2018 out of 100, with 146th position in both years among 180 countries (Reporters without Borders, 2019). The Global Right to Information Rating shows that Bangladesh secured 107 points out of 150, with 24th position among 111 countries; this remained unchanged in 2019 (Centre for Law and Democracy, 2018). The Information Commission report shows that 6,181 RTI applications were received in 2015; information was delivered to 5,954 applications (96.33 per cent of the applicants). In 2016, 6,369 RTI applications were received, of which information was delivered to 6,082 applications (95.49 per cent of the applicants). In 2017, 183 appeals (91.04 per cent of total appeals) were resolved by concerned authorities out of 201 (Information Commission, 2017). APAs signed in 2014 between the Cabinet Division and ministries have included the provisions of the Proactive Information Disclosure Guideline where clear instructions have been provided regarding the kind of information that should be posted on government websites.

However, in reality the RTI regime is yet to be fully in place. Violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms by different state organs have emerged as a disquieting concern. In the past, this has been because of a number of legal loopholes in the laws. However, in spite of the appropriate legal frameworks having been put in place now, the situation has not improved.³¹ In a statement to the authorities that was passed on in February 2018, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances noted that, the number of enforced disappearances in Bangladesh had actually

³¹ A total of 195 people in 2016 were subject to extrajudicial killings by law-enforcing agencies. In 2016, these agencies were accused of abduction, kidnapping and murder of 97 people. In 2017, 162 people were killed by law-enforcement agencies as a result of crossfires, gunfights and shootouts. Besides, 53 people died in jail custody in 2017; among those 33 were prisoners and 20 were convicted prisoners (ASK, 2018b).

seen a notable rise in recent years.³² In 2017, there were at least 30 assaults on journalists, including the February murder of a reporter of a daily newspaper killed while he was covering political unrest. In August, a journalist was arrested for a satirical reporting on Facebook about death of a goat. In early September, police detained two Myanmarese journalists who were reporting on the Rohingya crisis, and held them under arrest for a week before releasing them on bail (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

In September 2018, the government passed the Digital Security Act, which is designed to monitor all electronic communications. The new law was supposed to address abusive provisions in the Information and Communication Technology Act. However, the law continues to retain similar provisions and contains new sections to criminalise free expression. Meanwhile, hundreds faced charge on grounds of social media commentary. Human rights groups remained under pressure due to restrictions on accessing foreign funding. Journalists reported about threats and intimidation in an attempt to discourage any criticism of the government (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

There are allegations of misuse of some articles of the law regarding publication of information and opinion. For example, the preventive part of Article 14 of the Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, 2016 limits the freedom of expression and independence of NGOs and CSOs. In 2018, the Digital Security Act was enacted which ignored the concerns expressed by many CSOs as regards Sections 8, 28, 29 and 31 of the Act. The Act was perceived to be going against the core spirit of the Constitution of Bangladesh and as restricting free-thinking, freedom of speech and freedom of expression. Moreover, the National Online Mass Media Policy 2017, Bangladesh Press Institute Act and the National Broadcasting Act, drafted for enactment in near future, are perceived to be aimed at strengthening government control and restricting freedom of expression. Many concerned stakeholders have proposed revisions to the text.

Target 16a: Strengthen relevant national institutions for building capacity at all levels to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

With regard to Target 16a, there have been some progress over the past years. In accordance with the provision of National Human Rights Commission

³²Reports suggested that more than 80 people were forcibly disappeared during 2017 (Amnesty International, 2018). During the period between January to October 2018, 437 persons were victims of extrajudicial killing (ASK, 2018b).

Act 2009, a statutory independent NHRC has been established. The aim was to contribute to advancement of the cause of human dignity and integrity and to safeguard basic democratic rights. The objective is that inalienable fundamental human rights of all individuals are protected and the standards of human rights are improved in the country. The Commission is now implementing its second five-year strategic plan (2016–2020), where it has identified 17 pressing human rights issues with priority areas for 2016–2020. In 2016, the Commission responded to 692 cases of human rights violation, of which 665 were submitted to the Commission by concerned people themselves, and the rest 27 were *Suo Moto* actions by the Commission. A large number of violations were related to violence (108), jobs and workplace (56), dowry (21), killing (20) and abduction (10). The number of complaints which were resolved in 2016 stood at 503 (GED, 2018b).

Target 16b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

The progress in view of this target has not been satisfactory. The NHRC along with a few CSOs has worked closely with the National Law Commission to prepare a draft of Anti-Discrimination Act. However, the proposed act is yet to get approval of the Cabinet and the Parliament.

Priorities given to SDG 16 issues

From the above discussion it may be concluded that the government has been pursuing a multi-pronged approach to achieve the SDGs. Mapping of relevant bodies have been undertaken and gaps in the data have been identified. Monitoring mechanisms and tracking tools have been put in place. Needs assessment as regards resource envelope and possible sources of funds have also been carried out. It should also be noted that the government has adopted the approach of promoting integrity and good governance in the public administration. A number of initiatives have been undertaken in this regard.

However, the government is yet to develop specific strategies and plan of actions for achieving a number of targets under Goal 16. Despite the commendable initiatives, the government's planning lacks adequate emphasis on attaining the various targets of SDG 16 through concrete actions. There are also significant gaps in terms of relevant baseline data.

3. Engagement of CSOs in programme delivery and advocacy

A number of CSOs in Bangladesh have been implementing a wide range of programmes for achieving the various targets of Goal 16. As a matter of fact, many CSOs have been implementing programmes in relevant SDG areas for a much longer period, prior to adoption of the SDGs. Some, on the other hand, have designed new programmes and started to implement those following the adoption of the SDGs.

Target 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

CSOs, such as NU, ASF, Bandhu and Ain-o-Salish Kendra (ASK) have been implementing various programmes concerning Target 16.1. The Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB), a platform of CSOs in Bangladesh, is working for the promotion and protection of human rights in the country through use of national and international mechanisms to protect and promote human rights. The HRFB is working to inform the public on human rights issues and to raise voice and accountability at the national level by engaging with stakeholders, including the government, the civil society and the media.

The aforementioned CSOs, along with others, are working to reduce all forms of violence, including violence leading to deaths. They collect and document information on human rights violations. Some of the CSOs are working with the poor and the marginalised communities (such as, *dalits*) with a view to reducing domestic violence and other forms of violence. These are also trying to build peace through use of traditional conflict resolution tools and human rights and legal education. The CSOs impart education on human rights which is geared to reducing violence in the community. Community human rights volunteers are involved in addressing the rights of citizens and promoting the cause of environmental protection through various community fora. They have, to their credit, many instances of taking collective actions to protect and improve people's rights. Some of the CSOs are also involved in creating and promoting human rights defenders among the marginalised communities. Theatre is used as one of the tools for disseminating information and raising awareness as regards human rights.

Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

CSOs, including NU and ASK are undertaking various activities to achieve Target 16.2. The CSO platform working with child rights organisations is

actively involved in protecting and promoting child rights. These CSOs are working on many awareness-raising issues, such as educating parents, children and teachers about abuse, harassment, trafficking and torture. Awareness-raising and training programmes at the community level includes informing about the risk of trafficking and how to prevent this. They also raise awareness about strict laws and policies as regards prevention of abuse and exploitation, both within Bangladesh and outside. They are playing an active role through advocacy and mobilisation for policy advocacy. For instance, World Vision Bangladesh has initiated a campaign titled 'It takes me to end

Success Story: Religious leaders as safeguards to end physical violence against children

World Vision Bangladesh launched a nationwide campaign (starting from 2017) titled 'It takes me to end physical violence against children.' The objective is to protect 5 million children among the most vulnerable boys and girls who suffer from physical violence inflicted at home, school and workplace, by 2021. Through multi-sector collaboration, the campaign aims to promote effective implementation of relevant policies and bring about changes in social norms and traditional behaviour which perpetuate violence against children.

Research shows that religious, traditional and cultural norms play a critically important role in perpetuating violence against the children. At the same time, these norms and practices also often hinder reform initiatives. In the context of Bangladesh, religious leaders are very influential and they are able to reach people easily. Thus, engaging the religious leaders for raising awareness about child rights, and influencing positive changes in cultural norms was perceived to be a very effective strategy. The campaign successfully engaged religious leaders by five steps – mobilisation, materials development, sensitisation of safeguard committee led by faith leaders, including children and influential people, planning workshop to develop the message, and an action plan identifying shared role and responsibilities. As of now, 31,000 religious leaders from mosques, temples and churches have been sensitised by following these five steps. Religious leaders from mosques and churches disseminated the messages of eliminating violence against children following Friday and Sunday prayers, respectively.

Md. Soriful Islam (Convener of Godagari Upazila Safeguard Committee and Imam of Godagari Upazila Parishad Mosque) states, *"we were about to abandon the future of our children by not valuing them properly. Many of my relatives' children could not continue their education due to violence at school. This is the time to develop our children physically, mentally and spiritually by ensuring their rights."* Md. Soriful continues, *"Now, I'm highly committed to the work for the protection of vulnerable children with Safeguard committee members in my union under Godagari upazila. As a religious leader, I will share the message to stop violence against children in the classroom, with support of the Imam Forum and on Friday during Khutba."*

physical violence against children at home, school and workplace'. In two years, the campaign was able to reach 62,200 children across the country. The engagement of children includes association building, child-led research, child-led dialogue and participation in story book competition. About 2,200 child forums have been held with participation of more than 50,000 boys and girls. They are disseminating the message of the campaign, building their own agencies and sensitising the communities about concerned issues.

Secured, safe and child-friendly day-care facilities are being provided to children of female garment workers and informal sector women's workers through day-care support programmes. Some CSOs also run drop-in centres in the city for working and street children. Drop-in centres provide these children a safe place to share the problems they face; they can also learn how to protect themselves from the risk of violence and torture. However, the issue of scaling up remains a daunting task.

Target 16.3: Promote rule of law at national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

As regards Target 16.3, a number of CSOs, including Bandhu, BLAST, ASK, Brotee, ASF, NU, Wave Foundation and HEKS/EPER have been working for prolonged periods in relevant areas, while several other CSOs, including TIB, have been playing a supporting role. CSOs, such as BLAST, ASK, Brotee are playing a prominent role in furthering SDG 16.3 by providing access to justice in Bangladesh, with more specific focus on inclusion of the marginalised and socially excluded communities. Key programmes include raising awareness, providing free legal advice through appropriately qualified lawyers, paralegals and facilitators, facilitating ADR through mediation, providing advice and representation for individuals whose disputes cannot be resolved through mediation, and making referrals for clients to governmental agencies and NGOs working on legal aid. Some CSOs, such as Bandhu, provide investigation support in relevant cases, particularly concerning to violation of rights of *hijras* (third gender people).

In 2018, BLAST launched the seminal legal aid application *Sromik Jigyasha* (Workers' Queries) targetted at increasing access to justice for the readymade garments (RMG) sector workers. This can be downloaded on Android mobile phone devices. Since about 65 per cent of garment workers use smart phones, they can easily use this app to access legal advice and information services. Till now over 10,000 users have logged into the app (Malik, 2019).

The CSOs organise courtyard meetings, training sessions, rights fairs and networking meetings for the purpose of raising community awareness as regards citizen's rights. Some CSOs use social media to raise public awareness among lawyers, students, civil society groups and rights activists. These efforts not only provided knowledge about rights, remedies and services to relevant groups at the local and national levels, but also created opportunities for improving referrals and coordination between service-providers in the government and within the social sector. Some CSOs have been operating mobile legal clinics, especially in Dhaka urban slum areas, providing legal information and advice to individuals who live far away from any legal aid office. TIB is implementing a programme for Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs)³³ with an aim to help the poor and the marginalised access justice and challenge corruption.

Success Story: A story of embezzlement unveiled

Md. Fahad Hossain Anik was a student of Business Administration (Hons. final year) department of the Munshiganj Govt. Harganga College and a Cadet Sergeant of the College Platoon of Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC). Suspecting irregularities, Anik tried to get a financial statement as regards expenditure of BNCC funds from the person in-charge. However, the concerned person evaded giving a response.

Anik discussed the apprehension with Rakesh Das, a friend of his in the same institution and a member of Youth Engagement and Support (YES) group affiliated with the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Munshiganj, set up by the TIB as part of its effort to strengthen social movement against corruption in Bangladesh. Rakesh, trained on RTI Act, shared this issue with CCC, Munshiganj and sought its advice. Later, in January 2017, Anik filed an RTI application addressed to the Principal of the college following CCC's advice.

Subsequently the requested financial statement was provided by the person in question. The statement unveiled the truth that there was indeed an embezzlement of funds. Later on, a three-member investigation committee was constituted by the college authorities. As per recommendation of the committee, the accused person was dismissed.

³³It is a support centre to receive complaints about corruption from victims and witnesses of corruption, scrutinise the complaint, and render assistance and advice on the basis of merit of the case. Key activities include receiving complaints in person or by phone calls, reaching out to affected communities, ensuring confidentiality, providing advice on how to seek redress, including, where appropriate, and making referrals to other legal support groups. See, <https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/beta3/index.php/en/about-us/what-we-do/engaging-people/advocacy-tools>

Target 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

CSOs, including TIB and NU have been implementing a number of programmes for achieving Target 16.5. TIB has a robust programme for preventing corruption and raising awareness against corruption. Its activities include in-depth research on the state of effectiveness, transparency and accountability concerning different public and private sectors and institutions, civic engagement at the local level for raising awareness of common people against corruption at local-level service delivery institutions, and policy advocacy for legal, institutional and policy reforms at the national level. The key objective of the research is to shed light on the governance deficits and corruption in different sectors and institutions, as also the burden of corruption which have to be borne by people seeking public services. The purpose of research is also to indicate solutions. As part of civic engagement, TIB organises a wide range of local-level volunteer groups, who are its partners at the grassroots level.³⁴ Activities at local levels include Satellite Advice and Information Desk³⁵, Mothers' Gathering, advocacy meetings, monitoring of programmes and activities of different service-providing institutions, such as education, health, local government, land, etc. By taking advantage of these, citizens are able to raise questions and voice their demands as regards corruption and irregularities. The objective is to ensure good governance and delivery of better services. On the other hand, NU's community forum is proactively engaged in identifying the most deserving families with a view to ensure that they have access to social safety net programmes without bribe and nepotism.

Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

CSOs, such as the TIB, Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), Brotee, NU, HEKS/EPER, ActionAid Bangladesh, World Vision, Democracywatch, Shushashoner Jonno Procharabhijan (Supro) implement a wide spectrum of programmes for developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (Target 16.6). One of the focus areas relates to the democratic process and institutions of Bangladesh, as part of which research concerning

³⁴Known as the CCC, YES, Shwachhatar Jonno Nagorik (Swajan) and YES Friends.

³⁵Satellite AI-Desk is a useful tool to provide relevant information and advice to citizens, including women, poor and the marginalised. The service is delivered at their doorsteps and contributes to raise voice against corruption and irregularities. In the ongoing phase of the TIB project, approximately 74,000 people, including the poor and the marginalised ones, have received service-related and other required information, and were also provided with advice from the AI-Desk.

the Parliament, monitoring of elections and electoral process and role of democratic institutions, such as political parties, are carried out on a regular basis. The aim is to develop effective, accountable and transparent democratic institutions. Local communities are engaged in the process of putting pressure on local institutions to be more transparent and accountable. This is done through different social accountability tools, setting up complaint redress mechanisms, including installing complaint boxes, introducing complaint and maintaining RTI register. The purpose is to strengthen accountability and improve quality of services delivered by targetted institutions.

Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

CSOs, including HEKS/EPER, The British Council, ActionAid Bangladesh, NU, TIB, Wave Foundation and Democracywatch are involved in various activities to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels as part of attaining Target 16.7. Mention may be made in this connection about open budget, *ward shava* (ward meeting),

Success Story: Project tracking and public hearing in Brahmanbaria ensured that post-implementation maintenance work was appropriately carried out

A river protection embankment was built in Brahmanbaria by the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Brahmanbaria in response to persistent community demand. As part of TIB's Climate Finance project's regular tracking activity, the research team took up the task of tracking the implementation of the project. The team found that the quality of implementation was not up to the mark. The research team got in touch with the implementing organisation and shared the study findings. The team invited the concerned officials to an open public hearing where local BWDB authority and community people were present. The stakeholders were informed about the team's findings and about what was expected of the project. At this hearing, the community people raised their voice as regards a number of issues and demanded that maintenance work be started immediately to take care of the damaged part of the embankment. Concerned people made a commitment to do the needful and complete the maintenance work by December 2017, so that transportation using the embankment could be resumed.

The Executive Engineer also made a commitment that such public hearings will be conducted in future as well, concerning BWDB's projects in the area. He also assigned an information officer to liaise with TIB's respective divisions. The concerned person also took part in a training programme organised by the TIB. The Executive Engineer also committed that he and his office will prioritise public information disclosure in their future project-related activities, and also consider establishing information board in project areas.

face the public/public hearing, and multi-stakeholder meetings. Local-level community groups set up by different CSOs provide community people an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of local-level institutions, and help improve transparency and accountability of the respective institutions.

Target 16.9: By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

CSOs, such as NU are working with the government for promoting legal identity for all citizens, including birth registration for all by 2030 (Target 16.9). The Birth and Death Registration Act, 2004 provides for registration of every child born in Bangladesh irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth. A number of CSOs are working with dalits, linguistic minorities, plantation (tea) workers, marginalised groups, and poor and informal sector workers, who tend to be left out of the birth registration process. These organisations worked to raise awareness about the need for birth registration, and also offered support to government efforts at improving access to registration services. They are also working to help get civil documents, such as passport, national ID, license, etc. for linguistic minorities (particularly the Bihari community residing in Bangladesh) who are often deprived of legal identity.

Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms

TIB, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI), Shujan, NU, Democracywatch, Right to Information Forum (RTI Forum) and other CSOs are implementing various programmes to achieve Target 16.10. Information disclosure mechanism has proved to be an effective tool to encourage citizens to proactively demand disclosure. TIB has been assigning designated officers to all institutions it has been working with. It has also taken the initiative to display citizen's charter, information board, sign, different symbols, etc. to encourage citizens to take advantage of the RTI Act, 2009.

Additionally, CSOs including ASK and Odhikar collect information on the status of fundamental human rights and freedom of expression; their reports are published on a regular basis. Through these programmes a repository of information has been developed, which is often cited and made use of by international organisations in their relevant works.

Target 16a: Strengthen relevant national institutions for building capacity at all levels to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

NU has been actively involved in activities targetted to strengthen relevant national institutions for building capacity at all levels with a view to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime (Target 16a). It is working as member of different thematic committees of the NHRC to promote the cause of human rights. Representatives from CSOs also work as trainers of the Commission.

Target 16b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

For promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies (Target 16b), HEKS/EPER and NU have been advocating in favour of enactment of an Anti-Discriminatory Act since 2012. They have submitted the first draft of the Anti-Discrimination Act 2014 to the Law Commission. Later on, NHRC and some other CSOs have worked closely with the National Law Commission to prepare a final draft of the law. Regrettably, the proposed Act is yet to get approval of the Cabinet and the Parliament. CSOs are also working with designated authorities to have a national development strategy, separate ministry and commission(s) to look after the affairs of dalit and adivasi people. In light of this, a 13-point declaration was adopted at a national convention.

The above discussion on activities of CSOs pertaining to the various targets of Goal 16 demonstrates that these are playing a crucially important role, along with relevant government organisations, in achieving Goal 16 in Bangladesh. As the discussion bears out, many CSOs have been extending support to the poor and marginalised people; and by doing so, they are making important contributions to realise the LNOB aspiration of the SDGs.

4. Impact of CSO activities in achieving Goal 16 targets

As the preceding sections bear out, in a number of areas the CSOs in Bangladesh have been extending important support to the government initiatives for achieving the Goal 16. These can be structured under the following headings.

Institutional, policy and legal reforms

With help of research and advocacy activities of the CSOs it has been possible to facilitate undertaking of a number of institutional, legal and

policy reforms measures over the past years. NIS institutions, such as the ACC and the Information Commission, which are crucial to establishing good governance and combating corruption have been established as a result of intense advocacy work carried out by CSOs. Important institutional reforms were undertaken by the EC and the Public Service Commission, thanks to the knowledge-based advocacy work undertaken by the CSOs. This was instrumental in encouraging the Parliament, the Judiciary and the OCAg to undertake a number of reforms towards improved functioning and strengthened performance of concerned institutions.

A number of policies were adopted as a result of persistent CSO advocacy. These included the followings: Gold Policy 2018; Uniform Policy for Recruitment and Promotion/Upgradation of Teachers for All Public Universities, 2017; The National Drug Policy, 2016; Laws such as the Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2004, The Right to Information Act 2009, Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Provide Protection), 2011; four regulations and The Food Safety (Technical Committee) Rules, 2017. In many instances, NSAs were directly involved in the formulation of these. Due to persistent efforts by the ASK, along with other human rights organisations, Bangladesh Government enacted two laws in 2002 – one that raised criminal penalties and improved criminal procedures, and the other related to putting control over availability of acid. The Revised Labour Law, 2006 incorporated a number of issues pertaining to the RMG sector, while the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) was revised taking into consideration suggestions put forward by CSOs working in relevant areas. The Accreditation Council Act, 2016 was drafted with a view to ensure adequate standards in the higher education in both public and private universities in the country. This is still awaiting the approval of the Cabinet. An office order was issued in August 2016, with instructions to ensure transparency and accountability of the locally raised funds at the DC offices in all districts.

Changes in the institutional practices have been made in many public institutions, such as the ACC, OCAg, Bangladesh Telephone Communications Limited (BTCL), National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), and Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP). In case of ACC, it took a number of measures to improve its efficacy as an institution. One of these was the removal of inactive panel of lawyers from ACC's pool who were then replaced by five new lawyers. An Internal Discipline Unit was also set up. The OCAg of Bangladesh directed the Local and Revenue Audit Directorate in February 2017 to include seven most corrupt sectors in its audit programme on a priority basis in accordance with the findings of the National Household

Survey 2015 report released in June 2016. The Case Management Reforms Committee and Monitoring Committees of the Law and Justice Division, Ministry of Law were reconstituted and strengthened to identify and address the reasons for delay in disposal of cases in the courts at all tiers. As part of bringing the courts under the information and communication technology (ICT) network and recording the testimony of witnesses appropriately, audio recording system was piloted in Sylhet District Court. The CSOs have played an important role in creating the demand for reforms and institutional changes in view of the above.

In line with the TIB recommendations, the government has taken a number of measures to prevent leakage of questions in public examinations.³⁶ Law enforcers arrested 153 people in 52 cases filed over question leakage beginning from the start of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations in 2018. The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) decided to transfer office assistants at the upazila education offices who had been working for five years or above at a single station. According to the study recommendation as regards the NCTB, some measures were taken to improve performance of the institutions. For example, Ministry of Education required all audit reports of the NCTB to verify audit objections raised by the OCAg in December 2017. ACC prepared a list of 20 corrupt NCTB officials; eight of them were transferred. NCTB identified subject teachers who were responsible for errors and mistakes and took steps for correction.

Several initiatives have been undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to improve the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of healthcare-providing public institutions.³⁷ The DIP circulated office orders to deal with undue practices in passport offices. The DIP also established two new offices in Dhaka city to reduce overload and pressure on passport

³⁶The government stopped the activities of the coaching centers ahead of the SSC examinations on 1 February 2018, and asked those to remain closed till the end of exams. The examinees were instructed to enter their respective exam halls at least 30 minutes before the exams began. Students and teachers were not allowed to carry smartphones inside the exam centres. Instruction was given to arrest anyone carrying a mobile phone within 200 meters of the centres during the exam.

³⁷These include: introduction of an online mechanism for submitting complaints and feedbacks about health services; display of service-related information at the hospitals through hanging of citizen's charter, notice board, information board, etc.; introduction of biometric machines for ensuring the presence of doctors and Hello Doctor programme to monitor presence of doctors in hospitals through surprise phone calls twice a month by ministry officials; written instructions in health institutions to stop harassment by brokers; introduction of online licensing application and renewal processes for private healthcare institutions; and formation of different inspection committees at various levels down to the upazila level.

services. Public hearing on passport services was extended to local-level offices to ensure transparency and accountability in the service delivery. The DIP also took actions against four officials for their involvement in corruption and irregularities.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) constituted a committee to carry out an inquiry into the allegations that came up in a study conducted by the TIB. The government appointed an observer for each of the private universities to curb the absolute monopoly exercised by the Trustee Board in decision-making process. Higher officials from both the Ministry of Education and UGC made unscheduled visit to private universities and took measures to correct the identified irregularities. The UGC issued show cause letter to the universities on grounds of circulating admission notices for unapproved subjects. The UGC introduced a unified reporting format (Private University Regulation Form) to ensure university's financial accountability. The UGC also adopted a system to monitor the appointment of part-time teachers in private universities.

The NGO Affairs Bureau issued a letter to all NGOs in 2018, directing to take necessary measures in light of the recommendations proposed in a TIB study titled NGOs of Bangladesh Funded by Foreign Donations: Governance Challenges and Way Forward. The Ministry of Land circulated a number of directives to improve governance and reduce corruption through proactive disclosure of information in land offices. The Cabinet took a decision that permission will be required from the concerned authority for use of land for any development or industrial purposes.

The private sector also undertook a number of institutional reforms which resulted in important changes in practices. For instance, RMG sector adopted several initiatives in response to research findings and advocacy work of a number of CSOs. These included providing service contract papers to the workers, as well as ID cards that will contain emergency phone number, issuing an order to the factory-owners to appoint female welfare officers to address gender issues, improving the capacity of all factory inspectors for curbing corruption in the supply chain and formulating a code of ethics for the inspectors, and developing a Workers' Welfare Fund for RMG workers in July 2016 with a contribution equivalent to 0.03 per cent of the export earnings of RMG manufacturers.

Success Story: Successful campaign for dalits

The NHRC took a stand against discriminatory practices concerning the dalit communities; it has decided to include dalit issue in upcoming NHRC strategic plans. For instance, two dalit persons were qualified for the primary selection of Bangladesh Police Trainee Constable programme. However, their recruitment was cancelled through a Government circular on January 2016. They were dropped from the final recruitment list only because they did not own any land, which was a precondition for getting police jobs in Bangladesh. NU drew attention to the NHRC and the media about this discriminatory practice and a leading national daily published the news. This had a positive impact on public opinion. NU continued lobbying with the higher authorities through NHRC for appropriate actions in this regard. Finally, the Bangladesh Police cancelled the order, and a process was put in place to recruit the two dalit candidates.

Information dissemination

Through research and advocacy campaigns concerning various issues covered under Goal 16, the CSOs have been making a significant contribution in the area of dissemination of relevant information. Wide-ranging activities are being pursued in this connection, which include street theatre, production and airing of television commercials (TVCs), information fair and organisation of competitions.

For information dissemination and awareness building, CSOs, including TIB and ASK, are helping local theatre groups to develop story-based street theatre productions and organise public shows highlighting corruption and irregularities in such sectors as health, education, local government, RTI, etc. in Dhaka and in other regions. Information fairs are being organised at the local level, where relevant government service delivery institutions are also invited to take part. The Satellite AI-Desks organised by TIB's local-level volunteer groups play an important role in disseminating information on different public services, including education, health, local government and land-related services.

TVCs and documentaries help knowledge dissemination and raise awareness against corruption. TVCs for RTI as regards land, anti-bribery awareness in recruitment, graft liability concerning women, ALAC animation, etc. have been developed and were aired on private television channels.

TIB arranges national-level anti-corruption competitions, such as debate competitions, cartoon competitions, photography competitions and moot

Success Story: *Sromik Jigyasha – Legal aid at one’s fingertips*

Rekha, an RMG worker, was upset to learn that some of her colleagues were unfairly dismissed from a factory in Tejgaon in Dhaka, without any good reason or prior notice. Furthermore, they were not paid their dues, and were forcefully removed from the factory when they asked for it. Rekha immediately brought out her phone and lodged a query through *Sromik Jigyasha*, a mobile phone application she had recently come to know of through an awareness-raising programme, where she had also received basic induction on how to use the application. A paralegal explained the applicable laws to Rekha and informed her that her colleagues’ dismissal was possibly unlawful. Rekha was advised by the paralegal to ask her colleagues to visit BLAST’s Dhaka office with their relevant employment documents. The paralegal helped the workers send a legal notice to the concerned enterprise. To their pleasant surprise, Rekha’s colleagues were handed over their overdue salaries within a few days. Rekha and her colleagues now intend to spread news about the app among their peers and to encourage them to take advantage of this whenever there is a need to avail of the benefits of protection provided by relevant laws.

court competitions. Investigative Journalism Award and Fellowships and Training are also playing an important role in disseminating anti-corruption knowledge. Civic awareness is being raised through investigative reports on corruption issues prepared by the TIB.

Raising awareness

Awareness raising as regards governance and anti-corruption issues are carried out by CSOs through social mobilisation and engagement and advocacy programmes at the community level. Multidimensional and multi-stakeholder prevention campaigns have contributed to significant reduction in the number of violence against women over the past years. Activities have been designed to contribute to changing mindsets regarding gender stereotyping to prevent acid throwing and other forms of gender-related violence.

Many CSOs involve men and boys in activities that are geared to promoting good practices to address and reduce gender-based violence in Bangladesh. Through *kabigaan*, *baul* songs (forms of popular folk music), inter-community dialogues on peace and social cohesion, and theatre programmes on election-time peace, CSOs try to reduce violence and promote peace building in the country.

ASF's multidimensional and multi-stakeholder prevention campaign has contributed to significant reduction in the number of acid attacks over the years. Before the ASF prevention campaign was launched in 2002, there were over 500 recorded attacks annually in Bangladesh. In 2010, the number came down to about 153. However, it has nevertheless remained a grave concern with one attack taking place in every two and half days. In 2015, the number of acid attacks had come down further to 59. The numbers were 48 in 2017 and 22 in 2018.

Due to programmes implemented by Brotee, 84,169 villagers (32 per cent indigenous and 65 per cent women) are now aware of various laws, including family laws, legal services and those related to human and land rights. Women's capacity to deal with domestic violence has been significantly raised; 441 cases were filed in this connection. About 1,400 youth leaders (of those 30 per cent are indigenous and 50 per cent are girls) are playing a critically important role as defenders of human rights and providers of legal service to vulnerable communities.

As a result of relentless campaign by concerned CSOs, corruption has come to occupy a central place in public discourse. Inclusion of anti-corruption commitments in electoral manifestos of the major political parties, over the last two decades, is a testimony to this. The ruling party has put emphasis on anti-corruption, which is manifested through pronouncement of commitment to 'zero tolerance against corruption' in its election 2018 manifesto. Good governance and anti-corruption drive have been given importance in the various state policies and the five-year plans.

Legal support

Many CSOs provide legal support with a view to ensuring access to justice, particularly for the poor, women victims of acid/domestic violence, marginalised groups and ethnic/ adivasi and dalit communities. This is provided in the forms of mediation, litigation, consultation and advice, and referral.

Between January 2016 and 31 December 2018, BLAST was able to settle 6,503 disputes through mediation out of the 17,863 cases it had dealt with. Of the settled disputes, 2,176 were related to recovery of money – Tk. 12,67,65,045 was recovered and both women and men have benefitted from this. They sought remedies concerning a number of issues, such as claims for dower, maintenance, workplace compensation and others. Over the same period, BLAST provided a full range of litigation services concerning civil, criminal

and constitutional matters involving 34,333 cases at various levels of the judiciary system. Out of these, 14,407 were disposed and the rest remain pending. Of the disposed cases, 5,563 were related to recovery of money in family-related disputes (e.g. maintenance, dowry, family property cases) and workers' arrears (e.g. salary, benefits and compensation, etc.). The cases led to the recovery of a total of Tk. 9,51,34,255 for the clients, who could not otherwise have afforded the high costs of pursuing their cases in courts.

The total number of phone calls and written complaints received by Bandhu between the years 2013 and 2018 were 3,171 and 287, respectively. Among these, 13 cases of serious nature have been referred to the NHRC, and another 17 cases were referred to various panel lawyers. As part of its commitment to address human rights and social justice issues, Bandhu initiated the Bandhu Panel Lawyer in 64 districts with an objective to provide the community members with easy access to information and assistance on legal issues. At present, 205 lawyers are providing pro bono legal support to their clients. In two districts, Brotee has provided legal support to 2,669 people belonging to the adivasis.

Through the ALAC programme of the TIB, 697 people have received a wide range of services. Of these, 304 complaints were resolved positively and another 74 were referred to government organisations and likeminded NGOs for further specific support (till September 2018).

Capacity building

Capacity building of a large number of community people and youth has been possible, thanks to a wide spectrum of CSO interventions covering all parts of Bangladesh. The interventions are centred on right to information, legal and human rights and labour rights, using various social accountability tools. These initiatives are targetted at community people, particularly children, women, youth and the marginalised people. Capacity building of public officials are also provided through training and orientation. For instance, TIB provided training for a number of ACC officials on research methodology, data collection and analysis, and investigation techniques concerning anti-corruption activities.

The British Council, through its PRODIGY project, has helped to develop knowledge and skills of more than 800 young people directly, and also of more than 1,300 likeminded youths, indirectly. The objective was to engage the wider community through volunteer activities, including youth club activities,

theatre performances, internships with local government, community radio programmes and public dialogues; and by creating platforms and channels to ensure that the wider community has access to government information. These trained young people have been working in 110 social action projects in 25 locations. The aim is to encourage civic participation in activities of the local governments. As part of yet another project, 42 Multi Actor Partnership (MAP) were constituted in 14 districts. About 1,050 MAP members (male: 593, female: 456, transgender: 1) were trained on leadership, communication, advocacy, social accountability tools and undertaking social action projects. For instance, Platforms for Dialogue, a European Union-funded project, in partnership with the Cabinet Division of the GoB, is being implemented through the British Council in 21 districts across the country. Its objective is to promote a more enabling environment for effective engagement and participation of citizens and civil society in the government decision-making process and accountability mechanisms. Similarly, Wave Foundation has contributed to strengthening youth leadership capabilities through organising trainings and workshops. Some 600 youth leaders implemented 40 social action projects as a follow-up of these capacity building events (Wave Foundation, 2016).

HEKS/EPER Bangladesh has been facilitating access to rights and entitlements concerning public resources, which are led by community leaders. As of now, about 10,000 people, one-fourth of the targetted number, have received a wide range of public services involving such areas as health advices, medicine, education support, safety net allowances, sanitation and safe drinking water, employment and infrastructure support.³⁸

TIB works with a large number of volunteer groups who are spread all across the country. The capacity of YES group members, for example, has been strengthened in such areas as making use of the RTI Act, running advice and information desks, collecting data for research, and undertaking advocacy campaigns using different methods and tools.

Community participation

Many CSOs implement programmes to strengthen community participation which contribute to enhancing capacity in the area of monitoring and decision-making by public representatives and public service delivery by concerned organisations (health, education, land, etc.). This is done through formation of committees and groups at the grassroots. For instance,

³⁸HEKS/EPER project database.

under the Social Engagement for Budgetary Accountability programme, Democracywatch is trying to raise budgetary transparency of union parishads (UPs) by ensuring free flow of information in line with the Union Parishad Act, 2009, and Union Parishad Operations Manual and RTI Act. The objective is to make the UP representatives more accountable to the people concerning planning, budgeting and use of UP funds. The purpose is to ensure more inclusive planning and budgeting by UPs through greater participation of cross-section of people, especially women and poor and marginalised groups. ActionAid's partner Udayankur Seba Sangstha (USS) is also implementing a similar activity.

To enhance democratic practices within service delivery organisations (UP, hospital, educational institutions, etc.), HEKS/EPER has initiated the practice of monitoring of governance performance through use of social audit, community score card and open budgeting. In addition, its partners working with dalit and adivasis have also been working with local, sub-national and national administration to promote a culture of accountability geared to ensuring access of the marginalised people to public services.

Public hearings on climate finance issues organised by the TIB have made it possible to have face to face conversation between the concerned implementing authority and community leaders and general people. This has created an opportunity for relevant agencies to be accountable to stakeholder opinion, learn about implementation gaps and commit to addressing the attendant concerns. More than 80 projects implemented by the government entities and the NGOs have been tracked under the Tracking Climate Change Adaptation/Mitigation Project, which aims to assess the quality of fund utilisation on the ground. Tracking reports serve to engage local people with the local implementing authorities for purposes of improving disclosure of information, participation in implementation of developmental activities and as grievance redressal tool.

5. Key lessons learnt

Engaging the authorities pays off. It may be discerned from the experience of many CSOs that a large number of officials in positions of authority are willing to work with the CSOs to achieve Goal 16. As the preceding sections testify, activities are being undertaken in many areas in collaboration with various ministries, departments and institutions in a number of Goal-16-related areas. For instance, several ministries and institutions have invited TIB for in-depth hearings based on its research findings, and to discuss the way forward.

Engagements of TIB with concerned government entities in the conduct of its various studies – starting from conceptualisation to sharing of findings for validation – have risen significantly in recent years. Local-level diagnostic studies followed by advocacy initiatives have influenced local authorities to bring about changes in practice. It is also pertinent to note here that, private sector players have also demonstrated a willingness to provide necessary support to the TIB research endeavours and the advocacy works based on the research findings. Partnerships with the ACC, Information Commission, NHRC, National Legal Aid Services Organisation (NLASO) under Law and Justice Division, Acid Crime Case Monitoring Cell of Ministry of Home Affairs and Asian Centre for Development are good examples of collaboration with concerned government bodies. Establishing partnership with legal aid organisations and enhancing coordination between partner organisations also proved to be effective in extending reach and impact of referral services for legal assistance. It is necessary to further strengthen cooperation of duty-bearers during the litigation process. It is important to ensure that concerned are well-informed, aware of their rights, have willingness to seek legal support and have greater access to justice. CSOs are undertaking a wide array of activities in this regard.

Unhelpful environment undermines effectiveness of partnership activities.

It is not easy to influence policy-level changes in some of the key institutions of the state, e.g. the Executive, Parliament, Judiciary, etc. Change in leadership also often undermines continuity and success of ongoing collaborative partnerships. Follow-up activities require that the partners (e.g. concerned government institutions) move forward at a fast pace. Sometimes, for various reasons, it becomes a difficult task to deal with government institutions and relevant officials. As a result, implementation of projects and attaining the set targets become difficult. Often CSOs are not able to undertake collaborative initiatives with various government entities because of the high costs involved, although the demand for those remained high.

A section of government officials are reluctant to work with CSOs.

Regrettably, a section of government officials are reluctant to work with the CSOs. The contribution of the CSOs, particularly in achieving Goal 16 are not properly appreciated; neither is their efforts given due recognition in government documents. This is particularly visible, when the issues concern corruption, irregularities and malgovernance on the part of public institutions and officials. Government's strategy in addressing corruption appears to encourage good practices and improve the quality of service delivered by public officials, rather than taking a zero-tolerance stance against corruption.

As regards evidence and data, the stance often is to take government data without any question, and there is a reluctance in engaging NSAs in this regard (TIB, 2017b).

Lack of needed official data. The data gap analysis reveals that official data was not available as regards corruption and bribery (Target 16.5), institutional effectiveness and accountability (Target 16.6), and fundamental freedom and access to information (Target 16.10) (GED, 2017b). Partial information is available for some indicators. Mention may be made in this connection as regards the followings: all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere (Target 16.1), abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against, and torture of, children (Target 16.2), rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all (Target 16.3), money laundering and recovery of stolen assets (Target 16.4), and legal identity for all, including birth registration (Target 16.9). Collection, retention and preservation of records are not standardised, which poses a key challenge as regards implementation of the RTI Act. Information is often disseminated without understanding the needs of the users, or the contexts in which they can access and use the information. Many information systems exist that provide information to the poor that are not demand-driven. These tend to overlook local knowledge, and misunderstand the role of intermediaries and various forms of usage, if these are not monitored on an ongoing basis. To be true, some NGOs appear to be more reluctant compared to government offices as far as providing information under the RTI Act 2009 was concerned.

Government is reluctant to accept corruption-related data generated by CSOs. The government tends to suffer from a 'denial syndrome' when it comes to admitting the existence of corruption in public sector entities and institutions. This is in spite of presence of widespread corruption in these bodies as revealed by surveys and research studies conducted by non-government and international organisations. In general, response of concerned authorities tend to be guided more by political reasoning and considerations rather than by the demands of good governance and accountability. Instead of taking measures against corrupt practices, a part of the government machinery, as a practice, questions the validity and authenticity of such reports, terming the findings 'false', 'ill-motivated', 'politically biased' and/or 'part of a conspiracy' (TIB, 2017b). Moreover, many government officials continue to be guided by a culture of secrecy. Regrettably, they are found to be rather slow in adapting to a practice of openness, accountability and transparency as required by the RTI Act 2009.

6. The way forward

The government may like to consider the followings towards raising the efficacy of delivery of government and CSO programmes.

CSOs have recommended various legal reforms to address limitations of existing laws in the areas of ensuring human rights, protection of freedom of speech and expression, right to information, right to life and livelihood, and strengthening of NIS institutions. These suggestions should be considered with due seriousness by the government. There should be regular exchange of ideas and views before enactment of any new law or undertaking legal reforms. This is necessary to ensure that the foundational spirit of the Constitution and international standards are not compromised. Laws that contain clauses which are against the spirit of freedom of speech and expression, human rights and equality must be reviewed and revised. New laws promoting good governance, transparency, accountability and anti-discrimination should be enacted in place of those.

The institutional and financial capacity of NIS institutions should be raised to enable these to deliver better service and improve their performance. Positive and negative incentives must be put in place, as appropriate, to ensure transparency and accountability of public institutions.

The government should ensure that the data not available currently gets generated to monitor Goal 16 targets and indicators. For instance, the BBS may undertake a plan to conduct a nationwide baseline survey on the state of corruption and bribery and people's satisfaction and trust in NIS institutions. The government may consider engaging CSOs in this exercise by taking advantage of their expertise and experience in relevant areas.

The CSOs should develop effective partnerships with the government as regards various issues of mutual interest with the purpose of achieving the targets of Goal 16. Possible areas of collaborations could be capacity building, data generation, service delivery, information dissemination, etc.

Participation of youth volunteers and social workers should be encouraged both by the government and the CSOs. Capacity of these young people should be strengthened, particularly in areas concerning promotion of good governance, transparency and accountability of different institutions. The purpose will be to enable and empower them to act as a driving force

against corruption, human rights violation, violence against women and children, and to promote peace and justice in the social sphere. Content on non-discrimination, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular, rights to consent and to choice, should be incorporated into school and madrasah curricula and the curricula for training of teachers.

Special attention should be given to addressing gender-based violence. Coordination among different public and CSO stakeholders should be strengthened. Social media needs to play a more proactive role by making use of ICT-based tools for reporting, responding and for referral purposes. There is also a need for more gender-responsive budgeting. Participation of youth volunteers and social workers in work of police stations should be encouraged – they can provide support to victims of rights violations who are particularly vulnerable, such as persons with disabilities and women and girls facing sexual violence. An online complaint recording tool (e.g. a dedicated website) must be developed, especially for dealing with cases pertaining to violence against women (where social stigma discourages filing of complaints). This mechanism must treat the personal information of the complainant with utmost confidentiality. Relevant actors within law enforcement agencies and medical institutions should receive sensitisation training so that they respond to victims of rights violations with due care and diligence. These should include providing interpretation and special support for persons with disabilities. Training programmes should be organised to inculcate gender sensitivity for judges and lawyers, particularly in view of dealing with cases that involve victims of sexual violence.

Legal aid service-providers, including state and NSAs (for example, BLAST, BRAC and others) who are working across the country, should work together to create a central database that identifies and measures the reach and operations of legal aid and services.

Appropriate institutional support must be ensured for dalits and adivasis who are lagging behind for various reasons. Creation of a separate ministry, like the one for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), could be considered; setting up a human rights commission could also be thought of. There should be dedicated allocation for these marginalised groups in social safety net programmes. Targetted initiatives should be taken in areas inhabited by dalit and adivasi people, so that good education opportunities are available for their children.

7. Conclusions

From the discussion in the preceding sections, it is evident that the CSOs in Bangladesh have been playing a crucially important role, alongside the government, to achieve the different targets of Goal 16. Indeed, the CSOs in Bangladesh are playing dual roles as implementers and as watchdogs. In many instances, they have been successful in keeping government policies on the right track. They have extended effective support to SDG implementation programmes of the GoB by complementing and reinforcing those with their own programmes. Since the poor and the marginalised remain the key stakeholders of the CSOs, through their activities, interventions and advocacy works the CSOs are in a strategic and unique position to contribute importantly to the realisation of the LNOB spirit of the SDGs. The contribution of the CSOs in Bangladesh should receive due recognition and support from the GoB, so that the country is able to attain not only Goal 16, but all the 17 SDGs by 2030.

References

- ACC. (2018). *Annual Report 2017*. Dhaka: Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) of Bangladesh.
- Amnesty International. (2017). *Amnesty International Report 2016/17: The State of the World's Human Rights*. London: Amnesty International. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1048002017ENGLISH.PDF>
- Amnesty International. (2018). *Amnesty International Report 2017/18: The State of the World's Human Rights*. London: Amnesty International. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ENGLISH.PDF>
- ASK. (2018a). *Human Rights Situation of Bangladesh in 2017*. Dhaka: Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK). Available at: <http://www.askbd.org/ask/2018/04/24/hr-situation-of-bangladesh-in-2017/>
- ASK. (2018b). *National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh: Existing Challenges and Expectations of Civil Society*. Dhaka: Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).
- BBS. (2016). *Violence Against Women (VAW) Survey 2015*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/LatestReports/VAWSurvey2015.pdf>
- BBS and UNICEF. (2015). *Bangladesh – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012-2013, Progotir Pathay: Final Report*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Available at: http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/LatestReports/MICS_2012-13.pdf
- Bertelsmann Stiftung and SDSN. (2017). *SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2017 – Global Responsibilities: International Spillovers in Achieving the Goals*. New York: Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). Available at: <https://smartnet.niua.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017-SDG-Index-and-Dashboards-Report--full.pdf>
- Cabinet Division. (2013). *Sorkari Protishthane Uttam Charcha (Best Practices in Public Institutions)*. Dhaka: Cabinet Division, Government of Bangladesh

(GoB). Available at: http://cabinet.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/cabinet.portal.gov.bd/publications/5ab9615e_241a_4c7b_869b_048ce6212195/BestpracticesCopy.pdf

Cabinet Division. (2014). *Guidelines for Annual Performance Agreement (APA) 2014-2015*. Dhaka: Cabinet Division, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: [https://cabinet.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/cabinet.portal.gov.bd/page/089de62d_b4d1_4aa7_a879_bc9d483d9b2c/APA%20GUIDELINES%202014-15%20\(1\).pdf](https://cabinet.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/cabinet.portal.gov.bd/page/089de62d_b4d1_4aa7_a879_bc9d483d9b2c/APA%20GUIDELINES%202014-15%20(1).pdf)

Cabinet Division. (2017, 6 April). *Shuddhachar Puroskar Prodan Neetimala 2017 (Integrity Award Policy 2017)*. Bangladesh Gazette (Additional). Dhaka: Cabinet Division, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://cabinet.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/cabinet.portal.gov.bd/notification_circular/dcd10ed2_ed24_438b_9998_4ba8ee486b62/Award_GO.pdf

Centre for Law and Democracy. (2018). *Global Right to Information Rating 2017*. Nova Scotia: Centre for Law and Democracy. Available at: <https://www.rti-rating.org/country-detail/?country=Bangladesh>

Dhaka Tribune. (2017, 12 December). Judges' service rules gazette published, lower courts still in president's hands. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/law-rights/2017/12/11/gazette-lower-court-judges-service-rules/>

FDSD. (n.d.). *UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 – Importance of Participatory Institutions and Policymaking*. London: Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development (FDSD). Available at: <http://www.fdsd.org/ideas/sustainable-development-goal-sdg-16-democratic-institutions/>

Freedom House. (2019). *Freedom in the World 2019*. Washington, D. C.: Freedom House. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/bangladesh>

GED. (2012). *Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021: Making Vision 2021 a Reality*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: https://bangladesh.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bangladesh.gov.bd/page/6dca6a2a_9857_4656_bce6_139584b7f160/Perspective-Plan-of-Bangladesh.pdf

GED. (2013). *National Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-21*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/7ab46c78_0eaf_4538_8fbf_33ec533e3d07/National-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf

GED. (2015). *Seventh Five Year Plan (FY2016 - FY2020): Accelerating Growth, Empowering Citizens*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/aee61c03_3c11_4e89_9f30_d79639595c67/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf

GED. (2016a). *A Handbook: Mapping of Ministries by Targets in the Implementation of SDGs Aligning with 7th Five Year Plan (2016-20)*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/19da51a5_b571_4158_beaefc3e798c1f7/AHandbook-Mapping-of-Ministries_-targets_-SDG_-7-FYP_2016.pdf

GED. (2016b). *Integration of Sustainable Development Goals into the 7th Five Year Plan*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Integration_SDG_7FYP_Final.pdf

GED. (2017a). *Bangladesh Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2017: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World*. A report on progress of SDGs implementation of Bangladesh submitted to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) of the United Nations (UN). Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://www.sdg.gov.bd/public/img/upload/resources/5d39814178ea7_doc_file.pdf

GED. (2017b). *Data Gap Analysis of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/3acbc97e_6ba3_467b_bdb2_cfb3cbbf059f/Final_Data-Gap-Analysis-of-SDGs_Bangladesh-Perspective_23_02_2017.pdf

GED. (2017c). *SDGs Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government

of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <http://pkfsf-bd.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2.-SDGs-Financing-Strategy-Bangladesh-Perspective.pdf>

GED. (2017d). *2017 Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum: Summary on Adaptation and Implementation of SDGs by Bangladesh*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14854bangladesh.pdf>

GED. (2018a). *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/dc350cdc_4c6d_4a81_b72a_3afe082187ac/Monitoring_and_Evaluation_Framework_of_SDGS_Book_Proof.pdf

GED. (2018b). *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: [http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20(1).pdf)

GFI. (2019). *Illicit Financial Flows to and from 148 Developing Countries: 2006-2015*. Washington, D. C.: Global Financial Integrity (GFI). Available at: <https://www.gfintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/GFI-2019-IFF-Update-Report-1.29.18.pdf>

Human Rights Watch. (2018). *World Report 2018: Bangladesh Events 2017*. New York: Human Rights Watch. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/bangladesh>

Human Rights Watch. (2019). *World Report 2019: Bangladesh Events 2018*. New York: Human Rights Watch. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/bangladesh#f6277a>

Iftekharuzzaman. (2017, 27 February). Towards SDGs: Promoting transparency. *The Daily Star*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/towards-just-and-inclusive-society/promoting-transparency-1367572>

Iftekharuzzaman. (2019, 30 January). Bangladesh descends in corruption ranking: Zero tolerance – what next? *The Daily Star*. Available at: <https://>

www.thedailystar.net/opinion/governance/news/bangladesh-descends-corruption-ranking-1694551

Information Commission. (2017). *Annual Report 2016*. Dhaka: Information Commission of Bangladesh. Available at: [http://infocom.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/infocom.portal.gov.bd/annual_reports/824de0b6_5588_4754_a1c7_bea9f53eb81f/IC_per_cent20Annual_per_cent20Report_per_cent202016_per_cent20\(1\).pdf](http://infocom.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/infocom.portal.gov.bd/annual_reports/824de0b6_5588_4754_a1c7_bea9f53eb81f/IC_per_cent20Annual_per_cent20Report_per_cent202016_per_cent20(1).pdf)

Institute for Economics and Peace. (2018). *Global Peace Index 2018*. New York: Institute for Economics and Peace. Available at: <http://economicsandpeace.org/reports/>

Malik, S. (2019, 22 February). *Sromik Jigyasha: Legal aid at RMG workers' fingertips*. *The Daily Star*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/sromik-jigyasha-legal-aid-rmg-workers-fingertips-1705774>

Reporters without Borders. (2019). *World Press Freedom Index 2018*. Paris: Reporters without Borders. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh>

The Daily Star. (2018a, 28 June). *Bangladeshis' deposits in Swiss banks drop by Tk 4,064cr*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/bangladeshis-swiss-banks-deposits-drop-taka-4064-crore-1596886>

The Daily Star. (2018b, 3 April). *Banking Sector: TIB worried at proposal for reporting law*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/banking-sector-tib-worried-proposal-reporting-law-1557199>

The Daily Star. (2018c, 31 December). *National polls under int'l spotlight*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh-national-election-2018/bangladesh-election-2018-under-global-spotlight-1681045>

The Daily Star. (2019a, 11 January). *BB Heist: First conviction, after 3 years*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/banking/news/philippine-court-jails-ex-bank-manager-over-bb-cyber-heist-1685536>

The Daily Star. (2019b, 2 February). *Legal battle begins*. Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bb-files-case-ny-court-over-cyber-heist-1696027>

The New Nation. (2018, 10 March). 3,746 BD natls invested in Malaysia's second home scheme. Available at: <http://m.thedailynewnation.com/news/167572/3746-bd-natls-invested-in-malysias-second-home-scheme>

TI. (2019). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2018*. Berlin: Transparency International (TI). Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

TIB. (2017a). *Subordinate Court System of Bangladesh: Governance Challenges and Ways Forward*. Dhaka: Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). Available at: https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/beta3/images/2017/lower_judiciary/Executive_Summery_English_Judiciary_30112017.pdf

TIB. (2017b). *Sustainable Development Goal 16 – Preparedness, Progress and Challenges of Bangladesh: A Study of Selected Targets*. Dhaka: Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

TIB. (2018). *Corruption in Service Sectors: National Household Survey 2017*. Dhaka: Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). Available at: https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/beta3/images/2018/report/nhs/NHS_2017_Ex_Sum_EN.pdf

TIB. (2019). *Tracking the Eleventh National Parliament Election Process*. Dhaka: Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

UKAid, UNDP and Government of Bangladesh. (2015). *Access to Justice in Bangladesh: Situation Analysis – Summary Report 2015*. Report prepared under the Justice Sector Facility project. Dhaka: Law and Justice Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, UK Department for International Development (UKAid) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Available at: http://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/library/democratic_governance/access-to-justice-in-bangladesh-situation-analysis.html

UN. (2018). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018*. New York: United Nations (UN). Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2018/TheSustainableDevelopmentGoalsReport2018-EN.pdf>

UN. (n.d.a). *About the Sustainable Development Goals*. New York: United Nations (UN). Available at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

UN. (n.d.b). *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: Why They Matter*. New York: United Nations (UN). Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/16-00055p_Why_it_Matters_Goal16_Peace_new_text_Oct26.pdf

UN. (n.d.c). *The Sustainable Development Agenda*. New York: United Nations (UN). Available at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>

UNB. (2018, 4 October). Govt issues gazette abolishing quota in 1st and 2nd class govt jobs. Available at: <http://www.unb.com.bd/category/bangladesh/govt-issues-gazette-abolishing-quota-in-1st-and-2nd-class-govt-jobs/3549>

UNECOSOC. (2018). *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*. Report of the Secretary-General. E/2018/64. New York: United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC). Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/18541SG_SDG_Progress_Report_2018_ECOSOC.pdf

Wave Foundation. (2016). *Annual Report 2015-16*. Dhaka: Wave Foundation. Available at: https://wavefoundationbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/annual-repport-15-16_wave.pdf

WEF. (2018a). *The Global Competitiveness Report 2018*. Geneva: World Economic Forum (WEF). Available at: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2018/competitiveness-rankings/#series=TRANSPARENCYCPI>

WEF. (2018b). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2018*. Geneva: World Economic Forum (WEF). Available at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

WJP. (2018, 31 January). *WJP Releases 2017-2018 Rule of Law Index: Bangladesh Ranked 102 out of 113 Countries on Rule of Law, Rising One Position*. Press release. Washington, D. C.: The World Justice Project (WJP). Available at: https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/ROLIndex_2017-2018_Bangladesh_eng.pdf

World Bank. (n.d.). *The Worldwide Governance Indicators (2018 update)*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank. Available at: <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx?fileName=wgidataset.xlsx>

World Bank Group. (2013). *Enterprise Surveys Bangladesh*. Washington, D. C.: World Bank Group. Available at: <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/data/exploreeconomies/2013/bangladesh>

World Vision Bangladesh. (2018). *Integrated WVB National Baseline Report*. Dhaka: World Vision Bangladesh. Available at: [https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WVB per cent20Baseline per cent20Survey per cent20Report per cent20v1.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WVB%20Baseline%20Survey%20Report%20v1.pdf)

Annexes

Annex 1: Existing laws that inform efficiency, transparency and accountability of selected institutions

Institution	Effective functioning	Transparency	Accountability
Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Parliament Secretariat Act, 1994 • Rules of Procedure (ROP) • Representation of the People Order (Amendment) Act, 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Rules of Procedure (ROP) • Members of Parliament (Determination of Dispute) Act, 1980
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Rules of Business 1996 • General Financial Rules (GFR) • Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Privileges) Act, 1975 • Special Powers Act, 1974 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure (Protection) Act, 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Rules of Business 1996
Judiciary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Code of Civil Procedure 1908 • Supreme Court (High Court Division) Rules, 1973 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Government Servants (Conduct) Rules 1979
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • City Corporation Amended Act-2011 • Upazila Parishad Amended Act-2011 • Upazila Parishad Program Implementation Rules-2010 • Municipality Amendment Act-2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Council Servants (Efficiency and Discipline) Rules 1968 • Constitution of Bangladesh

(Annex 1 contd.)

(Annex 1 contd.)

Institution	Effective functioning	Transparency	Accountability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality Amended Act-2010 • Union Parishad Act-2009 • Union Parishad Tax Schedule Rules-2012 • Union Parishad Accounts and Audit Rules-2012 • Village Court Act-2006 		
Public Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Employment Act 2018 • Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Servants Conduct Rules, 1979 • RTI Act 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947 • Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1985 • Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance, 1985 • Government Servants (Review of Penalties) (Dissolution of Review Board) Ordinance, 1978 • Government Servants Conduct Rules, 1979
Law-enforcing agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Police Act, 1861 • Police Regulations, Bengal, 1915 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 • Evidence Act, 1872 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Act, 1861 • Civil Rules and Orders (Annual Confidential Report – ACR)

(Annex 1 contd.)

(Annex 1 contd.)

Institution	Effective functioning	Transparency	Accountability
Election Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Election Commission Secretariat Act, 2009 • Election Commission (Office Staff) Recruitment Rules, 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 • Election Commission Secretariat Act, 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Commission Secretariat Act, 2009 • Election Commission (Office Staff) Recruitment Rules, 2008 • Election Officer (Special Rules) Act, 1991
Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Comptroller and Auditor-General (Additional Functions) Act, 1974 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of ethics • Comptroller and Auditor-General (Additional Functions) Act, 1974
Anti-Corruption Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Corruption Act, 2004 • Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Corruption Act, 2004
Information Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • RTI (Information Disclosure and Dissemination) Rules, 2010 • Disclosure of Public Interest Information (Protection) Act, 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009
Human Rights Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009
Political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Political Parties Ordinance, 1978 • Political Party Registration Rules, 2008 • Conduct of Election Rules 1972 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation of the People Order, 1972 • Political Party Registration Rules, 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Parties Ordinance, 1978 • Political Party Registration Rules, 2008 • Conduct of Election Rules, 1972

(Annex 1 contd.)

(Annex 1 contd.)

Institution	Effective functioning	Transparency	Accountability
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Bangladesh • Press Council Act, 1974 • Information and Communication Technology Act, 2013 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and Communication Technology Act, 2013 • Press Council Act, 1974
Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Donation Regulations Act, 2016 • Societies Registration Act, 1860 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, 2009 • Public Interest Information Disclosure Act (Protection), 2011 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Donation Regulations Act, 2016
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Institutions Act, 1993 • Securities and Exchange Commission Act, 1993 • Companies Act, 1994 • Bankruptcy Act, 1997 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Institutions Act, 1993 • Companies Act, 1994 • Bankruptcy Act, 1997

Source: Compiled from TIB (2017b).

Annex 2: Success stories

Success story: Women empowerment through rights awareness

Jorina (29) is her parent's only child. After her father's sudden death, she and her mother left their village home in Bhola, a coastal district, and moved to Beribadh, a densely populated slum area in Dhaka city. They both found work in a garments factory. One day Jorina met Badsha (45) while walking to the factory. They married soon after. But Badsha changed afterwards. He stopped working and put pressure on Jorina to hand over her earnings. When she refused, he became violent and abusive. Jorina also discovered that Badshah was already married and had seven children with his previous wife, and that he had had vasectomy and could not have any children with her. Jorina tolerated Badsha's behaviour in the belief that if she left she would be in a dire situation. When she met a SHOKHI change maker in her community, she came to know that if she divorced him she could still claim her dower and maintenance. Once Jorina understood her legal rights, she sought a divorce. She submitted an application to the paralegals at the SHOKHI hub for legal aid to secure her dower and maintenance. Based on her application, SHOKHI issued a letter to Badsha asking him to attend

a mediation session. In the end, Jorina received Tk. 25,000 as dower from Badsha through the process of mediation.

Success story: Rights ensured for a transgender

Morjina is a transgender living in the district of Mymensingh. She managed to buy a small piece of land, of about three decimals. In the meantime, she also adopted a child. However, on seeing this, her nephew realised that if the child continues to live with them, he will not be able to inherit the land property from Morjina. This selfish greed turned him into a hostile person. This served as an excuse and he physically abused Morjina and tortured her brutally. He also threatened that if she did not transfer the land to him he will kill her. Morjina felt forlorn, helpless and deserted. Seeing no other way, she contacted one of the DLLG (District-Level Lawyers Group) of Bandhu and shared the matter. After listening to all the facts, they met the Additional Superintendent of Police. Considering the seriousness of the matter, he forwarded the complaint to officer-in-charge of the local police station who filed a First Information Report (FIR). He assured that he will verify the matter with due care.

Bandhu's DLLG member kept a regular line of communication with the OC to get updates. When the perpetrator came to know about this, he sought an apology. When Morjina learnt of this, she agreed to sit with her nephew for an open discussion. A meeting was held in the presence of the Bandhu representatives, DLLG member and other concerned people. After prolonged discussions, the perpetrator finally signed a letter of apology and made a commitment not to breach the security of Morjina in future. He also gave compensation to Morjina for the physical abuse. Finally, the case was withdrawn and they are now living in harmony.

Success story: RTI applied as a tool of investigative journalism

Md. Obaidur Rahman, a journalist living in the district of Dinajpur, came to know of rampant corruption involving the sale of fake stamps in the city. The government was losing a significant amount of revenue as a result of this. When concerned people refused to provide any information, Obaidur Rahman got in touch with CCC, Dinajpur for advice as regards getting the information. CCC, Dinajpur suggested that he submits an application to the local district administration as per the RTI Act, 2009 seeking information. With the help of technical assistance from the local CCC, Obaidur Rahman applied to the Information Officer of the District Administration under the

RTI, asking for information about the fake stamps, mentioning serial numbers of the stamps sold and the name of the concerned vendors. However, he was refused the information.

Later on, as per advice of the CCC, he appealed directly to the DC. He received the required information, which proved that the stamps were indeed fake. Considering the information and taking into account of the actual situation, the DC cancelled the licenses of the four involved vendors, on the same day, on grounds of corrupt practices and irregularities.

According to the information provided by relevant authorities, as a result of actions taken by the local administration, selling of fake stamps has stopped totally and the revenue received by the government has also increased significantly compared to previous fiscal year. As per information provided by accounts and audit section of the district administration, an additional amount of Tk. 2.5 million was collected from the same source within 40 working days following the measures taken by the authorities.

Success story: Youth contributing to strengthening of local institutions

As an important institution that promotes local-level democracy, the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 allows the people at the local level to participate in the decision-making process of the UP. According to this law, each UP is supposed to form 13 standing committees to look after specific areas (e.g. finance, agriculture, health, sports). Each committee is required to co-opt five to seven members representing the local community. However, many of these tend to remain dysfunctional; indeed, this is commonplace



across the country. The Fulbaria UP in Mirpur upazila was also no exception. Although the standing committees were established in 2016, they did not maintain any resolution book, which indicated that the meetings were not held on a regular basis. However, the UP Act 2009 requires that each standing committee has a meeting every often month. Also, none of these committees had a member who was under 30 years of age.

An analysis was undertaken to identify the problem of dysfunctionality of the standing committee and potential opportunities for young people to join the committees in vacant membership positions. This was done with support from ActionAid Bangladesh's local partner ALO in Kushtia. A number of young people attended the training programme on democracy and leadership organised by the ActionAid Bangladesh. They held several meetings with elected UP representatives. Their persistent and intensive negotiations with the Chairman and the UP members opened the opportunity for 26 young people to represent the community at the standing committees. Two young people were included in the vacant positions of each of the 13 standing committees. Ten of the young people included in the committees came from the youth groups of ALO, while the remaining 16 came from the broader community.

While the UP chairperson and the members believe that the newly recruited young members of the standing committees will contribute to transform the UP into a vibrant local democracy institution, the community people, including the youth community, expect that the young people will represent their voice in the UP decision-making processes. The young people who have been appointed as members of the standing committees also strongly feel that they can play an effective role and believe that they will be able to contribute to transforming the Fulbaria UP into an accountable and youth-responsive body.

Success story: Young people facilitating community-led development planning

The people of Bamunia UP have seen that it has been the UP chairperson and members who have traditionally developed the plan for the UP; this practice had continued since the independence of the country. The UP representatives had never asked them what they wanted to see in the UP plan. Consequently, the UP plan hardly reflected the aspirations of the community.



However, a recent initiative by young people has contributed to a change in the way the UPs have traditionally functioned. In July 2018, with the support from Udayankur Seba Sangstha, a group of young people analysed the local development issues and examined the development planning process that the UP follows. Based on their initial analysis, they decided to conduct a community-led mid-term review of the five-year plan of the UP. When they shared their idea with the UP representatives, they acknowledged that the opinion of the community members was not solicited in the development planning process. The chairperson of the UP agreed to the proposal for undertaking a joint review of the plan with the youth group members.

This led to the start of a new chapter in the UP's journey. Together with the youth group members, the UP representatives consulted community people in each ward of the UP (unit/constituency of a UP member) to understand their problems and seek opinion as regards the plan. Based on community consultation, the UP representatives in cooperation with the young people, developed new projects, which were to be prioritised in all the nine wards. While her sharing feelings about engagement with the planning process, Tanjilla Begum, a woman from Ward 2, said, "I have never seen in my life that a UP member has openly engaged with and involved the community members in project selection process."

By the end of August 2018, the UP representatives revised their five-year plan by incorporating nine new projects. The revised budget was also announced. Within a few days, the new projects were approved. Later, ward-level project implementation committees were constituted with one youth representative being included in each of the committees. The youth group members and the community people will be monitoring the implementation of the projects as they were directly involved in the project development process.

Both the community people and the UP representatives are very happy to see this kind of initiative on the part of the youth. The chairperson of the Bamunia UP appreciated the leadership of the young people for facilitating the development of the nine new projects. The young people who led the community-led project development process, believe that the relationship which has developed between the community and their elected representatives through the plan review process, will contribute to gradually inculcating a culture of accountability in the work of the UP representatives. They also hope that this example could have a ripple effect on other service delivery institutions in adjacent UPs and also beyond.

Success story: Working with the NHRC

Since 2012, ASK has been advocating the establishment of an independent structure to look after the interests of children following the recommendations of UPR and CRC. In 2016, the organisation joined the NHRC to work in tandem towards the establishment of National Commission for the Rights of Children (NCRC). A law was drafted in 2015, which was shared with different stakeholders at various levels. The draft took cognisance of opinions of experts of relevant stakeholders. The draft law was submitted to Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in June 2016, and was accepted. The ministry convened two inter-ministerial meetings, where the then State Minister and the Chairperson, NHRC were present. The Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguard the interests of children. He was of the opinion that as children make up a large part of the population and they are a particularly vulnerable group, the demand for an independent structure to ensure the rights of children was a logical one. ASK also consulted the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR). Members present at the meeting also supported the issue. Later, the ministry formed a review committee to work further on the draft law.

Success story: Engaging stakeholders

As part of Promoting Citizens' Access to Information Project, MADI facilitated setting up of civil society groups called Jagrata Nagorik Committee in six upazilas each of Jessore and Barisal districts. The groups were committed to working for an open and information-centric society. The members of the committee of Chowgachha, Jessore played an important role in organising and publicising the activities at the RTI camp and issues of RTI in general. Government officials and elected representatives were engaged as part of the sensitisation programme. The DC of Jessore and the UNO of Chowgachha remained engaged throughout the process and lent their active support to this initiative.

The Shinghajhuli UP chairman Rezaur Rahman Rendu became a staunch supporter of information disclosure. This was a departure from his earlier position of maintaining a culture of secrecy in the work of the UP. He extended all out cooperation at each step of organising the camp. This contributed significantly to make the initiative a success. He made a disclosure of his budget; he also made public the names of the beneficiaries of five safety net programmes in his area, including Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programmes. He got the names written on the walls of the UP and in other places for all to see. This was a demonstration of courage and commitment by an elected representative. "I don't want to be involved in corruption and I don't want anyone to indulge in corruption in future when I am not here," he said.

Success story: Farida – the Light House of Awliabad

The Local Governance Support Program (LGSP-II) is a milestone project implemented by the GoB. The project has created significant opportunities for the UPs to function effectively. The programme is geared to playing an active role in rural development and community engagement at all levels. Under the SEBA project, Democracywatch has provided training to Community Support Groups and UP bodies, Ward Committee and Scheme Supervision Committees as regards use of Social Accountability Tools, LGSP-II and Right to Information Act 2009.

Farida, a member of Community Support Group of Parkhi UP, ward number 9, played an exceptional role by monitoring the LGSP-II schemes which were being implemented in her area. She wanted to know from the ward member about the number of schemes which was planned and those that

were in the process of implementation in her ward, including budgetary allocations for the schemes in FY2014-15. Following persistent demands from Farida, the UP member had to disclose the information as regards both schemes and allocations. Farida received a copy of the estimates involving the implementation of the schemes. She, with the assistance of other members of Community Support Group, took on the task of monitoring the scheme which concerned rebuilding a road in Aowliabad village.

Farida also requested the Scheme Supervision Committee in her ward to play its assigned role in a proactive manner as per the requirements of the UP operational manual. Farida said “This is my responsibility not as a woman but as a citizen.” She thanked SEBA for making her aware of UP activities and for imparting the motivation to play the role of a concerned citizen. The people of Aowliabad are now encouraged and interested in looking after development projects that are being implemented in their area. Farida is now regarded as the ‘Light House’ of the village.

Success story: Youth for non-violent elections

This project was aimed at building awareness about the importance of non-violent elections and encouraging the holding of such election. The project was implemented with participation of youth, women and other concerned citizens. The project covers eight divisions in Bangladesh, and is supported by the US Department of State. The duration was between April and December, 2018. The idea was to encourage people to take a wide spectrum of initiatives both online and in their respective communities. The project focused on promoting peaceful election with *Pledge4Peacebd campaign* through various promotional activities and materials. The project used social media to reach the young people by posting pictures, status, sharing of videos and dissemination of promotional materials. Young people were also asked to make videos and post those on Facebook and Twitter. Solaiman Shukhon, one of the motivational speakers, went live on 7 November 2018. The team also collected information about young people who encouraged other young people for the *Pledge4Peacebd campaign*. Young people were asked to explain what peace means to them in different contexts. A day-long campus promotional campaign was held in eight districts and in 10 public and private universities. Many students made online and offline pledges; many people made pledges by signing on a sheet. In each of the universities, there were four booths to collect online pledges. More than 30,000 online pledges and 3,000 offline pledges were collected. Online courses and promotional videos were shown on big screens. This also contributed to creating 4,901 peace advocates.

Awareness videos and songs were played; and promotional materials, such as flyers, badges and t-shirts were distributed. Young people also participated in various campus activities. They also encouraged the youth of their locality to spread the message of peace in their communities. In each district, approximately 3,000 youths in 48 communities were engaged, of which, 1,800 were female and 1,200 were male. In total 10,000, 56 people were mobilised through a wide range of online and offline activities.

Strengthening Global Partnerships for Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness (SDG 17)



Anchor organisation

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Co-anchor organisation

ActionAid Bangladesh

Associate organisations

BRAC

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)

Gram Bikash Sahayak Sangstha (GBSS)

Oxfam in Bangladesh

Lead authors

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, PhD, Research Director, CPD

Asgar Ali Sabri, Director- Programme in Policy and Campaign, ActionAid
Bangladesh, and

Mohammad Ali, former Programme Associate, CPD

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report provides a critical view on the role of civil society organisations and private sector at national, regional and global levels in implementing Goal 17 of the SDGs. The report highlights various issues and concerns as regards effective engagement of non-state actors in the implementation of Goal 17 targets in Bangladesh, and puts forward a set of recommendations for initiatives and actions by relevant stakeholders in the country to raise the efficacy of their interventions.

The authors would like to register their gratitude to Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Convenor of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, for his overall guidance in preparing the report. The authors would like to put on record their sincere appreciation of the support they have received from Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Distinguished Fellow, CPD and Core Group Member of the Platform and Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh in the course of preparing this report.

The authors would like to particularly thank Abul Kalam Azad, Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance, Jeroen Steeghs, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh and Ferdaus Ara Begum, Chief Executive Officer, BUILD, for taking part in interviews and sharing their views which have enriched the paper. Appreciation is also due to the participants of two preparatory meetings held in connection with this exercise. Authors would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the respondents of the online survey, which was conducted to elicit insights and information for this report.

Finally, the authors would like to put on record their special thanks to the Platform Secretariat, particularly to Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, former Head of Dialogue and Communication, CPD and Coordinator, Citizen's Platform, and Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate, CPD for their excellent cooperation and support extended to the members of Goal-Group 17.

1. Introduction

As would be recalled, the 2019 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) was held in July 2019, with the theme of ‘Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’. Six of the 17 goals of the Agenda 2030 were reviewed at this meeting—Goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17.¹ One of the distinctive features of Goal 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development) is that, it is a key cross-cutting goal. Indeed, Goal 17 concerns means and instruments for attaining all the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Agenda 2030 itself. As a matter of fact, Goal 17 is the only goal which is a common feature in all Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs); Goal 17 featured in the earlier two HLPFs held in 2017 and 2018, as also in 2019. As a cross-cutting goal, it focuses on resources and partnerships in three core areas: economy, society and biosphere. The multidimensional nature of the goal is reflected in the diverse set of targets under five broad areas of coverage: finance, technology, trade, capacity building and systemic issues.²

As the SDG implementation period (2016–2030) crosses the first quarter (2016–2019) of its journey, it is important to review the performance of implementation during the ‘initial phase’ in order to draw lessons in going forward. As it is, the first few years could be considered as the preparatory phase in implementing the SDGs and a good start here will have important implications for attaining the goals and targets by the terminal year of 2030. During this phase, the expectation was that a good foundation will be laid for institutions to be ready and operational, activities to be well-defined, respective roles of different players/actors to be clarified, coordination and implementation mechanism to be operationalised, and monitoring and review mechanisms to be set in place. A formal review process of SDG-related activities, as is known, is already in place in Bangladesh, as part of which, the country had prepared its VNR in 2017 (GED, 2017a) and its annual review report 2018 (GED, 2018b). There is a wide recognition that the SDGs can be fully attained only through effective and collaborative efforts of both state and

¹Fifty countries presented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the HLPF 2019: 16 from Asia-Pacific, 18 from Africa, 11 from Europe and six from Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Bangladesh took part in the 2017 VNR process with its report (GED, 2017a); but did not present any in 2018. However, Bangladesh has prepared the ‘Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018’, which undertook a review of the progress made in the 17 Goal areas, based on latest available data (GED, 2018b).

²In terms of the number of targets and indicators, Goal 17 has 19 targets and 25 indicators, which are 11 per cent of total 169 targets and 10 per cent of the total 244 SDG indicators. As a matter of fact, these numbers are one of the highest among all the SDGs.

non-state actors. It is a matter of record, that in Bangladesh, non-state actors (NSAs) are making important contributions in all the goal areas of the SDGs; indeed, NSAs are key partners of the government in several SDG-related areas. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB), on its part, has set the aspiration of pursuing the SDGs through a *whole of society* approach. There is, thus, a need to capture the NSA experience in this connection, in a comprehensive manner, with a view to appreciate and assess NSA role and also to raise its effectiveness in SDG implementation. This is also of practical relevance to strengthen GO-NGO (government-non-government organisation) partnership to attain the 2030 Agenda. NSAs, such as civil society organisations (CSOs) and private sector, work directly at the grassroots level. Because a particular focus of the NSAs relates to those who are the marginalised section and tend to be left behind from receiving the development benefits, the importance of their role in implementing the SDGs cannot be overemphasised.

The role of CSOs and the private sector has been given wide recognition in the context of implementing the SDGs. Means of implementation and global partnerships mentioned in Goal 17 cover a diverse range of areas, including domestic resources, public-private partnership (PPP), aid, development cooperation, South-South Cooperation (SSC), foreign direct investment (FDI), transfer of technology, remittances, trade and capacity building, and strengthening of national data. Review of activities of the NSAs in attaining Goal 17 needs to put emphasis not only on quantitative aspects of the goal and its targets and indicators, but also on qualitative aspects of the SDG initiatives, from the perspectives of the NSAs. However, the nature of engagement of CSOs and private sector in the context of SDG implementation in Bangladesh is rather complex. At the national level, their role as key actors in the SDG implementation process, is yet to be formalised and institutionalised. Although the report prepared by the General Economics Division (GED) in 2018 does mention these two important stakeholders, this is done only tangentially. Review of activities relating to Goal 17 undertaken by the GoB, where collaboration between state and NSAs should have featured prominently, fails to do justice to the role of the NSAs.³ The present study makes an attempt to address this lacunae and highlights the activities of CSOs and the private sector in implementing Goal 17 with a view to identifying their specific engagements and raising the efficacy of such engagements towards achieving the different targets of Goal 17.

³As a matter of fact, CSOs have been referred to four times, while businesses have been referred to eight times in the report. In most cases, this was done only in a generic way. Specific mention of these entities have been found in cases of Goals 11 and 12. In a number of cases, businesses have been referred to only as 'beneficiary', not as an 'implementer' of the specific goal.

In this backdrop, the study first reviews the performance of Bangladesh in implementing Goal 17 during the first quarter of the SDG period. The study examines the role of the CSOs and the private sector at national, regional and global levels, and presents a set of best practices, based on their experience in attaining Goal 17 targets, with a view to identify possible areas of further actions for improvement. The report discusses how GO-NSA (government-NSA) cooperation could be deepened and awareness about the partnership could be raised at the national level. Finally, the paper identifies issues to be addressed and concerns to be taken care of towards successful implementation of Goal 17 targets, by 2030. The paper puts forward a set of recommendations to raise the efficacy of NSAs in attaining Goal 17 by 2030.

2. Methodology of the study

An analysis of the 19 targets and 25 indicators of Goal 17 from the perspective of the CSOs and the private sector is a methodologically complex and rather challenging exercise. Following sub-sections highlight four methodological issues which need to be taken into cognisance for such a review.

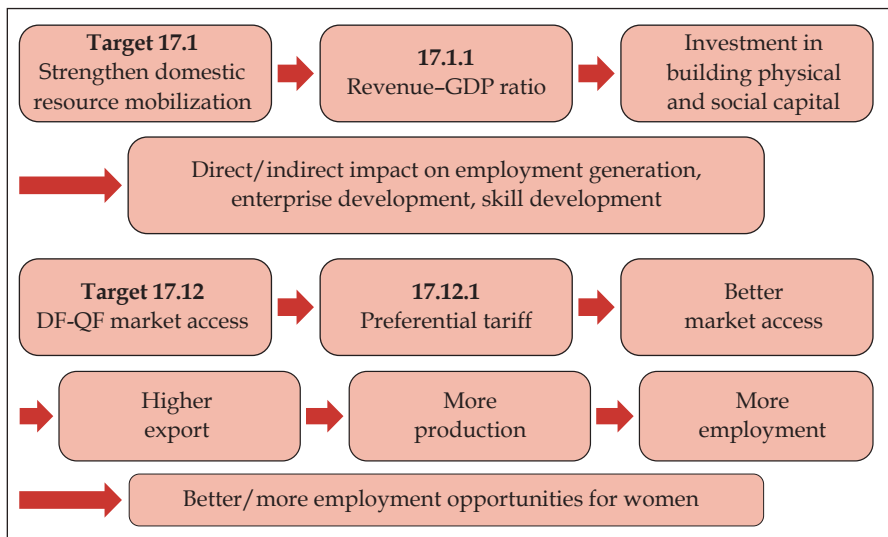
Integrating the role of CSOs and private sector in attaining Goal 17

Of the 19 targets of Goal 17, the CSOs and the private sector have been referred to only in connection with one target (17.17), where mention has been made of encouraging and promoting effective partnerships with the government, CSOs and the private sector. The relevant indicator for 17.17 refers to financial contribution for building partnership with CSOs and other entities. One can conclude that, this indicator does not adequately capture the role of CSOs and the private sector as means of implementation. On the other hand, a number of other targets of Goal 17 are linked to the contribution of the private sector and the CSOs. Some of these are: 17.1 (domestic resource mobilization), 17.3 (mobilize additional financial resources), 17.6 (access to science and technology) and 17.7 (transfer and dissemination of technology), 17.8 (Technology Bank), 17.10 (rule-based trading system), 17.11 (increase export) and 17.12 (duty-free and quota-free market access). As it is, the indicators associated with the above mentioned targets hardly capture the role of the CSOs and the private sector in an adequate manner. Hence, a methodological challenge is to appropriately capture the role of the CSOs and the private sector in attaining different targets of Goal 17. Such an exercise could also help better align their activities with the task of attaining the Goal 17 targets.

The issue of ‘leave no one behind’

A major methodological issue relates to capturing the linkage between NSA activities and the *leave no one behind* (LNOB) aspiration of the SDGs by establishing a connection between the two. In this context, a broad and flexible interpretation of the targets and CSO activities could help establish this link. For example, Target 17.1 mentions about strengthening domestic resource mobilisation. Here, the related indicators are 17.1.1 concerning the revenue-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio and 17.1.2 relating to tax as a share of domestic budget. Logically, an increasing revenue earning should contribute to more public investment for enhancing physical and social infrastructure, which in its turn, should attract more private investment, including the FDI. This would then potentially increase opportunities for employment, including of those who tend to be left behind. Similar is the case with 17.12, which mentions about duty-free quota-free (DF-QF) market access for the least developed countries (LDCs). This may be linked to the LNOB aspiration, as better market access leads to higher export competitiveness and higher earnings for the exporters; this, then in turn, at least partially, passed on to the workers, and particularly the women workers. In this way, Target 17.12 could also be linked to the call for inclusion embedded in the SDGs. Diagram 1 presents the logical link between targets, indicators, and the LNOB role of CSOs/private sector.

Diagram 1: Logical link between targets, indicators, role of CSOs/private sector and the LNOB aspiration



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Availability of data

Two types of concerns inform the discussion as regards information on the targets and indicators of Goal 17—first, lack of availability of data on different indicators in general; and second, lack of real time data on the available indicators. Absence of the needed data seriously constrain the task of detailed analysis of performance concerning the various targets. Table 1 presents the status of data for the different indicators of Goal 17 at national and global levels. Out of the 25 targets, data for 15 targets are available at the global level (referred to as Tier I data), data for four targets are available but these are not directly related (Tier II data), and data for six targets are not available at all (Tier III data). The scenario as regards data availability in the context of Bangladesh is far more wanting—data for only seven indicators are readily available at all (Tier I), data for 15 indicators are available but in different forms (Tier II), and for three indicators, relevant data is not available at all (Tier III). As a result, analysis of the performance as regards different targets becomes difficult, particularly for which, data are of Tier II and Tier III types.

Table 1: Status of data availability for Goal 17 targets at national and global levels

Data status: Goal 17			Country data availability for Goal 17 Country: Bangladesh		
Indicator	World ^a	Bangladesh ^b	Indicator	2016	2017
17.1.1	Tier I	Tier I	17.1.1	Yes	No
17.1.2	Tier I	Tier I	17.1.2	No	No
17.2.1	Tier I	Tier I	17.2.1	Yes	No
17.3.1	Tier I	Tier II	17.3.1	Yes	Yes
17.3.2	Tier I	Tier I	17.3.2	Yes	No
17.4.1	Tier I	Tier I	17.4.1	Yes	No
17.5.1	Tier III	Tier II	17.5.1	Yes	No
17.6.1	Tier III	Tier II	17.6.1	No	No
17.6.2	Tier I	Tier I	17.6.2	Yes	Yes
17.7.1	Tier III	Tier II	17.7.1	No	No
17.8.1	Tier I	Tier I	17.8.1	Yes	Yes
17.9.1	Tier I	Tier II	17.9.1	Yes	No
17.10.1	Tier I	Tier II	17.10.1	Yes	No
17.11.1	Tier I	Tier II	17.11.1	NA	NA
17.12.1	Tier I	Tier II	17.12.1	NA	NA
17.13.1	Tier II	Tier II	17.13.1	Yes	Yes

(Table 1 contd.)

(Table 1 contd.)

Data status: Goal 17			Country data availability for Goal 17 Country: Bangladesh		
Indicator	World ^a	Bangladesh ^b	Indicator	2016	2017
17.14.1	Tier III	Tier II	17.14.1	No	No
17.15.1	Tier II	Tier II	17.15.1		Yes
17.16.1	Tier II	Tier III	17.16.1		Yes
17.17.1	Tier III	Tier II	17.17.1	No	No
17.18.1	Tier III	Tier III	17.18.1	Yes	Yes
17.18.2	Tier II	Tier II	17.18.2		Yes
17.18.3	Tier I	Tier II	17.18.3		Yes
17.19.1	Tier I	Tier II	17.19.1	No (2015)	No (2015)
17.19.2	Tier I	Tier II	17.19.2	Yes (75% data)	No

Source: a. United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS), Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). b. GED (2017b).

Note:

Readily available	Partially available	Not available	NA= Not applicable
-------------------	---------------------	---------------	--------------------

On the other hand, for the year 2016, out of the 25 indicators, national data was available only for 13; and for 2017, data was available for only eight indicators. Almost no data is available for 2018. In other words, a meaningful analysis of national-level performance of Goal 17 is seriously impeded because of lack of updated data. Thus, assessment of Bangladesh's performance in Goal 17 areas during the post-SDG period has to be largely indicative in nature, as the analysis could be carried out based on data for only one or two years.

Level of contribution

A major methodological issue concerning impact assessment of the SDGs is associated with whether SDGs have actually stimulated additional measures in specific areas. It is important to capture whether the contribution of various actors to SDG attainment was consequent to a 'business as usual' approach, or whether there was indeed an additional thrust in this connection, thanks to the SDGs. A pre- and post-2015 analysis of efforts could perhaps be useful to identify whether or not the (positive) changes that have taken place were on account of the various new interventions and measures taken by the NSAs in view of the SDGs.

Generation of data

Taking into cognisance of the aforesaid methodological issues and the attendant constraints, the present study has made use of data and information

drawn from a number of sources. National-level data and information was gleaned from the GED of the Planning Commission, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Information was also drawn from such sources as World Development Indicators (WDI), World Bank, United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), World Investment Report, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). In addition, a sample survey of the partners of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh was conducted with a view to prioritise the various targets of Goal 17. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were also conducted with some development partners and government officials.

Process followed in preparing the report

Preparation of this report has followed a multi-stakeholder approach. This involved review of activities of the CSOs and the private sector concerning Goal 17 areas and discussion with selected representatives from the government, development partners, CSOs and private sector. Good practices in implementing Goal 17, at national, regional and global levels, was also reviewed. The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) played the anchor role in preparing the report, while ActionAid was the co-anchor. A number of partner organisations of the Citizen's Platform joined the process as 'associate organisations', including BRAC, Gram Bikash Sahayak Sangstha (GBSS), Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), Oxfam and CARE Bangladesh.

The process of preparing the report was initiated with an inception meeting in January 2019, where several Platform partners were present. A detailed discussion was held at the meeting as regards objectives, methodology and outline of the report and the role to be played by the partner organisations in preparing the report. A division of labour was agreed upon taking into consideration the focus and specialisation of Goal-Group 17 partner organisations.

In preparation of the report, CPD, the anchor organisation of Goal 17, organised a meeting of the Goal-Group members in February 2019. It was attended by eight representatives from four organisations; a number of other organisations expressed willingness to be associated with the

process. The meeting discussed issues related to preparation of the report, which included preparation of the draft annotated outline of the report, finalisation of questionnaire for the perception survey to identify priority targets under Goal 17 and finalisation of web-based survey questionnaire for collecting information about ‘good practices’ of partners and other relevant organisations. A total of 16 organisations participated in the online perception survey. The data generated through the survey was analysed and the results were used as inputs for this report.

KIIs were conducted with representatives of relevant government offices (e.g. Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance), development partners and the private sector (e.g. BUILD, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI)). A number of experts who have earlier worked with CSOs in different capacities, particularly dealing with trade, aid and tax-related issues, were also interviewed. The idea was to elicit views about the changing dynamics of partnerships in concerned areas, both in pre- and post-2015 periods.⁴ Information generated through literature review, KIIs and perception survey results provided valuable inputs for the report. Some of the preliminary findings were shared with development partners and government officials who attended two workshops organised by the Platform on 6 and 7 March, 2019. Participants of these workshops provided important feedbacks on the findings of the report which were taken into consideration in preparing the final report.

Scope and structure of the report

As was noted earlier, Goal 17 has 19 targets and 25 indicators, which are one of the highest among the various goals of Agenda 2030. This long list of targets and associated indicators could be grouped into five categories: finance, technology, capacity building, trade and systemic issues. To keep the focus of the report on important areas of Goal 17, a set of priority targets were identified. For example, in case of finance, the focus was on domestic resource mobilisation; in case of technology, it was information and communication technology (ICT)-related issues; in case of capacity building, it was support to the CSOs and other organisations; in case of trade-related issues, it was rule-based trading system; and in case of systemic issues, the focus was mainly on development effectiveness and strengthening of the national data system.

The present report is divided into nine sections. Section 3 discusses the global trends in achieving key indicators of Goal 17 with a comparison of the data at

⁴ Referring to periods before and after the initiation of the SDGs.

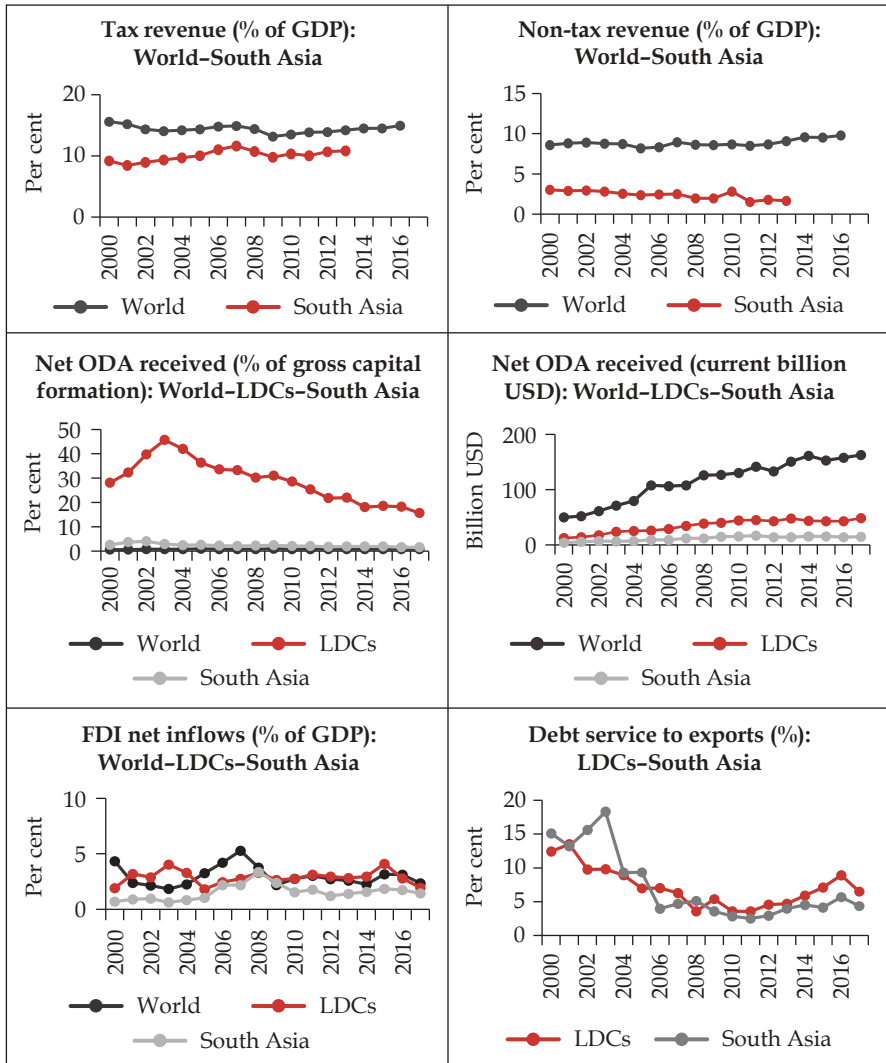
the global level with those for the LDCs and South Asia. Such a comparison helped to assess the relative performance of the LDCs and South Asia in achieving the various Goal-17-related indicators. Section 4 presents the list of priority targets for Bangladesh from the list of 19 targets and 25 indicators. Results of the perception survey on relative importance of different targets is presented in this section. In Section 5, a country-level analysis has been carried out: Bangladesh and two South Asian countries (India, a developing country; and Nepal, an LDC). Bangladesh's performance as regards the priority targets and other targets in the five aforesaid areas are presented in this section. Section 6 reviews the role of the CSOs during the pre- and post-2015 periods from the perspective of various initiatives at the global and the national levels. A number of case studies on good practices of CSOs have been presented in this section. In Section 7, experience of global NSAs has been analysed based on a global database, which had information on 700-plus initiatives. The section also reviews the performance of the private sector in Bangladesh in addressing the targets of Goal 17. Similar to the method followed for the CSOs, a set of case studies involving private sector engagement in Goal 17 areas has been presented in this section. Section 8 highlights the nature of partnership of Bangladesh in the global arena—both as a recipient and a provider. Finally, Section 9 identifies a number of issues and concerns based on the preceding sections, and puts forward a set of recommendations which needs immediate actions on the part of concerned stakeholders, at both national and global levels.

3. Trends in achieving key targets of Goal 17: South Asia and other regions

Finance-related issues

Regrettably, South Asia as a region has not been able to make visible progress in terms of most of the indicators related to Goal 17 areas. Figure 1 presents the performance of South Asia vis-à-vis the average for the world and the LDCs. The region is lagging behind the other two comparators in terms of tax-GDP ratio, non-tax-GDP ratio (domestic resource mobilisation), net flow of official development assistance (ODA), flow of FDI (absolute and share of GDP) and debt service-export ratio. Moreover, in a number of cases, South Asia's financial position has deteriorated in the post-2015 period; these included non-tax revenue (as per cent of GDP), FDI inflow (as per cent of GDP) and debt services (as per cent of exports). In other words, South Asia as a whole has not performed well in terms of resource mobilisation and management points of view. Significant efforts will be needed to improve

Figure 1: Performance of South Asia vis-à-vis world and LDCs in selected finance-related indicators of Goal 17



Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

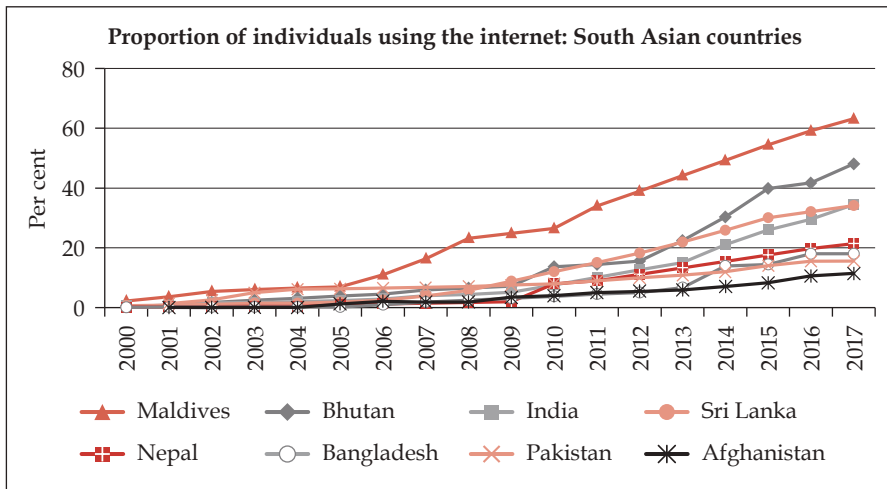
the financial capacity of the region in the coming years in order to ensure proper implementation of the SDGs. The positive trend of domestic resource mobilisation, manifested in the tax-GDP ratio, needs to outweigh the decelerating trend of resources from other sources, such as non-tax-GDP, ODA-GDP, debt-export ratio, and others, including the FDI inflow. South Asian countries need to review and strengthen strategies as regards attracting additional resource flows from various domestic and external sources. It

is also important to note here that, among the OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) countries, only five countries (out of 29) have kept to the promise of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) as ODA to be earmarked for the developing countries.

Technology-related issues

On a welcome note, South Asian countries have taken off at quite an accelerated pace in the use of web-based technologies, such as use of internet (Figure 2). Between 2010 and 2016, proportion of individuals using internet has jumped from less than 20 per cent to as high as 50–60 per cent. This rise in use of modern technologies has taken place, thanks to favourable policies, creation of enabling business environment and promotion of private investment, including FDI. However, performance has varied across the South Asian countries; a few countries are lagging behind and will need to catch up.

Figure 2: Performance of South Asia in technology-related issues

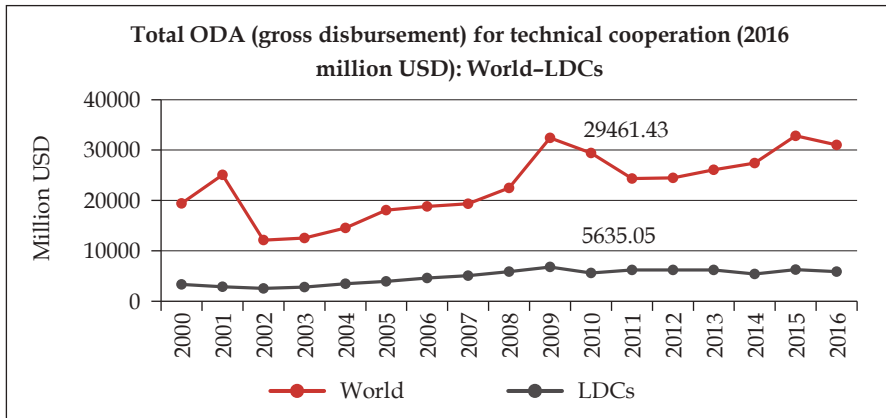


Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Capacity building-related issues

Although a rising trend in the flow of ODA for technical cooperation has been visible since 2011, this was not the case for the LDCs (Figure 3). As the figure shows, in 2016, LDCs received only 18.9 per cent of the total global flow of ODA for technical cooperation. Although the figure shows some increase since 2000, the trend could not be maintained in recent years. The share was 17.3 per cent in 2000 and 19.1 per cent in 2010. Due to dearth of data, it was

Figure 3: ODA flow for technical cooperation



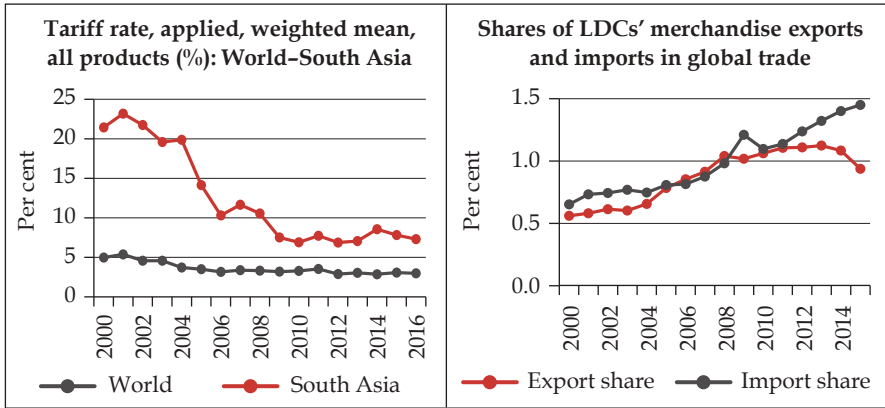
Source: Authors' estimates based on data on Indicator 17.9.1 from UNSTATS (n.d.).

found difficult to estimate the relative shares of the various categories of development partners, such as the OECD, Southern development partners and triangular cooperation. Nonetheless, the overall picture is rather discouraging.

Trade-related issues

As may be recalled, most of the South Asian countries have made important transition from protective tariff regimes to a more liberalised ones, particularly in the early 1990s. The difference in tariff rates between South Asia and rest of the world has further narrowed down in recent years – the gap has reduced from 16.46 per cent in 2000 to 4.33 per cent in 2016 (Figure 4). However, average weighted tariff rates in South Asia currently stands at 7.31 per cent in 2016, as against the world average of only 2.98 per cent. Revenue concerns, protection of domestic industries and strategic trade and industrial policies are some of the reasons for this. While the share of LDCs merchandise export has posted some rise between 2000 and 2013, thereafter it has failed to keep the momentum (Figure 4). This was likely to have adverse implications for attaining Target 17.11 of the SDGs with attendant consequences for production, employment, foreign exchange earnings, poverty reduction, and in the end, for future economic growth of the LDCs. The Hong Kong WTO (World Trade Organization) Ministerial decision as regards duty-free quota-free (DF-QF) market access for the LDCs, for at last 97 per cent of their export items, could not be realised; and the Doha Development Round is, for all practical purposes, dead. New issues are emerging which are likely to give rise to new challenges for the LDCs. The demand for DF-QF market access must be kept on the table, and a package of support needs to be designed for the large number of graduating LDCs.

Figure 4: Performance of South Asia in trade-related issues



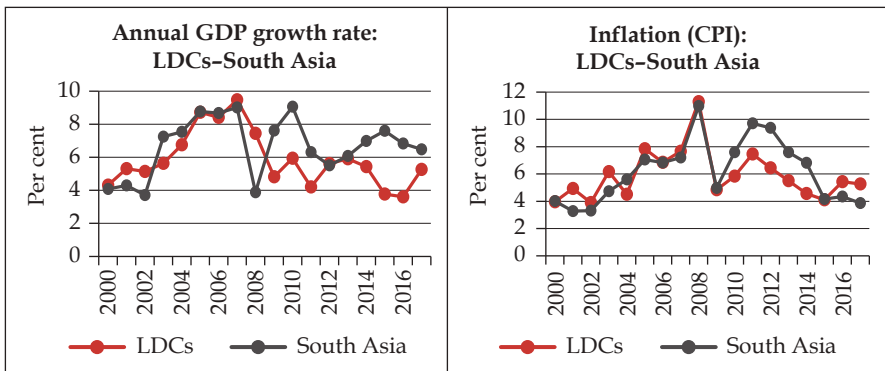
Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

Source: United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS).

Systemic issues

South Asia has been able to maintain a strong macroeconomic track record over the past years, which could serve as a major strength in addressing Goal 17 aspirations in the region. The average GDP growth was 5-per-cent-plus since 2012, which was as high as 7.6 per cent in 2015 (Figure 5). Similarly, inflation has steadily declined since 2011 – from 9.71 per cent to 3.86 per cent. However, it needs to be kept in mind that South Asia’s economic performance is overwhelmingly dominated by the performance of India. Indeed, India’s outstanding economic performance has helped to raise the overall

Figure 5: Macroeconomic performance scenario of South Asia: Selected indicators



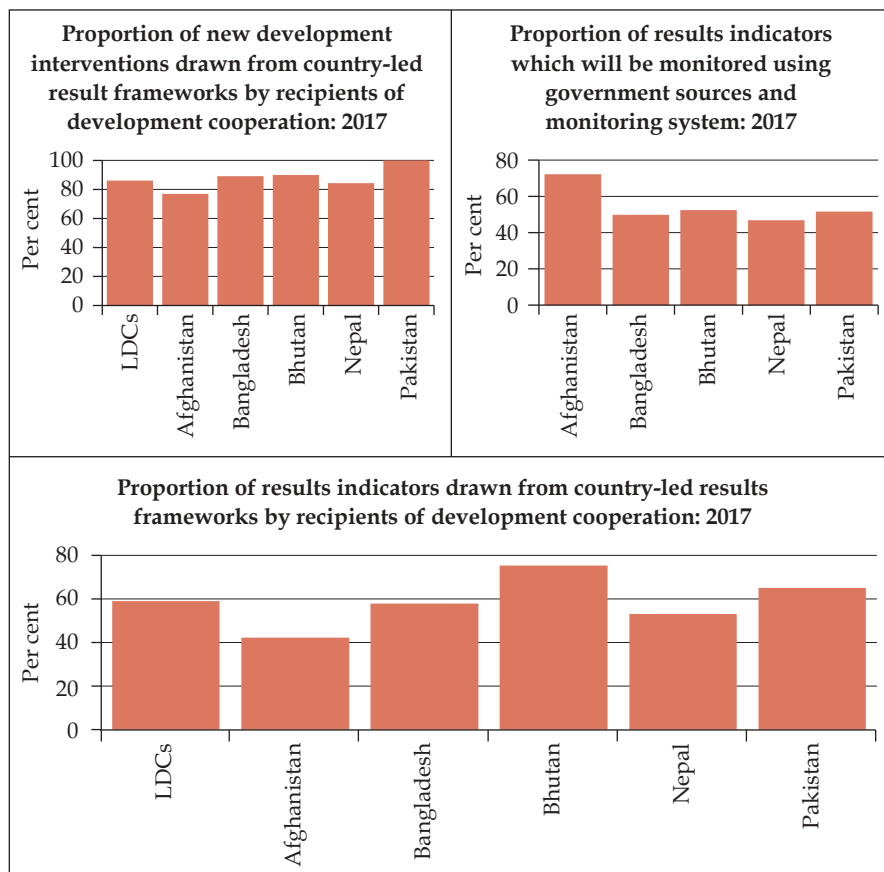
Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

Note: CPI: Consumer Price Index.

performance of the region. Indeed, the stable macroeconomic scenario in South Asia should serve as an advantage in pursuing medium-term development strategy favouring social, economic and environmentally sustainable development, which in turn, will contribute towards implementation of the Agenda 2030 goals and targets.

The other systemic issue concerns policy and institutional coherence in line with the Agenda 2030 aspirations. This would require that development interventions are aligned with country-led results frameworks, monitoring systems use data from government agencies in recipient countries, and the progress is assessed from the vantage point of development effectiveness monitoring framework. It is seen that South Asia’s performance in this connection is rather mixed, when compared to other regions (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Performance of South Asia in systemic issues: Policy coherence



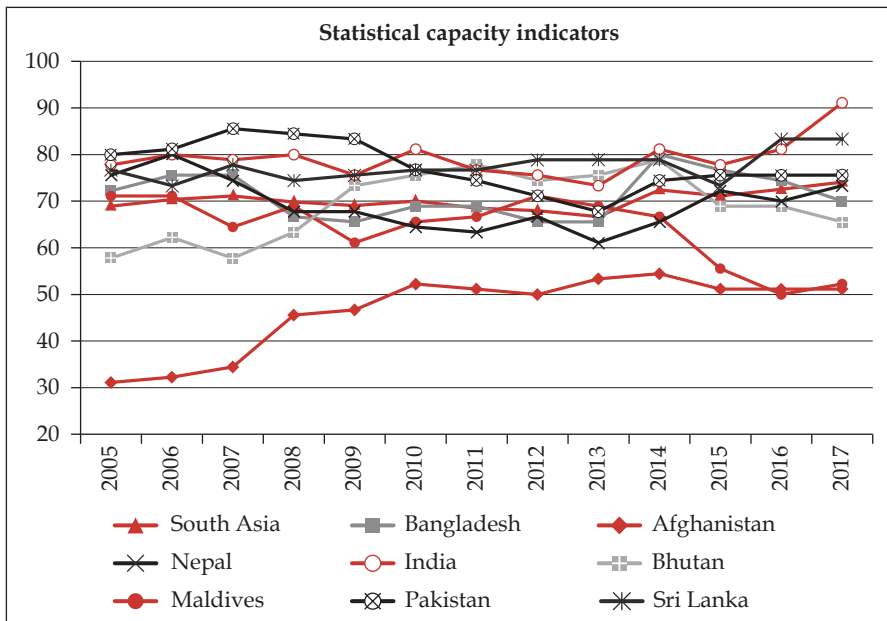
Source: United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS); Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD).

In case of use of country-led results framework, South Asian countries' performance is found to be rather mixed. Bhutan and Pakistan perform better as against the average performance of the LDCs as a group. South Asian countries will need to further improve monitoring framework in order to raise the efficacy of development cooperation.

There has been some improvement in the capacity of majority of South Asian countries in the areas of data availability, monitoring and accountability (Figure 7). This was achieved, thanks to putting in place appropriate legislation and national statistical plans. However, some of the countries in the region are lagging in this connection, and are yet to design proper statistical plans. Not surprisingly, level of performance across countries has varied widely – India is at the top, with Afghanistan and Maldives being at the bottom.

South Asia's domestic resource base to implement the SDGs is not adequate by any measure. Development assistance in the form of ODA has seen some decline, though trends in the areas of technical assistance have been positive.

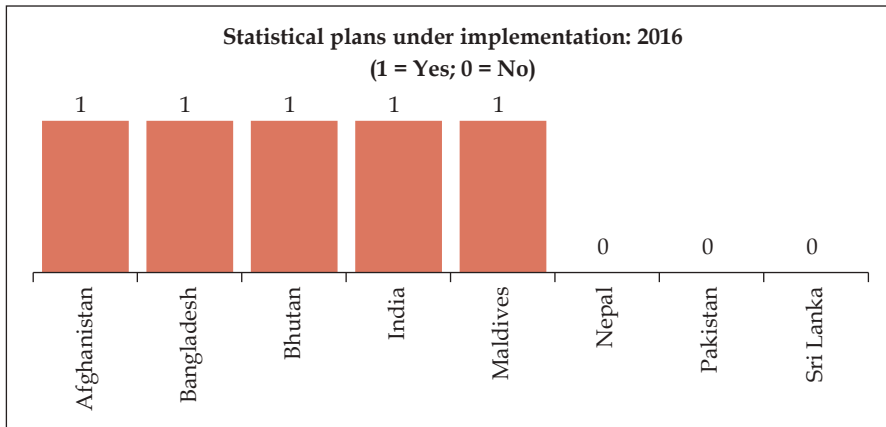
Figure 7: Performance of South Asia in systemic issues: Data and monitoring



Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

(Figure 7 contd.)

(Figure 7 contd.)



Source: United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS).

International trade, which is an important means of SDG implementation for the South Asian countries, has failed to show any significant departure from past trends. While the region is reducing the gap in technology use, particularly in terms of internet and other ICT instruments, South Asia is still lagging significantly behind compared to the global standards. The results framework for assessing effectiveness of development cooperation is not fully followed by the countries of the region. Data management also needs further improvement.

Most importantly, it is to be kept in mind that, South Asia is not a group of homogenous countries, as it includes both developing and LDCs, landlocked and sea-locked (island) countries, highly densely populated and sparsely populated countries, technologically progressed and low-progressed countries. This diversity makes it difficult to pursue region-wide harmonised policies and initiatives for implementing the SDGs. In other words, country-specific initiatives should be pursued on the broader scale and region-specific initiatives should be pursued in selected areas to achieve the aspirations espoused in Goal 17.

4. Priority targets for Bangladesh under Goal 17

In the backdrop of the diversity in the levels of development in economic, social and biospherical areas, priorities in connection with the goals, targets and indicators of the Agenda 2030 vary across different countries of the region. In other words, each country has its own list of priorities in implementing the SDGs. Similarly, the list of priorities under Goal 17, in terms of targets also

tends to vary. Taking this into account, a survey of Platform members was undertaken to learn about perception, regarding priorities with respect to the different targets. A select set of Platform members were asked to share their views about the level of importance of different targets under a three-point likert scale – ‘most important’ (with a value of 3), moderately important (value of 2) and somewhat important (value of 1). The results are shown in Table 2.

Targets with an average perception index value between 2.75 to 3 were considered as top priority. The five top targets were: 17.1 (Strengthen domestic resource mobilization), 17.18 (Enhance capacity-building support

Table 2: Perception on level of importance of different indicators of Goal 17 in the context of Bangladesh

Target	Valid per cent (out of 100)			Average Weighted Frequency (AWF)
	Most important (Value=3)	Moderately important (Value=2)	Somewhat important (Value=1)	
17.1	93.8	6.3		2.94
17.18	93.8	6.3		2.94
17.3	78.6	21.4		2.79
17.6	81.3	12.5	6.3	2.75
17.17	81.3	12.5	6.3	2.75
17.10	75.0	18.8	6.3	2.69
17.11	75.0	18.8	6.3	2.69
17.12	75.0	12.5	12.5	2.63
17.14	68.8	25.0	6.3	2.63
17.16	56.3	43.8		2.56
17.2	56.3	37.5	6.3	2.50
17.19	50.0	50.0		2.50
17.7	43.8	56.3		2.44
17.9	56.3	31.3	12.5	2.44
17.15	50.0	43.8	6.3	2.44
17.5	50.0	37.5	12.5	2.38
17.13	40.0	46.7	13.3	2.27
17.8	43.8	37.5	18.8	2.25
17.4	26.7	60.0	13.3	2.13

Source: Perception survey of Citizen’s Platform members.

Note: Total respondents: 16.

to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data), 17.3 (Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources), 17.6 (Enhance North–South, South–South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing) and 17.17 (Encourage and promote effective public, public–private and civil society partnerships). These targets were related to three Goal 17 areas: finance (17.1 and 17.3), technology (17.6) and systemic issues (17.17 and 17.18). Domestic resource mobilisation and additional sources of financing were marked as top priority for achieving Goal 17. Support for technological development came out as an emerging demand for Bangladesh. Respondents put emphasis on strengthening support for CSOs and other NSAs for attaining Goal 17 in Bangladesh. Interestingly, no target from trade and capacity building areas were mentioned as top priorities for Bangladesh. However, a number of targets related to trade and capacity building areas were mentioned in the second set of priority list for Bangladesh.⁵

Availability of data for the identified priority targets remains a major challenge. Of the five targets identified, data was available for two (Targets 17.1 and 17.3), while for the remaining three, data for only of some of the indicators were available (Targets 17.6, 17.17 and 17.18). Hence, the discussion on Bangladesh's performance in the priority target areas, as also other targets areas, had to take recourse to proxy data in some instances.

5. State of progress of SDG 17 in Bangladesh

Key milestones for achieving Goal 17: 2020, 2025 and 2030

The GED of the Ministry of Planning has set intertemporal milestones for various indicators of the different targets, including those related to Goal 17. These are planned to be achieved in view of three milestones – 2020, 2025 and 2030. A 'lead' and 'co-lead' ministry and division have been assigned for each of the targets and indicators. These entities are responsible to steer the process of achieving the milestones according to the plan. In this regard, the task of attaining the majority of targets and indicators of Goal 17 have been assigned to a number of institutions: Internal Resources Division (IRD) and ERD of the Ministry of Finance, Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ministry

⁵ The second set of priorities (seven indicators) having weighted average perception index value between 2.5–2.75 included Targets 17.10, 17.11, 17.12, 17.14, 17.16, 17.2 and 17.19.

of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Planning and the BBS. However, CSOs and private sector have not been assigned any specific responsibilities in connection with attaining any of the milestones concerning any of the targets. The task for attaining the milestones set for indicators of finance-related targets is to be led by different divisions of the Ministry of Finance. In a number of cases, where national indicators are absent, additional indicators have been included in the milestones; for example, 17.2.1 and 17.3.1.⁶ A review of the milestones for 2020 indicates that a major focus has been put on domestic resource mobilisation and FDI. Between 2015 and 2020, revenue–GDP ratio was to rise from 9.6 per cent to 16 per cent; similarly, FDI–domestic budget ratio was to be increased from 5.7 per cent to 14 per cent. ODA was assigned a declining role in SDG financing over the short-, medium- and long-terms.⁷ This would mean that, more emphasis will need to be given to mobilise resources through higher private investment.

Technology-related issues are to be dealt with by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology. Out of four indicators, milestones have been set for two. This indicates that increasing the number of fixed internet broadband subscription and internet use should be given priority. No milestone was proposed for some of the other indicators, such as agreements for technology cooperation and programmes, and funding for transfer, dissemination and diffusion of technologies. Most possibly, these were not perceived as one of the GoB priorities. It needs to be noted here that, the private sector, including foreign companies, has a key role to play in ensuring wider access to new technologies, particularly the information technology (IT). Here, the government has an important role to play for creating a conducive IT-enabled business environment, which is set to play an important role in future growth of the Bangladesh economy.

Implementation of targets and indicators related to capacity building was to be led by the ERD of the Ministry of Finance. Major focus here was given to attracting more development assistance in this area. The milestone set for this is an amount of USD 900 million, by 2020, with the base year (2015) amount being USD 570 million.

⁶ In case of 17.2.1, additional indicators are: 17.2.1a: Total net ODA; 17.2.1b: Total net ODA to LDCs; and 17.2.1c: Net ODA to Bangladesh. Similarly, in case of 17.3.1, additional indicators are: 17.3.1a: FDI as percentage of total domestic budget; and 17.3.1b: ODA as percentage of total domestic budget.

⁷ ODA–domestic budget ratio has been set at 11 per cent for 2020 against 11.6 per cent in 2015.

Trade-related initiatives were to be steered by the Ministry of Commerce, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs being the co-lead. Although trade is considered to be a major means of implementation, the milestones do not specifically mention concrete initiatives to accelerate the pace of Bangladesh's export. Thus, no measure is mentioned as regards reduction of tariffs, initiatives to offset the loss of DF-QF market access, such as signing of bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), and initiatives towards export diversification. As is known, the private sector plays the leading role in trade-related areas. CSOs also perform much-needed advocacy role to advance the interests of Bangladesh in various national, regional and global fora that deal with trade-related issues. Given the timeline for graduating from the LDC group (in 2024), Bangladesh needs to take appropriate measures to address post-graduation challenges, when many of the preferential market access facilities will no more be available. Domestic tariff regime will also need to be further liberalised in view of the LDC graduation.

The systemic issues will need to be addressed by the ERD, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PMO and the BBS. However, majority of the concerned indicators do not have any milestone. A number of indicators are only of qualitative nature. It is important to set milestones for these indicators. One of the targets related to ensuring effective public, private and CSO partnerships, for which an indicator has been set, relates to the amount of resources committed to such partnerships. Based on data which can be accessed from the NGO Affairs Bureau and Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA), the baseline could have been easily established. A suitable milestone may be set accordingly for different time periods; CSOs and the PPPA could be consulted on this.

Overall, majority of the targets do not have specific milestones – out of 25 indicators, only 11 have concrete milestones. A major weakness of the monitoring framework prepared by the GED is that concerned CSOs and private sector organisations have not been made partners in the process (GED, 2018a). Since the government has set the objective of implementing the SDGs under a *whole of society* approach, lead CSOs/CSO alliances/private sector organisations in respective areas should be integrated in the formal process. CSOs, private sector and other NSAs could serve as 'associate partners', and could be included in the monitoring and evaluation framework of the SDGs.

Analysis of year-wise performance of selected priority targets and associated indicators (pre- and post-2015)

Section 4 has identified five indicators, which are considered to be of high priority for Bangladesh. These include 17.1 (Strengthen domestic resource

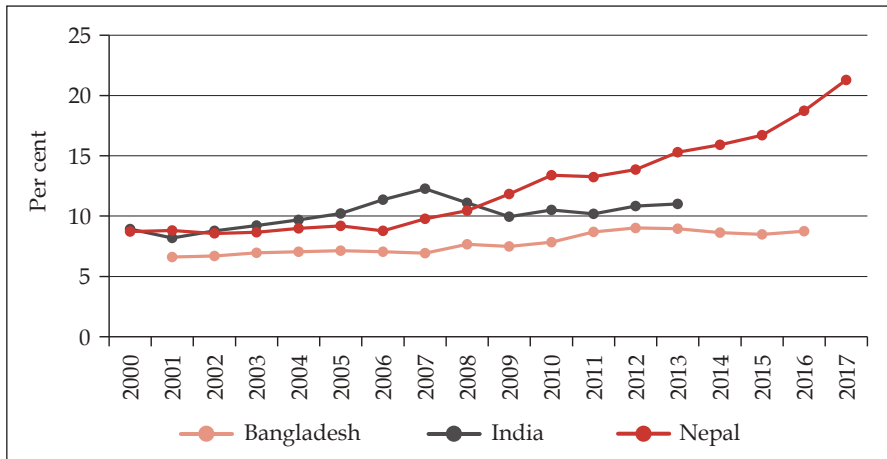
mobilization), 17.18 (enhance capacity-building support to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data), 17.3 (Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources), 17.6 (Enhance North–South, South–South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing), and 17.17 (Encourage and promote effective public, public–private and civil society partnerships).⁸ Bangladesh’s SDGs Progress Report 2018 (GED, 2018b), has reported progress with respect to nine of the 25 indicators of Goal 17, which include several indicators associated with priority targets (17.1, 17.3 and 17.6).⁹ The report shows whether the progress till 2018 are in line with what the milestones set out for 2020. Out of the reported nine indicators, Bangladesh was mentioned as ‘target met’ in case of four indicators, indicating that milestones have been reached for these; ‘on track’ was mentioned in case of two indicators, indicating that milestones will most likely be attained by 2020; ‘need attention’ was mentioned in case of three indicators, indicating that milestones would not be reached as per the stipulated timeline.

According to the government data, the top priority Target 17.1 includes such indicators as revenue–GDP ratio (17.1.1) and tax–domestic budget ratio (17.1.2). In case of 17.1.1, revenue as share of Bangladesh’s GDP was only 10.16 per cent in 2017, while the milestone for 2020 has been set at 16 per cent (Figure 8). More attention will be needed to realise the milestone. As a matter of fact, Bangladesh was behind some of the other South Asian countries (such as, Nepal and India) in this regard. Curiously, Nepal’s tax–GDP ratio has been on a rising trend at a time when its economic growth was experiencing considerable volatility (with low level of GDP growth in the previous years and a significant rise in recent years). On the other hand, in case of 17.1.2, the ratio of domestic taxes as share of budget was 66.4 per cent in FY2016–17, while the milestone set for 2020 was 65 per cent. In other words, the milestone has already been achieved. A large part of the domestic resource generated in the form of tax and non-tax earnings was contributed by the private sector in Bangladesh. The low level of tax–GDP ratio is attributed to the lack of proper enforcement of the relevant acts, rules and regulations against tax evasion and tax avoidance. VAT and SD Act 2012 (value added tax and supplementary duty) has been implemented only starting from FY2019–20, and that also in a truncated form. Direct Tax Act 2011 is yet to be implemented. Poor

⁸ Besides, a second set of priority indicators have been identified, which include – 17.9.1, 17.11.1, 17.14.1, 17.16.1, 17.6.2, 17.15.1, 17.2.1, 17.7.1 and 17.12.1.

⁹ The report includes following indicators: 17.1.1, 17.1.2, 17.3.1, 17.3.1a, 17.3.2, 17.4.1, 17.6.2, 17.8.1 and 17.9.1.

Figure 8: Tax revenue as per cent of GDP: Bangladesh, India and Nepal

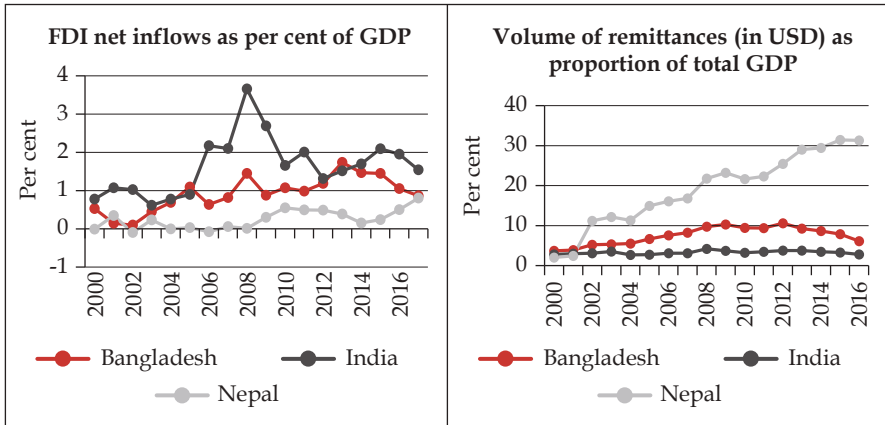


Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

infrastructure for collection of taxes, including weak online-based collection system, limited capacity to expand tax network and lack of enforcement of measures to deal with tax evasion and avoidance are some of the other reasons. An effective collaboration between government, private sector and CSOs is needed to improve the performance in this connection. Sections 6 and 7 present possible role of CSOs and the private sector in this regard.

Target 17.3 has two indicators: 17.3.1 concerning flow of FDI, ODA and SSC; and 17.3.2 relating to volume of remittances as a share of the GDP. Since SDGs have put emphasis on private flow of capital, particularly flow of FDI, the milestone set for FDI (as a share of domestic budget) for 2020 was as high as 14 per cent of the GDP. However, the actual ratio was only 7.4 per cent of the GDP – about 50 per cent of the milestone level (Figure 9). Attracting more FDI will require actions at various levels. Creating enabling business environment through building the required physical infrastructure (such as, special economic zones (SEZs), roads, rails, ports, electricity and gas supply), developing human resources (such as, management, technical professionals and skilled labour force) and improving the soft infrastructure (such as, IT infrastructure, taxes, fees and charges) will be of heightened importance in this context.

As is known, remittance is a major source of foreign exchange for Bangladesh and its importance has been duly recognised in the context of implementing the SDGs (17.3.2). The targets set by Bangladesh is for remittance to reach 7.6 per cent of the GDP by 2020; the actual figure was 5.1 per cent in 2017. According to Figure 9, Bangladesh has experienced volatility in the flow of

Figure 9: Flow of resources from alternate sources: FDI and remittances

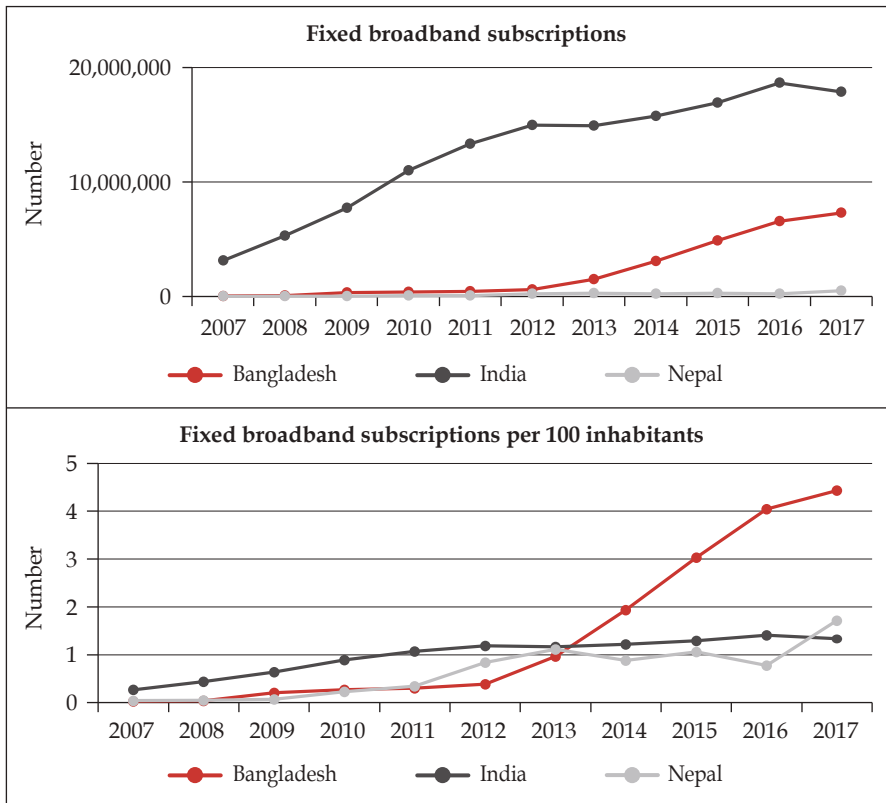
Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

Source: United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS).

remittances since 2013. The reasons are many. Middle-East countries are facing volatility in incomes from oil revenues. Several countries, including Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, have significantly reduced recruitment of foreign workers. A government-to-government (G2G) initiative, followed by G2G-plus initiatives, targeting Malaysia's labour market did not generate the expected results; allegations of corruption and various irregularities have been blamed for this. Government and private sector need to collaborate more effectively to identify new markets with new demands for workers, along with retaining the traditional markets. Skills upgradation should be given top most priority to ensure higher earnings by migrant workers. It is good to see that remittance has picked up in the very recent period with growth rates bouncing back in FY2017-18 (17.3 per cent) and FY2018-19 (9.6 per cent).

Target 17.6 is related to technological collaboration and development of technological base in the developing countries. It has two indicators: 17.6.1 concerns number of science and technology cooperation agreements and programmes between countries, and 17.6.2 relates to fixed internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. No data is available for target 17.6.1. However, the positive news is that Bangladesh has made impressive progress as regards fixed broadband subscription – it has reached 4.43 per 100 inhabitants, which appears to be well on track to reach the milestone set for 2020 (8 per 100 in 2020). If subscription in terms of 100 inhabitants is considered, Bangladesh is well ahead of India and Nepal (Figure 10). Government's IT-enabling policies and support and the active participation of the private sector and CSOs in this connection have helped Bangladesh to

Figure 10: Fixed broadband use: Bangladesh, India and Nepal

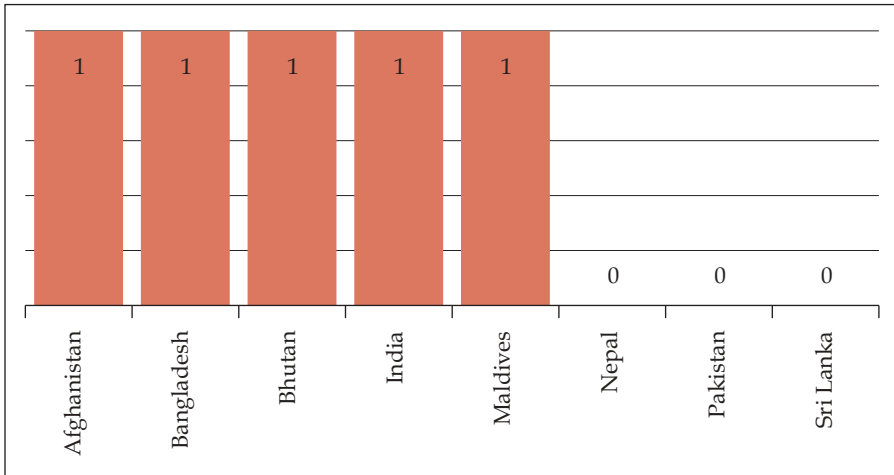


Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

keep the progress on track. Section 7 discusses the role of the private sector in attaining new technologies.

Two targets related to systemic issues were identified as important: 17.18 (Enhance capacity-building support to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data) and 17.17 (Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships). The target 17.18 has three indicators: 17.18.1, 17.18.2 and 17.18.3. For these, no official data is available. Proxy indicators for 17.18.2 and 17.18.3 indicate that Bangladesh’s performance in this connection has been rather mixed. In case of 17.18.3 (National Statistical Plan under implementation), it is to be noted that Bangladesh is one of the few countries in South Asia, which has a statistical plan currently under implementation (Figure 11). Many South Asian countries do not have such plans; these include Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. However, unlike Maldives and Pakistan, Bangladesh is yet to enact national statistical legislation (17.18.2).

Figure 11: Statistical plan under implementation: Bangladesh and other South Asian countries

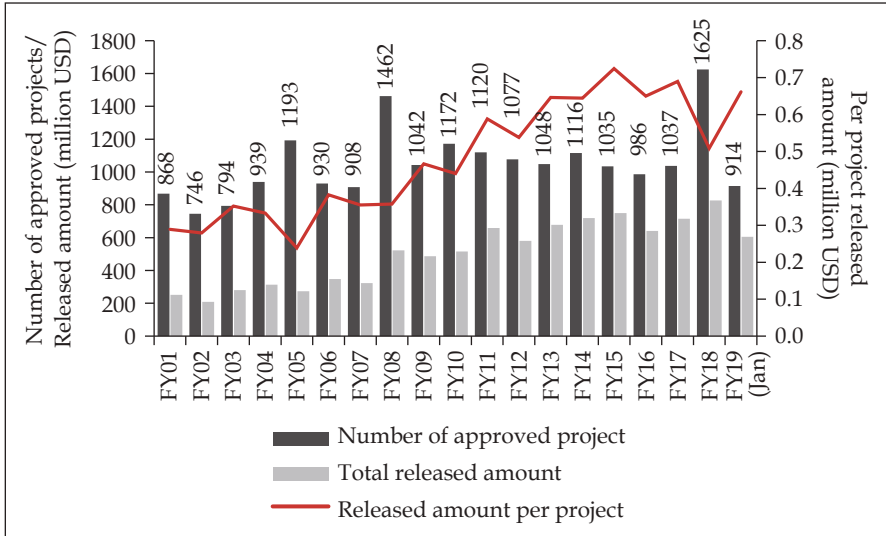


Source: United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS).

Target 17.17 has only one indicator, which is 17.17.1 (i.e. USD committed to public-private and CSO partnerships). Official and global data are not available to assess the performance as regards this; no milestone has been set in this regard either. According to the data of the NGO Affairs Bureau, flow of funds to the NGOs in Bangladesh depict a mixed scenario since 2015, with slow rise in case of overall flow and a decline in case of release per projects (Figure 12). As a matter of fact, Bangladesh's NGO fund has experienced two distinct trends in recent years, particularly since 2017, in the aftermath of the influx of displaced Rohingya population from Myanmar. One of the reasons for the recent rise in the flow of funds is the diversion of resources to the Rohingya people. According to the Khatun and Kamruzzaman (2018), Rohingya population will require a support to the tune of about USD 1 billion per year. Indeed, the Rohingya crisis is having an adverse impact on availability of funds for the CSOs in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's dual graduation will also likely have negative impact on availability of funds for the NGOs.¹⁰ As a consequence, SDG implementation by the CSOs could suffer from funding shortages. Taking this emerging scenario into consideration, the Citizen's Platform has proposed that the GoB set up an SDG Trust Fund to provide support to CSOs for undertaking projects related to various SDG-related activities.

¹⁰ Bangladesh has recently achieved dual graduation—from low-income country to lower-middle income country status (in 2015), and from LDC to developing country status (to be effective in 2024).

Figure 12: Flow of foreign grants through NGO Affairs Bureau



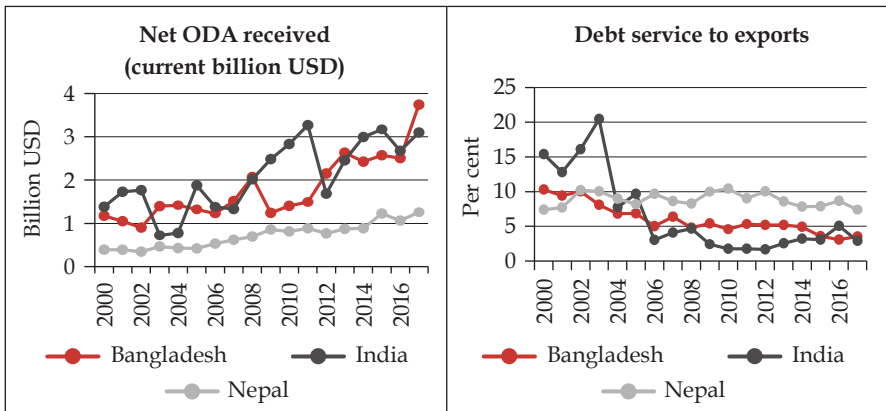
Source: NGO Affairs Bureau (2019).

Bangladesh’s performance in other targets and indicators

Finance-related issues

In recent years, Bangladesh has experienced higher flows of ODA (USD 3.74 billion in 2017) (Figure 13). ODA as per cent of domestic budget was 10.9 per cent in 2017, and it was ‘on track’ to reach 11 per cent by 2020, according to the 2018 national review of the SDGs. Bangladesh’s debt

Figure 13: Finance-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal



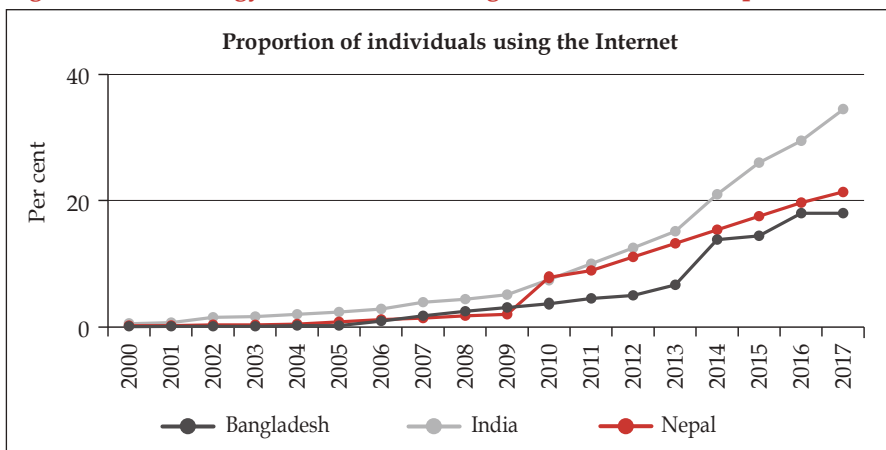
Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

servicing record (equivalent to 3.54 per cent of export receipts in 2017) has been comfortable till now. However, new loans (at non-IDA (International Development Association) interest rates in most cases, because of middle-income graduation) and new sources (non-traditional sources from Southern countries and high interest-bearing non-bank domestic sources) is likely to increase the debt burden, both domestic and overseas, in the medium- to long-term period. As a result, the milestone set for debt service of 5 per cent of export earnings by 2020 and 4.5 per cent by 2025 may be difficult to maintain. According to Bhattacharya and Ashraf (2018), although Bangladesh should be able to service its increasing debt in the medium term (2017–2026), as long as economic growth is higher than the real interest rate payable on debt, it will need to allocate an increasing share of revenue for external debt payment, with attendant consequences. Bangladesh’s debt strategy, particularly concerning foreign aid, must be designed by taking cognisance of these new challenges.

Technology-related issues

According to the ITU database, the proportion of individuals using the internet was 18 per cent in 2017 (Figure 14), indicating that Bangladesh is lagging behind many other developing countries. However, the official data of the BTRC reported the figure to be 49.5 per cent for 2017. According to this data, the country has been able to reach the milestone. It is important to cross-check the data from the two sources to verify the actual status and take required measures to improve performance in this regard.

Figure 14: Technology-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal

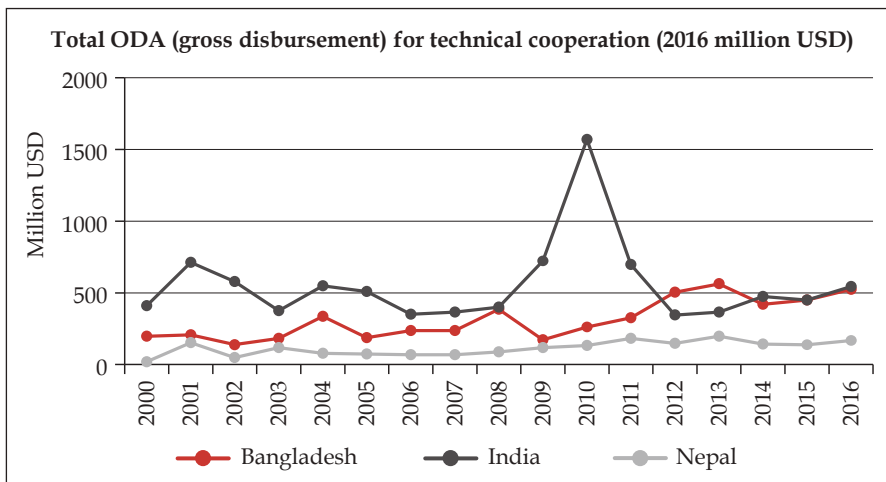


Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Capacity building-related issues

According to the official data, Bangladesh has already reached the milestones for financial and technical assistance received from North–South, South–South and triangular cooperation. Bangladesh received USD 3.7 billion in FY2016–17. The milestone set for technical cooperation in 2020 was USD 900 million (GED, 2018b) (Figure 15). However, data provided by other sources indicate that Bangladesh received much less than what is reported in the official statistics. According to the UNSTATS, ODA support for technical cooperation for Bangladesh was USD 522 million in 2016, which is significantly lower than official figures (for the year 2017). The gap is mainly due to misreporting of technical assistance in the official report. Technical assistance is supposed to report only the dollar value of the technical assistance projects (as per the method mentioned in the framework report); if this is considered, Bangladesh is yet to reach the milestone.¹¹ Compared to some of the other South Asian countries, technical assistance in Bangladesh has been on the rise over the past years; the record was better than those of India and Nepal.

Figure 15: Capacity building-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal

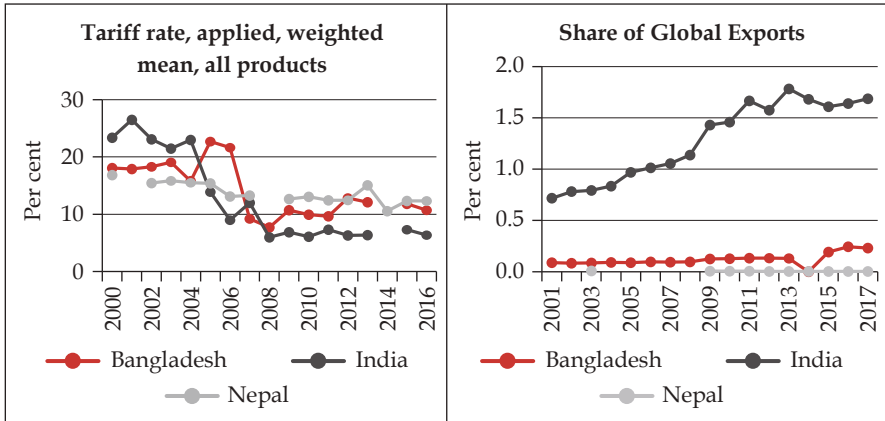


Source: United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS).

Trade-related issues

Bangladesh’s weighted average tariff rate in 2015 was 4.85 per cent as reported in the review report of 2018, while it was reported as 11.82 per cent in the WDI

¹¹ The status should be either ‘need attention, or at best, on track’.

Figure 16: Trade-related issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal

Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

Source: United Nations Trade Statistics Database. (UN COMTRADE) and International Trade Centre (ITC) statistics.

(Figure 16). In other words, a significant gap is observed between the two sources. Although weighted tariff of Bangladesh has come down perceptibly since 2000, recent trends indicate a movement in the opposite direction—since 2011, the average weighted tariff has started to rise (10.72 per cent in 2016). In contrast, weighted tariff for India has declined significantly over the years, and reached to 6.32 per cent in 2016. To recall, the milestone set for 2020 is 5.5 per cent.¹² The difference between official and WDI data needs to be clarified and explained. Evidently, if the WDI figure is taken as the reference point, Bangladesh will need to implement deeper tariff reforms. On the other hand, interests of domestic sectors will also need to be safeguarded. This is, indeed, a challenging task and Bangladesh's policies in this connection should be informed by its strategic trade, investment and developmental interests.

No country-specific indicator and milestones have been set for Bangladesh's share in world export. According to the UN COMTRADE data, Bangladesh's share in global export was only 0.23 per cent in 2017, with the share increasing at a slow pace over the recent past (Figure 16). To compare, India's share in world export has increased sharply over the years, though in recent times it has somewhat stagnated. Bangladesh needs to put more emphasis on raising export earnings by diversifying its export base in non-RMG (readymade garments) products and by targeting non-traditional markets. The policy support from the government needs to be redirected accordingly—by

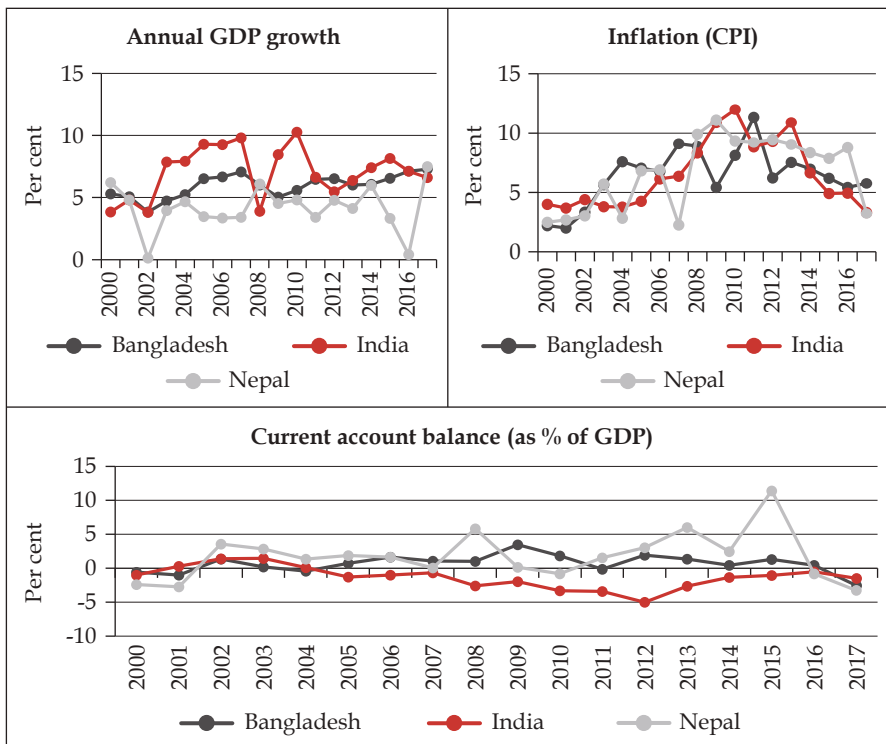
¹² Bangladesh needs to halve the weighted tariff between 2016 to 2020.

undertaking sectoral policies with long-term fiscal support in a targeted manner. Role of the private sector and CSOs as regards trade, tariff and regional agreements has been discussed in Sections 6 and 7.

Systemic issues

Most of the systemic issues do not have specific milestones set against respective indicators. In case of macroeconomic dashboard (17.13.1), Bangladesh was in a better position compared to other South Asian countries (Figure 17). Key macroeconomic indicators, such as GDP growth rate and inflation rate have posted consistently robust trends over the years; however, the current account balance (as percentage of GDP) position has weakened in recent times. This is in part explained by rising imports, with exports not being able to catch up. Bangladesh will need to step up its efforts to raise competitiveness of its exports and go for diversification of both goods and markets. The private sector has a strong role to play in this connection, as it

Figure 17: Systemic issues: Bangladesh, India and Nepal



Source: World Development Indicators (WDI).

is the key player in the trade arena. The government, on its part, will need to create a conducive environment for the private sector to play its expected role. Role of CSOs and the private sector in this regard has been discussed in the subsequent sections (Sections 6 and 7).

Bangladesh is lagging behind in terms of using country-led results framework, when compared to some of the other countries in the region (Table 3). Bhutan and Pakistan have outperformed Bangladesh in this respect. However, the country is ahead of the average for the LDC group. Bangladesh has made progress in reporting on development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support achievement of the SDGs; some of the developing countries are lagging behind in this connection. Given the rising trend of development cooperation from the emerging Southern providers, such as China, India and Russia, which have their own monitoring standards which are not fully in line with the OECD-led GPEDC monitoring framework, it is important that Bangladesh takes initiative to develop an integrated monitoring framework.

Table 3: Issues related to policy coherence

Country	Share of results indicators drawn from country-led results frameworks by recipients of development cooperation (%) 2017 Score (out of 100)	Progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the SDGs (1 = Yes; 0 = No)
Afghanistan	42.19	0
Bangladesh	57.88	1
Bhutan	75.36	0
Nepal	53.06	1
Pakistan	65.05	0
India		0

Source: United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTATS); Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD).

6. Engagement of CSOs in implementing Goal 17 (pre- and post-2015)

Engagement of the CSOs and the private sector in strengthening global partnership and in ensuring effective use of means of implementation involves, to a large extent, policy activism, advocacy, policy-awareness activities and capacity building. These are generally carried out at the grassroots level, which are not easy to quantify. Hence engagement of the

private sector and the CSOs in implementing Goal 17 needs to be assessed primarily from a qualitative point of view. CSOs and the private sector in Bangladesh have been involved in various activities related to the SDGs even before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. So, it is important to review their role from intertemporal point of view: pre-2015 and post-2015, to adequately capture the incremental changes to assess SDG progress.

Role of the CSOs at the global level during pre-2015

From the point of view of global partnership and means of implementation, major engagements of the CSOs at the global level during the pre-2015 period concerned the followings: advocacy for tax justice, initiatives against avoidance of taxes by individuals and corporate sector, identification of reasons for revenue losses, initiatives for financial transparency of the corporate sector and aid effectiveness. These initiatives were undertaken by international NGOs (INGOs), global networks of NGOs and other NGO groups where Bangladesh's NSAs have also been involved.¹³ Some of the key objectives of these initiatives were to raise awareness, build agendas on related issues and promote exchange of information and access to data. As part of these activities, a number of suggestions were made, which include:

- forming a global tax body tasked with raising efficacy of national tax system;
- preparing an international convention to facilitate repatriation of tax funds appropriated from developing country treasuries;
- setting international standards as regards payment of tax;
- greater information sharing;
- eliminating cross-border tax evasion and limiting the scope for tax avoidance;
- increasing citizen's influence in the democratic control of taxation;
- restoring similar tax treatment concerning different forms of income and reverse shifting of tax burden on ordinary citizens;
- removing incentives that encourage tax evasion and secrecy;
- promoting research in tax and related regulatory and legislative areas to promote economic development, encourage citizenship and reduce poverty in the context of local, national and international economies and societies;
- discouraging illicit financial flows through promotion of transparent, accountable and sustainable financial systems.

¹³ Some of these NGOs are Oxfam International, Christian Aid, Tax Justice Network (TJN) and Financial Transparency Coalition (FTC).

For example, ActionAid has been working on tax justice issues since 2008, including running the global Tax Power campaign across over 20 countries, between 2013 and 2017. The campaign focused on harnessing people power and influencing governments by working at local, national and global levels to end harmful tax incentives and tackle tax avoidance and do away with tax havens and lack of transparency in corporate tax matters.

A number of regional CSO networks worked on tax, trade and aid-related issues. For example, Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM), founded in 1992, is a civil society platform, which is geared to strengthen cross-constituency coordination and ensure that voices of the various sub-regions of Asia-Pacific are heard in the intergovernmental processes. Major areas of concerns of APRCM were: (i) raising public revenue by taxing corporations, assets of high-net-worth individuals and socially and environmentally harmful activities, such as mining, financial speculation, etc.; (ii) reversing the prevailing trends of tax competition and trade mispricing through enforcement of international tax conventions; and (iii) mobilising resources through financial transaction taxes and other innovative sources of financing, such as carbon taxes, military budget-cuts and reallocation of social spending (APRCM-APFSD (Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development) Statement).

Case Study 1 presents the role of CSO in pre-2015 period in addressing the aid effectiveness issue.

Case Study 1: CSO engagement in aid effectiveness: Pre-2015

During pre-2015 period, a major focus of global initiatives related to partnership development concerned aid effectiveness. “The Advisory Group on Civil Society (AG-CS), a multi-stakeholder group comprised of 12 members represented by donors, developing country governments and CSOs, was set up in 2007, with the objective of advising the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF). The AG-CS was envisaged to lend support to the process of Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Approximately 600 organisations were represented in these consultations, which involved CSOs interacting with each other, as well as holding multi-stakeholder dialogues. The practice of multi-stakeholder approach was found to be useful on three grounds. First, it created an opportunity for enhanced CSO participation in the aid effectiveness dialogue. Second, distinctive and different perspectives brought in by the CSOs enriched the overall quality of the dialogue. Third, this practice/ approach led to a richer understanding of development and aid effectiveness issues, which

(Case Study contd.)

(Case Study contd.)

was reflected most notably in the Accra Agenda for Action under the themes of ownership, more inclusive partnerships and accountability for results. The most crucially important factor behind the success of the AG-CS was the combination of ‘inside the tent’ / ‘outside the tent’ strategy adopted by the CSOs. This approach allowed CSOs to have a voice in shaping multi-stakeholder consensus, and to express their own views independently as and when required.”

Source: OECD (2009).

Role of the CSOs at the global level during post-2015 period

During the post-2015 period, the activities of the CSOs concerning Goal 17 were extended further. For example, ActionAid has been a part of the global efforts to raise the issue of global tax governance at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD3) in Addis Ababa in 2015; it was also involved in the subsequent regional and international summits, including United Nations (UN) FfD Forums in 2017 and 2018.¹⁴ The CSOs are getting engaged not only in activities related to traditional issues, such as tax justice and financial transparency, but also in new issues by building new forms of partnerships with other organisations. For example, Tax Justice Network’s (TJN) activities have been focusing on issues related to financial disclosure, scale of tax injustice, tax justice and human rights. At the same time, new forms of partnerships are being developed with participation of CSOs and the private sector. For example, Oxfam has undertaken an initiative with global leading brands captioned Behind the Brands Scorecard (Case Study 2). As part of this initiative, level of commitment of global leading brands in implementing sustainable and responsible corporate practices will be assessed. This will be carried out through evaluation of corporate policies in seven areas.¹⁵ Among these, ‘transparency’ has a broader focus; companies are rewarded for disclosure concerning cross-cutting and corporate-level issues, including those that concern taxation.

¹⁴ In 2015, ActionAid published the ‘Levelling Up’ report, which focused more generally on policy issues around corporate tax avoidance in developing countries, with a particular focus on the OECD’s base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) reforms proposals.

¹⁵ These seven themes are: (i) Land: both rights and access to land and sustainable use of it; (ii) Women: farm-workers and small-scale producers in the supply chain; (iii) Farmers (small-scale) growing the commodities; (iv) Farm-workers: in the supply chain; (v) Climate change: commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation in agriculture supply chains and to help farmers to adapt to climate change; (vi) Transparency: at the corporate level; and (vii) Water: both rights and access to water resources and sustainable use of it.

Case Study 2: CSO–private sector collaboration on ‘Behind the Brands Scorecard’: Post-2015

‘Behind the Brands Scorecard’, an initiative of Oxfam, has proven to be an effective way to assess the level of commitments of companies towards sustainable and responsible corporate practices. The assessment is done through evaluation of corporate policies using scorecard method, which is structured around seven themes. The scorecard is a two-pronged tool: (i) a critically important output to measure company progress on important issues; and (ii) a vehicle for influencing and engagement. Practice of the scorecard has generated competitive spirit among the companies. Top-performing companies highlighted their performance through announcements on their websites and other platforms. There is evidence that suppliers are asking for guidance on how to meet new company commitments. Besides, the scorecard initiative also witnessed a desire by many companies to improve their ranking, and be seen as one of the leaders in the industry. On the whole, the scorecard was an important tool for getting investors engaged and supporting the campaign. These investors played an important role in achieving the commitments in areas of land rights, women’s empowerment and climate change across the 10 companies.

Source: Oxfam (2017).

Role of CSOs at the national level: Pre-2015

Traditionally CSOs were more involved in trade, tax and aid-related issues at both national and global levels. In most cases, their engagements were in the form of providing support to grassroots organisations to build capacities and to raise awareness as regards concerned issues. They also helped build alliance with local- and global-level organisations. Through these initiatives, a number of recommendations have been put forward by them in the areas of aid effectiveness, finance for development, tax justice and market access. Some of these are:

- creating real ownership in the development process and supporting wider participation of civil society in the aid discourse;
- harmonising economic policy conditionality in such a way that development interventions/actions ensure pro-poor development;
- questioning unjust trade negotiations in the WTO;
- discontinuing the policy of privatisation of water and other natural resources;
- ensuring DF-QF market access for Bangladeshi products;
- implementing special and differential treatment (S&D) under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for the LDCs;
- phasing out all types of trade-distorting subsidies in the developed countries;

- promoting tri-party coordination between government, NGOs and development partners in achieving the goals and objectives of the Paris Declaration and Accra Action Agenda;
- strengthening advocacy for flexible rules of origin (RoO), S&D provision pledged by the WTO, inclusion of movement of natural persons from one country to another and special market access for the RMG sector. Among the CSOs, a diverse range of organisations were involved in this process.¹⁶

Case Study 3 presents local CSO engagement in the process of aid and development effectiveness in the pre-2015 period.

Case Study 3: Multi-stakeholder consultation on the joint cooperation strategy in the context of aid and development effectiveness: Pre-2015

The Aid Accountability Group, with support of the Reality of Aid Network, organised a multi-stakeholder consultation in Dhaka in September 2010. The idea was to discuss a joint cooperation strategy (JCS) in the context of aid and development effectiveness. The purpose of the meeting was to raise CSOs' voice with regard to aid accountability initiative. A total of 150 participants, including media, CSOs, government representatives, parliamentarians, donors and focal persons for the monitoring of Project Director (PD) evaluation, attended the programme. CSOs voiced critical views on the functionality/effectiveness of the JCS referring to lack of transparency and inclusiveness of its process. CSOs also asked for aid negotiations to be publicly held. Accountability of donors and government was highlighted, and development of a set of principles towards more effective aid was proposed.

Source: Reality of Aid (2010).

Case Study 4: International Civil Society Forum on advancing LDC interests in the Sixth WTO Ministerial: Pre-2015

A three-day International Civil Society Forum titled 'Advancing the LDCs Interests in the Sixth WTO Ministerial' was organised in Dhaka in October 2005. The Forum was organised by the CPD, in association with eight co-organisers which included ActionAid International; Consumers International, Malaysia; ENDA Tiers Monde, Senegal; EU-LDC Network; International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), Geneva; Oxfam GB, Bangladesh; South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Kathmandu; and Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute

(Case Study contd.)

¹⁶Some of the leading organisations in this connection are — CPD, ActionAid Bangladesh, VOICE, Make Trade Fair (MTF) Alliance and INCIDIN Bangladesh.

(Case Study contd.)

(SEATINI), Uganda. The event highlighted a wide spectrum of issues from the perspective of NSAs. Some of these were: Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), Agriculture, S&D, Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Properties (TRIPS), GATS, Rules, Trade Facilitation and trade-related capacity building, etc. LDC demands were articulated in the Dhaka Declaration, which was adopted at the end of the conference.

Source: CPD (2005).

Role of CSOs in implementing Goal 17: Post-2015

Following adoption of the SDGs in 2015, CSOs have continued to remain engaged in various areas related to Goal 17, both at the national as also global levels. Their activities concerned both traditional issues, such as tax, trade and aid effectiveness; and also non-traditional issues, such as technology and communication. As regards the second set of issues, CSOs are partnering with different private sector organisations, which is a novel endeavour. It is also to be noted that, engagement of the CSOs on traditional issues have been further widened and deepened during the SDG era. Mention may be made of the ActionAid organised Citizen's Tax Tribunal, held in 2018, as part of its ongoing Tax Power campaign. The Tribunal was conceived as an alternative space for aggrieved taxpayers, which was structured around six case petitions in two hearings (please see, Case Study 5). Similarly, new forms of engagement of the CSOs are seen in connection with addressing tax-related

Case Study 5: **Citizen's tax tribunal: Post-2015**

ActionAid Bangladesh organised the Citizen's Tax Tribunal in 2018, as part of which, there were two hearings. The first hearing included three case petitions: (i) implications of VAT on workers; (ii) implications of VAT on students; (iii) implications of VAT on slum-dwellers. The second hearing covered two case petitions: (i) impact of corporate tax avoidance on financing of local government; and (ii) implications of corporate tax avoidance on basic services. The reports (print and electronic) published under Media Fellowship supplemented/evidenced the case petitions covering following issues:

- tax paid by general people versus what the government actually receives;
- tax avoidance by multinational/national big corporations;
- reform of taxation system through incorporation of progressive taxation;
- political parties' perception about tax justice and inclusion of progressive taxation issues in election manifestos;
- tax avoidance by expatriates working in Bangladesh;
- illicit financial flows, involving multinational companies.

(Case Study contd.)

(Case Study contd.)

The role of ActionAid in this connection was to offer orientation courses for selected media people and case petitioners for preparing fellowship reports and drafting case petitions. The event covered a broad spectrum of issues, such as tax burden on the urban poor, institutional and legal mechanism for ensuring tax transparency and curbing corruption, tax-to-service ratio, accountability of corporate entities, etc. Some of the key propositions (verdicts) voiced at the tribunals included the followings: (i) reduce the burden of tax from the shoulders of low-income population by implementing progressive tax system; (ii) maintain institutional transparency by strengthening relevant agencies to stop tax dodging and money laundering; and (iii) raise the share of direct tax. The above exercise contributed to attaining SDG Target 17.1, particularly in relation to strengthening/improving domestic capacity in tax revenue generation.

Source: ActionAid (2018).

irregularities (e.g. restrictive tax treaties and attendant consequences in terms of revenue losses). National CSOs have been building partnerships with global organisations, e.g. Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ), to deal with related issues.

CSOs of Bangladesh are active in several global platforms. They are also taking part in various workshops. For example, they participate in CSOs Enabling Environment and CSOs Development Effectiveness, which is geared to building broader constituency and strengthen networking and advocacy capacities as regards development effectiveness issues. Some of the CSOs, such as Oxfam, ActionAid and CPD, have been working on a number of issues related to Goal 17. These include tax justice, trade governance, climate finance, knowledge generation and research, capacity building of CSOs/community-based organisations (CBOs) on SDGs-related issues. A large number of CBOs and CSOs have been involved in dissemination, capacity building and GO-NGO collaborative activities as part of a diverse range of platforms.

Engagement of the CSOs has broadened in Goal-17-related areas in recent times. Many CSOs are getting involved in activities related to access to new technologies, technology transfer and inclusive digitisation. Some NGOs are giving attention to such issues as promoting living wage for workers in the global value chains, fair price for the manufacturers of exporting developing countries and global policies concerning emerging Southern issues. Some are taking a more proactive part in global negotiating fora on finance, environment and other issues. Some are working as community watchdogs to bring accountability and transparency in climate finance management of the

government. CBOs and CSOs are working to promote the cause of democratic governance in Bangladesh by undertaking various activities to strengthen knowledge and leadership capacities of grassroots CBOs and CSOs to secure social and economic rights of vulnerable individuals and communities. Some CBOs are engaged in monitoring implementation of government policies and budgets related to the SDGs. A number of NGOs are involved in building multi-stakeholder partnerships to mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, and are engaged in developing programme-related databases.

Bangladesh is having to deal with the new reality of shrinking flow of fund to the CSOs. Grassroots organisations have been raising the issue of downscaled fund flows in various global platforms. The Istanbul Declaration on Grand Bargain and Charter for Change (C4C), signed by 28 INGOs, committed to the followings to deepen localisation:

- bringing local organisations in leadership;
- promoting accountability to local people especially to the affected communities;
- ensuring full transparency of expenditure, including in financial transactions;
- adequate monitoring and reporting;
- inclusive mediation process;
- involving all the concerned stakeholder organisations; and
- providing funds to local organisations for institutional development.

In recent years, a number of CSOs are being increasingly engaged with the youth population to address issues of particular concern to the young people. Analysis of the engagement of various youth-related CSOs showed that a large part of their engagements were related to SDGs such as 3, 4, 8,9, 10 and 16 (Table 4). Because of their cross-cutting nature, many such activities are related to Goal 17, particularly target 17.8 (i.e. technology-related cooperation). Engagement of CSOs in these non-conventional areas have further widened the scope of their work, and will be helpful in implementing Goal 17.

Table 4: Engagement of youth-related organisations in SDG activities and their association with Goal 17

Organisation	Major focus	SDGs	Goal 17 relation
Avijan	Empower dalit people	8	17.8
Save the Children	Quality education and training	4	17.8
VSO	Youth leadership and engagement with society	10	17.8
YPSA	Capacity development of youth through technology	8	17.8
ADD International	Inclusive education	4	17.8
Kapaeeng Foundation	Equal education access and training for the indigenous peoples	4.5	17.8
CAMPE	Quality education for all	4	17.8
Dnet	Quality education for skilled manpower	4	17.8
HEKS/EPER	Quality education for ethnic people on plain-land	4	17.8
JAAGO	Quality education (online school)	4	17.8
BRAC	App-based job search and training for youth	8	17.8
British Council	Digital tools for quality education and skilled manpower	4	17.8
	Training and cultural centre for inclusiveness	8	17.8
BYLC	Education and skill gap	4	17.8
MAYA Apa	Good mental health (app-based health services)	3	17.8
The Tech Academy	Quality education (ICT)	4	17.8
	Industry innovations and infrastructure (robotics)	9	17.8
MRDI	Access to information, protect and ensure fundamental freedoms of life	16.10	17.8

Note: Target 17.8: Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology.

7. Role of the private sector in implementing the SDGs

Private sector has been recognised as a key player in implementing the SDGs. To recall, this was not the case in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In case of Goal 17, private sector plays an important role in five areas: finance, technology, trade, capacity building and systemic issues. With respect to finance-related issues of Goal 17, private sector's role is 'indirect' – helping to achieve the national targets by paying taxes, through non-tax payments, generating flow of FDI and through remittance flows from abroad. The role of the private sector in case of technology (technology transfer, internet use, disseminating environmentally sound technologies, etc.) has not been recognised directly, rather has been referred to indirectly. Same is true in case of trade-related issues (e.g. higher export performance of the private sector will raise the country's share in global export). Analysis of engagement of the private sector at the global level reveals that the activities of the private sector have far-reaching impact on attainment of the various targets of Goal 17. However, assessing this is somewhat problematic as many of the contributions are indirect in nature.

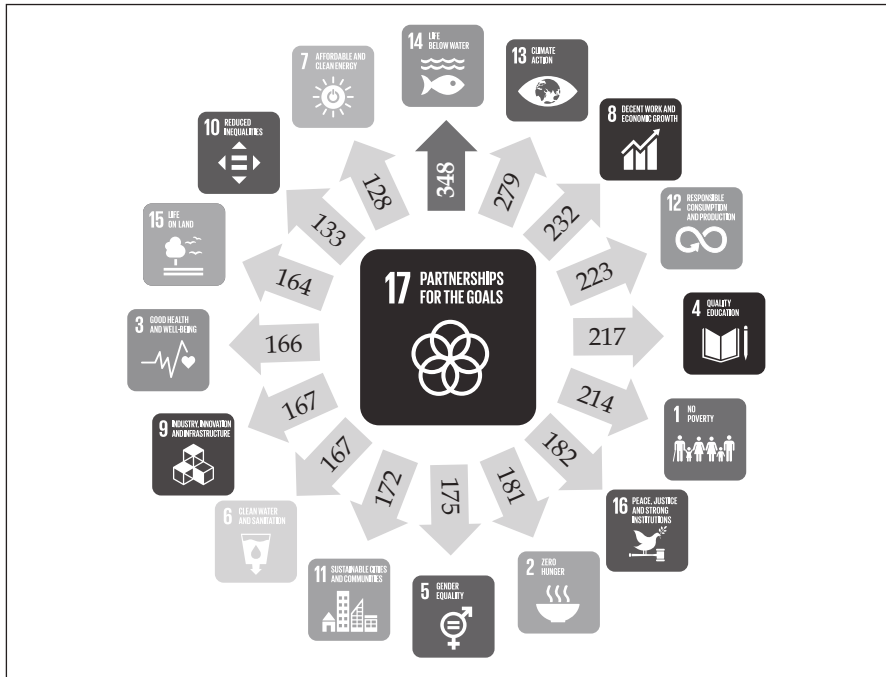
Role of the private sector at the global level

CPD has carried out a web-based data analysis of the engagement of private sector at the global level, based on the information available on the website titled 'Sustainable Development Partnership Platform' – a UN-led initiative.¹⁷ The website reported information on a total of 702 different initiatives, mostly led by the private sector, CSOs and other organisations (as of 10 March 2019). Each initiative was connected to the SDGs; a significant number of the initiatives are reported as being connected to multiple goals. Most importantly, multiplicity of connection as regards various activities are found particularly in case of Goal 17. Figure 18 shows linkages of these initiatives with different goals, including Goal 17. The largest number of activities which are reported as having connection to Goal 17 have links to Goal 14 (Life Below Water: 348 cases); followed by Goal 13 (Climate Action: 279 cases), Goal 8 (Decent Employment and Economic Growth: 232 cases), Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production: 223 cases), Goal 4 (Quality Education: 217 cases), and Goal 1 (No Poverty: 214 cases). In other words, engagement of the private sector and other organisations in Goal 17 are of cross-cutting nature and needs to be assessed keeping this in the purview.

A review of the type of activity and nature of engagement of the private sector reveals that globally the private sector has been playing a role in a

¹⁷ www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/browse/

Figure 18: Goal 17 linkage with other SDGs (based on 702 initiatives of CSOs/international private sector organisations)



Source: Calculated from Sustainable Development Partnership Platform (till 10 March 2019).

variety of ways in Goal 17 areas, not to speak of the other goal areas. Key areas of their engagement include activities related to promoting green growth through reduced chemical use, generating novel ideas for app development, knowledge sharing on climate change, gender equality, community development, media services, livelihood development, e-schools, ICT capability development, training, improving organisational capacity, PPP, marketing of eco-friendly products. Private sector has established foundations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, which undertake many activities that promote the cause of Goal 17. Private sector also extends financial support to universities, research organisations, schools and banks to implement various activities. Private sector engagements are found to vary across different partnerships, such as foundation–university collaboration, foundation–CSO collaboration, university–foundation collaboration and UN agencies–foundations–private companies collaboration, etc. However, the fact remains that, Bangladesh’s private sector companies are yet to be tuned to attaining SDG aspirations in a visible way. There is significant scope to broaden its involvement in the coming days. More on this will be discussed in the next section.

There are some regional initiatives, as part of which, the private sector is making contribution in implementing the SDGs. One of the important bodies dealing with business issues in the Asia region is the Asia-Pacific Business Forum (APBF). Instead of addressing goal-specific issues, APBF is more concerned about the overall sustainable development agenda which are targeted to the government, and include issues, such as responsible business practices and conduct, trade policies, mobilisation of sustainable finance, promotion of impact investment, etc. Apart from the viewpoint of the Business Forum as such, private sector engagement in the Asia-Pacific region may also be viewed from the perspective of the private sector companies.

Companies are trying to integrate SDG Agenda in their activities in a number of ways. These include alignment of corporate strategy with the sustainability agenda, raising awareness among the employees, internal diagnosis exercise regarding capacity and challenges in aligning with international standards (Universality and SDGs: Business Perspective). Another initiative is the SDG Fund. A Private Sector Advisory Group has been formed with the objective to help the fund to prepare a roadmap for exploring the potentials of public-private alliance in finding solutions for achieving the SDGs.

Case Study 6 presents the role of the private sector in the GPEDC process to promote the cause of ensuring development effectiveness of aid.

Case Study 6: Private sector engagement with the GPEDC: Post-2015

Private sector engagement at the global level on SDG-related issues is driven by a range of initiatives. Of these, GPEDC, led by OECD-UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) is a notable initiative, which was set up as a result of an agreement reached at the 2016 high-level meeting. GPEDC is structured around three issue areas¹⁸, of which one of the sub-issues under Issue 1 covers purpose-driven funding for the SDGs that particularly focus on blended finance. UNDP's private sector collaboration, among others, is contributing in the form of: mobilising private sector financial and in-kind resources for sustainable development solutions; and leveraging innovative financing and partnership solutions to mobilise private sector capital for the implementation of the SDGs.

Source: GPEDC (2018).

¹⁸These issue areas are: Issue 1: Leveraging the contributions of the development cooperation community; Issue 2: Making private sector engagement through development cooperation work in programmes at the country level; and Issue 3: Achieving sustainable results and accountability to scale up successful private sector engagement efforts.

Role of the private sector at the national level

Engagement of the Bangladesh private sector in the context of the SDGs is, by and large, of a 'business as usual' nature. According to the information of the business associations available on websites (Table 5), these are engaged

Table 5: Private sector of Bangladesh engaged in SDG-related activities

Chamber	Activity	Period	Relevance with SDGs
DCCI	Investment in strengthening infrastructure	2016	9
	Training programme for developing women entrepreneurship	2016	8
	Training on rules and procedure of VAT and income tax	2017	
	Seminar on potentials of the Blue Economy	2017	14
	DCCI's call for use of foreign exchange reserves for infrastructure development	2017	9
MCCI	Economic and market research		
	Partnership with different stakeholders		17
FBCCI	Promotion of industrialisation of the greater Chattogram region	2019	9
	Trade and finance: Preparing suggestion for national budget, tax, VAT, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and price monitoring		8, 17
	Partnership with national and foreign delegation		
BGMEA	Workplace safety		9, 8
	Environmental sustainability		12
	Social responsibility: Green and clean production, healthcare for workers		3, 5
	Trade facilitation and promotion		17
BTMA	Protection and promotion of trade, commerce and manufactures		17
	Bridging the communication gap with different stakeholders		17
CCCI	Promotion and protection of trade, commerce and manufactures of Bangladesh		9
	Partnership with different stakeholders		17
	Collection and circulation of data and other information relating to trade commerce and industry		17
	Training courses on ICT		8

(Table 5 contd.)

(Table 5 contd.)

Chamber	Activity	Period	Relevance with SDGs
FICCI	Developing key business sectors		
	Bridging communication gap digitally		17
	Ensuring energy security for Bangladesh		7
	Introducing international standard financial services		
	Building the blocks for future		9
	Facilitating exports		17

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the information gleaned from different websites.

Note: DCCI: Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry; FBCCI: Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries.

in different areas that concern Goals 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 17. However, the number of activities related directly to these goals is few and far between. Of the ones which could be mentioned in relation to Goal 17, is the initiative of the MCCI on building partnerships with different stakeholders; Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association's (BGMEA) initiative on trade facilitation and trade promotion; Bangladesh Textile Mills Association's (BTMA) initiative on promotion and protection of trade and commerce and bridging the communication gap with different stakeholders; Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry's (CCCI) initiative on partnership building with different stakeholders and dissemination of data and information; and Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry's (FICCI) initiative on bridging the communication gap digitally. However, it is difficult to attribute these activities as purposefully-built to address the targets of Goal 17.

A few private sector organisations have targetted initiatives aligned with the SDGs. BUILD, which was set up in 2018, at the initiative of the DCCI, is implementing various activities through its SDG Wing (see Case Study 7). BUILD's activities are linked more with other goals rather than Goal 17. As part of BUILD initiatives, private sector has been working on industry-academia collaboration (in the pharmaceutical sector), capacity building activities (with BGMEA and the Bangladesh Institute of Plastic Engineering and Technology (BIPET)), simplification of tax collection system (with FBCCI), and reforms of discriminatory policy support, etc.

Industry-academia collaboration in the pharmaceutical sector is a newly emerging area of private sector engagement. However, the initiative is having to face a number of bottlenecks, such as gap between entrepreneurs

Case Study 7: Business Initiatives Leading to Development (BUILD): Post-2015

At the national level, private sector engagement was pioneered through the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)-led initiative of the BUILD. BUILD is involved in a number of areas, which are in various degrees linked to Goal 17. For example, BUILD is working on capacity building for the private sector. As regards capacity building in science, technology and innovation areas, BUILD has been promoting the idea of technology bank in different platforms. As part of this initiative, BUILD is trying to include seven categories that are not aligned with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) list for import of capital machineries – an important component/requirement for the technology bank. As part of green financing, BUILD is working with the Bangladesh Bank to set up the Green Transfer Fund (GTF). As part of investment promotion strategy, it is promoting the idea of simplification of regulatory barriers to create favourable investment climate. BUILD has submitted 690 quick-win reform proposals to the government around sustainability and green growth thematic areas (which are related to SDGs 6, 11 and 12).

Private sector engagement around capacity building include existing initiatives, such as BGMEA Fashion Institute, Leather Institute and BIPET, including various affiliations with international academic organisations. The private sector engagement at the regional level is confined to SAARC Chamber of Commerce. However, there is no specific initiative explicitly focusing on Goal 17 areas.

BUILD as interlocutory body is providing secretarial support to the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC), which was formed in 2012, in order to expedite the implementation of export diversification policy. It has also dealt with the anti-dumping case involving jute export.

BUILD Bangladesh–UNDP SDGs Impact Fund is a social impact investment platform to develop fund that will be invested in growth of equity in medium- and large-sized enterprises, which have a positive impact on social and environmental outcomes while generating financial returns. The fund will include investment in agriculture, healthcare, affordable housing, ITs, renewable energy, training and education, waste management and other sectors. Managed by the Impress Capital Limited, the fund makes use of an impact measurement framework developed by the UNDP to ensure measurable results for a range of SDGs and to monitor how investments impact different populations groups. The growth of impact investment in Bangladesh has potential to support the LNOB aspirations as a people-centric private sector engagement model. There are a number of challenges in the current context that BUILD is facing. These include developing a pipeline for impact investment, building awareness about impact investing opportunities among local and international investors, taking advantage of government regulations to promote impact investing, and building the capacity of impact investment managers.

Source: Based on the information collected from the DCCI and the BUILD offices (March 2018).

and researchers in provision of support following an innovation and lack of commercialisation of research findings. Private sector has identified a number of discriminatory policy measures that involve RMG and non-RMG sectors (e.g. leather, plastic, footwear and light engineering). It has requested the government to ensure equity in distribution of fiscal benefits with a view to promote emerging sectors and promote the cause of ensuring export diversification. Private sector has also proposed a number of reforms with a view to raise taxes, which include: (i) simplification of tax payment process; (ii) provision of service facilities through introduction of initiatives, such as Tax Card; (iii) tackling corruption in tax collection process; and (iv) widening the tax net.

8. Partnership between Bangladesh and development partners

In order to appreciate the dynamics of intergovernmental partnership between Bangladesh and development partners, the study team conducted a KII with one of the senior officials from a development partner institution, who is a member of the local consultative group in Bangladesh. The objective was to understand the perspective of the development partners with regard to global partnership between developed and developing countries, and its effectiveness particularly in the context of Bangladesh. The issues discussed covered financial contribution of developed countries against commitment, contribution to trade and investment-related measures, support for technological development, level of technical assistance, SSC and debt sustainability of developing countries. The following sub-section dwells on these issues.

It should be noted that although Bangladesh is globally considered as a ‘recipient’ country in the global development partnership discourse, in a number of areas it has also been contributing to global public goods. Bangladesh is participating in the UN-led peace operations in a number of countries and providing humanitarian and temporary support to the displaced Rohingya population of Myanmar. Thus, overall, Bangladesh does have a role as a ‘provider’, although its overwhelming role is that of a ‘recipient’ in global partnership. This section will also discuss the above mentioned issues.

Perspectives of development partners on partnership and cooperation

Development partners are aware of their commitment for development cooperation for the LDCs and developing countries (Target 17.2). However, as was mentioned earlier, only five out of 27 OECD countries have so far fulfilled

their commitment of 0.7 per cent of GNI as aid. According to the development partner interviewed, a large part of support is directed to countries, which are in acute need for additional resources (e.g. humanitarian urgency). However, Bangladesh was not on the list of those countries.

With regard to means of implementation related to investment, trade and technologies (Targets 17.5, 17.6, 17.7, 17.8 and 17.10), Bangladesh is one of the LDCs, which has been able to take good advantage of the support provided to this category. Among the development partners, the European Union's Everything But Arms (EU-EBA) is considered to be one of the most important trade policy measures in support of the LDCs. By offering duty-free market access for Bangladesh's export to the EU, the EBA has made significant contribution to Bangladesh's manufacturing production, export performance, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings. The scheme has contributed to poverty reduction in Bangladesh and stimulated economic growth. However, support in the form of investment and technology transfer has been rather weak. According to the development partners, interviewed, Bangladesh needs to liberalise its domestic market further, if it is to have larger foreign investment; this would also facilitate transfer of technology to the country. Some have also argued in favour of further liberalisation of the tariff regime. However, experts have argued that some selected sectors of the economy will need to be given strategic policy support to remain competitive. For Bangladesh, to benefit from initiatives such as the technology bank, trade and investment regime will need to be calibrated to the demands of the relevant conditionalities and also realities of global market scenario. A number of development partners have been contributing to the promotion of environmentally sustainable technology in Bangladesh through promotion of clean energy, clean textile, low use of hazardous chemicals and more economic use of ground water, among others. There is scope for further enhancement of such collaboration in future.

Some development partners have been collaborating in areas of capacity building (Target 17.9). For example, support has been extended to areas such as water sector, sexual and reproductive health and rights, upgradation of RMG enterprises. In view of nutrition deficit emerging as a major concern in Bangladesh, some development partners have been providing support in a number of projects that aim at improving nutrition status of particularly the vulnerable groups of the population, including the children.

While development partners welcome SSC as an additional means of support for the developing countries and the LDCs such as Bangladesh (Targets 17.3,

17.6 and 17.9), a number of concerns has been voiced in this connection. While SSC involves a partnership between Southern providers and recipient countries, it has been argued that SSC lacks transparency, and does not have a common set of principles such as the ones that inform the Paris Declaration on Aid. It is also argued that, the emerging ‘providers’ often have their own motivation and interest, and they fail to address social and environmental concerns. One criticism in the particular context of Bangladesh has been that Southern partners shy away from participating development partners’ platforms at the country level.

It is also apprehended that debt sustainability could emerge as a major concern for Bangladesh (Target 17.4) in the coming decade. Bangladesh is incurring significant debt burden owing to the rising domestic and foreign debts incurred in recent period. A large part of the new foreign debts are being provided by non-traditional players, the Southern providers. Also, debt is being incurred from sources that are costly, and for projects, where, in at least some cases, the viability of investment could turn out to be a concern. Good governance in project negotiations, management and implementation will be critically important to address the attendant issues. Accordingly, proper justification and pre-assessment of projects must be given due importance.

Some development partners have expressed concern about the shrinking space of the CSOs in Bangladesh involved in policy-influencing activities (Target 17.17). A number of partners consider support to the CSOs to be of heightened importance, particularly to enhance their capacity in raising awareness on social, economic and environmental issues.

Availability and quality of data remain a major concern for many developing countries, including Bangladesh (Targets 17.18 and 17.19). Till now, support extended by development partners for strengthening national data systems has been quite limited. However, KII under the present study indicates that development partners are aware of the issues and challenges in this connection. While data availability remains a concern, quality of data, robustness of reports based on data and proper use of data have emerged as new concerns in the Bangladesh context. In view of this, strengthening of national data system, maintaining data integrity and capacity building of statistical institutions should be given due prominence if proper monitoring of the SDGs, including SDG 17, is to be ensured.

Bangladesh's contribution to global partnership building

Bangladesh, with its limited capacity, has been striving to contribute to global partnership building. The two most important areas in this connection are: participation in the UN-led peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian support to Rohingya people displaced from their homeland. While Bangladesh's involvement in UN peacekeeping forces predates the SDGs, its humanitarian support to the Rohingya, on a large scale, is a more recent development.

Bangladesh has been participating in UN peace keeping forces since 1988. To date it has joined 30 peace missions in 25 countries. More than 85,000 Bangladeshi military personnel have participated in these missions. Currently, about 6,600 Bangladeshi personnel are deployed in nine different missions, which is about 6.5 per cent of total personnel working worldwide. Of these, 5,830 are contingent troops, 650 are police, 38 are experts and 96 are staff officers (Table 6). Through these missions, Bangladesh has been contributing to ensure peacekeeping in troubled/war-prone regions in different parts of the world.

Table 6: Country contributions by mission and personnel type (as of 31 March 2019)

Mission	Period	Contingent troops	Police	Experts on mission	Staff officer	Bangladesh total	World total personnel
MONUSCO	July 2010	1692	182	5	19	1898	20452
MINUSMA	March 2013	1389	280	3	21	1693	16355
UNMISS	July 2011	1584	21	9	29	1643	19372
MINUSCA	April 2014	998		11	18	1027	15051
UNAMID	July 2007	36	164	2	5	207	10623
UNIFIL	March 1978	112			4	116	11133
MINURSO	April 1991	19		7		26	480
MINUJUSTH	October 2017		3			3	1313
UNISFA	June 2011			1		1	4815

(Table 6 contd.)

(Table 6 contd.)

Mission	Period	Contingent troops	Police	Experts on mission	Staff officer	Bangladesh total	World total personnel
Bangladesh total		5830	650	38	96	6614*	
World total		74874	10316	1271	2016	102736	102736**
Bangladesh share (%)		7.79	6.30	2.99	4.76	6.44	

Source: UN Peacekeeping website.

Note: * As of 31 March 2019; ** As of 28 February 2019.

Since August 2017, a total of 741,000 Rohingya people have crossed over to Bangladesh, and are mostly concentrated in the southern part of the country. To recall, another 168,000 Rohingyas had been staying in Bangladesh since the early 1990s. These people were given the status of ‘temporarily displaced Myanmar citizens.’ Bangladesh has provided them with food and shelter in five unions of Cox’s Bazar district of the country. Registered Rohingyas are receiving three types of humanitarian support: shelter, relief and medical facilities. Bangladesh Navy has built shelters for the Rohingyas in a nearby island. Apart from the development partners, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) of the GoB and several NGOs and CBOs and national and international organisations have been providing humanitarian aid and support to the Rohingyas. The economic pressure on Bangladesh in this connection is becoming increasingly apparent with time. In addition, Bangladesh is having to deal with significant environmental losses on account of this influx of Rohingya population. According to a study of Khatun and Kamruzzaman (2018), the cost of deforestation in view of this include following elements: (i) loss of firewood and timber; (ii) loss of carbon stock; (iii) loss of non-timber forest products; and (iv) loss of fodder. In the backdrop of the limited support extended by the development partners, Bangladesh is having to take increasing responsibility to deal with the Rohingya crisis. If the crisis turns out to be a prolonged one, Bangladesh will be saddled with a formidable challenge over the longer term future.

Bangladesh’s CSOs have been contributing to global public goods in a number of ways. Bangladesh is headquarter or an important hub of a number of important global CSO initiatives, including in the areas of poverty reduction, women empowerment and capacity building, awareness raising among the marginalised sections. World-renowned institutions, such as the BRAC and

the Grameen Bank, and a number of other NGOs/CSOs have pioneered innovative practices and tools to address the issues that particularly concern the marginalised groups. Many of these are being successfully replicated in other parts of the world.

9. Challenges and way forward

The study has identified a number of issues and concerns with regard to implementation of Goal 17 in Bangladesh. It has examined what the ‘whole of society’ approach means, and how CSOs are contributing in the context of SDG 17 from this particular vantage point, at national, regional and global levels. The attendant concerns which were identified in this connection can be categorised in four groups: framework-related; data-related; performance-related; and CSO and private sector-engagements-related. It is important to note that at all these levels, the early phase of SDG implementation, which is largely of preparatory nature, is coming to an end. The second phase of implementation, where localisation of the SDGs has emerged as an important task, has now been initiated. Indeed, addressing implementation-related challenges will be a major task over the next decade in the run-up to the year 2030. The success in this connection will hinge on the efficacy of the engagements, and the effectiveness of coordination involving all concerned activities. Some of the challenges in view of this are mentioned below.

Role of CSOs and private sector should be specified in the national framework

Monitoring and evaluation framework for the SDGs in Bangladesh (GED, 2018a) does not specifically recognise the role of the CSOs and the private sector as important actors in the implementation of the SDGs. Although the Review Report prepared by the Planning Commission does mention about undertaking the whole of society approach in implementing the SDGs, NSAs’ role in this regard has not been clearly articulated; rather CSOs and others are considered as ‘beneficiaries’ in the SDG implementation process. Private sector, a key player in SDG implementation, must be given higher visibility in concerned plans and actions. The institutional process for SDG implementation stipulates the role of different departments and ministries and other public agencies as ‘lead’ and ‘co-lead’ organisations to facilitate the process. However, the role of other important actors, such as the private sector, CSOs and other NSAs, have not been recognised in the monitoring framework with assigned concrete responsibilities. Their role and responsibility could be mentioned under a separate head, which may be

captioned 'associate partners'. NGOs/their alliance/private sector with focus of activities in targetted Goal areas may be included as partners. These would work closely with the lead/co-lead public agencies in implementing relevant targets of Goal 17. Including the CSOs and the private sector in the monitoring framework will do justice to realising the claimed whole of society approach of the GoB.

Address the gap between activities related to indicators and the contributions being made by the NSAs

Majority of the targets and indicators of Goal 17 are economic in nature, which are to be attained through national government and intergovernmental processes. Given the nature of work of the private sector and the CSOs, which function primarily at field and grassroots levels, creating direct link of their activities with indicators of Goal 17 is rather difficult. However, overall, the NSAs are making significant contributions in attaining Goal 17 targets and indicators. Additionally, nature of engagement of the CSOs is largely qualitative in nature, and it is rather difficult to match and establish correspondence with related indicators of Goal 17. Similarly, while through various activities the private sector is making direct contribution in attaining the targets and indicators of Goal 17, it is difficult to appreciate and give recognition to this through the existing framework.

An initiative needs to be taken at national and global levels to ensure proper recognition of the contributions being made by the private sector and the CSOs in attaining Goal 17. A set of proxy indicators may be identified, which could be termed as 'associated indicators'. These could be customised to take account of, and give recognition to, the activities and initiatives of the CSOs and the private sector in implementing targets and indicators of different goals, including Goal 17.

'Attribution problem' concerning engagement of NSAs in Goal 17 areas should be dealt with

Goal 17 is a cross-cutting goal, which is linked to majority of the other goals. The study has noted in the preceding sections that activities of the private sector in Goal 17 is mostly linked with Goals 14, 13, 8, 12, 4 and 1. It is the usual practice of the CSOs and the private sector to report their activities under the core-goals instead of the cross-cutting goals such as Goal 17. Since targets and indicators are structured in such a way that it reflects the contribution of the national governments and intergovernmental processes

and make it difficult for the private sector and CSOs to establish association between their activities and the indicators, their contribution to Goal 17 tend to remain unappreciated and unreported.

It is important to simplify the linkage of activities of NSAs with different targets and indicators of Goal 17. Moreover, the activities of the CSOs and private sector are of qualitative in nature, and this should be taken cognisance of. The new framework proposed in the preceding section should help address the attendant disjuncture.

Address lack of up to date data to assess progress of attaining Goal 17 aspirations

Goal 17 is one of the goals, concerning which data for a large number of indicators is either not there, or difficult to access. This is because of the nature of the data, which is either of Tier II or Tier III type. In certain cases concerning Goal 17, only global-level indicators are available; indeed, no national-level indicator is mentioned. This has been proposed earlier. The GED has included a number of national indicators; however, for a number of other indicators, no such indicators are mentioned. Besides, some of the indicators are qualitative in nature and difficult to measure without appropriate measuring tools. To address this, a set of proxy indicators needs to be identified. The GED may take an initiative, in consultation with public, private and CSOs entities, to identify the proxy indicators for all targets related to Goal 17. This will help in undertaking a proper review and monitoring of the progress of implementation of the targets and indicators associated with Goal 17.

Data variance leading to interpretative ambiguities should be explained and minimised

The Bangladesh national progress report of 2018 has documented the status of progress of different indicators based on the official data, for different years (GED, 2018b). In view of the milestones set for 2020, some of the indicators are found to be with the status of 'target met' and 'progress on track'. However, comparison of this data with those in relevant global databases indicates significant departure. This undermines the validity of the national (official) data as regards progress of SDG implementation. There are various reasons for the above mentioned data gap. Misreporting and calculation problem are some of the reasons. This needs to be addressed. A number of indicators do not have milestones for different time periods (2020, 2025 and 2030). As

regards some other indicators, the milestones are not aligned with the current trends and changing dynamics.

In this backdrop, it is important to revisit the progress reported in the 2018 national review report as regards different targets and indicators of Goal 17. Necessary corrections in the data and the status of progress need to be undertaken. Also, the GED should set milestones for rest of the indicators (both quantitative and qualitative in nature), so that progress of implementation may be monitored for all indicators.

Country-led results framework should be strengthened

Bangladesh is yet to develop a proper monitoring and evaluation framework concerning use of domestic resources in line with what is practiced in case of foreign development assistance. While there is an institutional structure and mechanism to deal with public procurement, assessment of progress concerning domestic resource-based projects is generally found to be weak, and in extreme cases, not suitable for proper assessment of the value for money. It is to be noted that there are provisions in place to engage CSOs and private sector in the monitoring process; however, this is hardly put in practice. This leads to allegations of lack of transparency and accountability in resource use.

In this backdrop, an effective and functional institutionalised results-based framework needs to be developed for use of domestic resources. The framework followed by the development partners may serve as reference in this regard. The monitoring indicators should be well-specified to assess the quality and standard of projects. Such a framework should ensure effective participation of the CSOs/private sector in the monitoring process, along with the concerned government agencies, with a view to enhance transparency and accountability in the use of domestic resources, which is key to attaining the SDGs.

More emphasis needed as regards the five prioritised targets

The perception survey carried out for this exercise revealed that five out of 19 targets of Goal 17 are most important for Bangladesh. As may be recalled, these are: domestic resource mobilization (17.1), universal rule-based trade (17.10), strengthening the role of CSOs and public-private partnership (17.17), strengthening the database for better monitoring of implementation of SDGs (17.18) and mobilization of additional resources from North-South, South-

South and triangular cooperation (17.3). Indeed, there is a need to prioritise a set of activities as regards Goal 17, so that by putting emphasis on these, progress towards attaining Goal 17 may be made at a faster pace. Here, leveraging and drawing synergies from implementation of the prioritised indicators should inform implementation of Goal 17. The CPD perception survey provides a direction in this connection.

A departure from the 'business as usual' approach is required

Our analysis revealed that there was no significant departure in the performance of top priority targets, as also other targets of Goal 17, during the pre-2015 and post-2015 periods. This apparent 'business-as-usual' approach has to be drastically changed if the targets associated with the priority areas of Goal 17, including those that concerns finance, technology and trade-related issues, are to be attained. Domestic resource mobilisation, which ought to serve as the most important means of implementation, has lagged behind significantly compared to the targets that were set. Similarly, FDI flow to Bangladesh has been way behind the target set in the Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP). There is a growing concern as regards the declining amount of aid flow and also aid absorption capacity on the one hand, and the rising debt servicing liability, on the other. Although Bangladesh made impressive progress in IT-related technology use, it is lagging behind by Asian standards. As regards trade-related issues, Bangladesh needs to undertake reforms of the tariff structure in line with its strategic trade and investment interests. Bangladesh's export basket continues to remain highly concentrated in terms of products and markets. These trends need to be reversed by designing and pursuing appropriate policies.

Excepting in policy areas where the government is firmly in the driving seat, in all other areas associated with Goal 17 the private sector and the CSOs in Bangladesh have a strong role to play. NSAs, such as CSOs will have to play a more proactive role in pursuing such causes as tax justice, avoidance of tax evasion and transparency in financial reporting. Private sector should play its part in broadening the tax base, helping the government in its efforts to curb tax evasion and tax avoidance and in supporting SMEs and macro entrepreneurs. Government agencies must play a more proactive role in creating enabling business environment and negotiating regional trade agreements (RTAs) and bilateral FTAs that serve Bangladesh's trade and economic interests.

CSO partnerships must be further strengthened

As has been pointed out in the preceding sections, engagement of CSOs which was concentrated in trade and aid-related activities during pre-2015, has broadened in recent times, to include new areas, such as technology transfer, and new forms, such as partnership building, to advance the cause of SDG implementation. In this process, the nature of partnership has also undergone important changes – building partnership with the private sector within country, going for partnerships with other CSOs across countries, etc. These partnerships need to be strengthened further, particularly in Goal 17 areas. On the other hand, as was pointed out, a significant part of the funds are being diverted to address more urgent issues at hand, such as the urgency of dealing with humanitarian crises. NGOs and CSOs are having to face the challenge of shrinking resource availability, which is undermining their engagement in the SDG-related areas. Partnership and effective CSO–CSO and CSO–private sector initiatives are necessary to raise the efficiency of resource use, which have become more urgent in this backdrop. In view of lack of adequate resources, CPD has floated the idea of establishing an SDG Trust Fund in support of efforts of NSAs to implement the SDGs in Bangladesh. The idea needs serious consideration on the part of the GoB.

Bangladesh's private sector needs to catch up with global frontrunners

As part of the Global Compact many globally leading private sector entities are taking various measures in support of different SDGs, including Goal 17. As the preceding discussions indicate, level of awareness and scope of engagement of Bangladesh's private sector has been rather limited in this context. Although private sector is involved in a number of activities concerning Goal 17 areas, a conscious effort to align the activities with SDG targets is needed, including in Goal 17 areas. Here, Bangladesh's private sector, particularly trade and business bodies and associations, has a lot to learn from global best practices. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen private sector–CSO partnerships within Bangladesh with a view to attaining Goal 17 targets. Some examples of such collaboration have been presented in the present report, and there should be an active interest on the part of concerned entities to study these modalities and take lessons from those.

References

ActionAid. (2018). *Citizen's Tax Tribunal 2018*. Event Report, programme Brochure. Dhaka: ActionAid Bangladesh.

Bhattacharya, D. and Ashraf, Z. (2018). Is Bangladesh rolling towards debt stress? An exploration of debt sustainability in the context of recent external financial flows. *South Asian Journal of Macroeconomics and Public Finance*, 7 (2), pp. 137–173.

CPD. (2005). *International Civil Society's Dhaka Declaration 2005: For Advancing LDC Interests in the Sixth WTO Ministerial*. Dhaka. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

GED. (2017a). *Bangladesh Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2017: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World*. A report on progress of SDGs implementation of Bangladesh submitted to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) of the United Nations (UN). Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://www.sdg.gov.bd/public/img/upload/resources/5d39814178ea7_doc_file.pdf

GED. (2017b). *Data Gap Analysis of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/3acbc97e_6ba3_467b_bdb2_cfb3cbbf059f/Final_Data-Gap-Analysis-of-SDGs_Bangladesh-Perspective_23_02_2017.pdf

GED. (2018a). *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Bangladesh Perspective*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/dc350cdc_4c6d_4a81_b72a_3afe082187ac/Monitoring_and_Evaluation_Framework_of_SDGS_Book_Proof.pdf

GED. (2018b). *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Dhaka: General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh (GoB).

GPEDC. (2018, 8 November). *A Global Partnership Survey on Emerging Issues: Private Sector Engagement through Development Co-operation*. New York and Paris: Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC). Available at: <http://effectivecooperation.org/2018/11/pse-survey/>

Khatun, F. and Kamruzzaman, M. (2018). *Fiscal Implications of Rohingya Crisis for Bangladesh*. CPD Working Paper 120. Dhaka. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Available at: <https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CPD-Working-Paper-120-Fiscal-Implications-of-Rohingya-Crisis-for-Bangladesh.pdf>

MoF. (2018). *Bangladesh Economic Review 2018*. Dhaka: Ministry of Finance (MoF), Government of Bangladesh (GoB). Available at: https://mof.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mof.portal.gov.bd/page/e8bc0eaa_463d_4cf9_b3be_26ab70a32a47/Ch-04%20%28English-2018%29%20%281%29.pdf

NGO Affairs Bureau. (n.d.). <http://www.ngoab.gov.bd> (website of the NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Government of Bangladesh (GoB)).

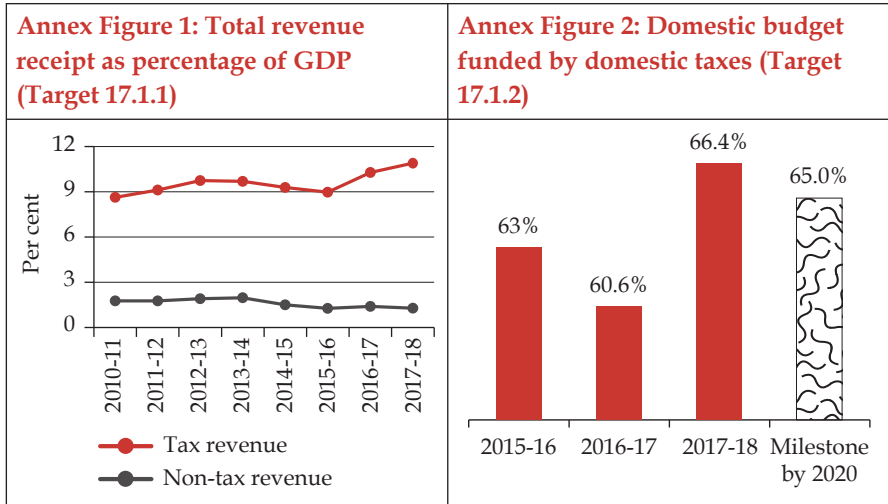
OECD. (2009). *Better Aid Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness: Findings, Recommendations and Good Practice*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD). Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/civil-society-and-aid-effectiveness_9789264056435-en

Oxfam. (2017). *Using Scorecards to Influence Business: Behind the Brands experience*. Available at: <https://views-voices.oxfam.org.uk/2017/10/using-scorecards-to-influence-business-learning-from-behind-the-brands/>

Reality of Aid. (2010). *Multi-stakeholder Consultations on the Joint Cooperation Strategy in the context of Aid and Development Effectiveness*. Available at: <http://www.realityofaid.org/2010/09/multi-stakeholder-consultations-on-the-joint-cooperation-strategy-in-the-context-of-aid-and-development-effectiveness/>

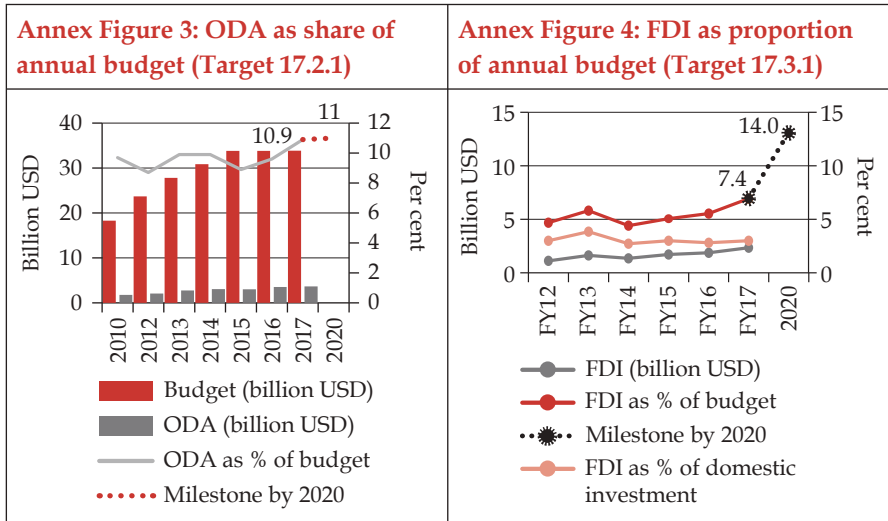
UNSTATS. (n.d.). *SDG Indicators* (United Nations Global SDG Database). New York: United Nations (UN). Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

Annex: Performance of Bangladesh in different targets and milestones for 2020



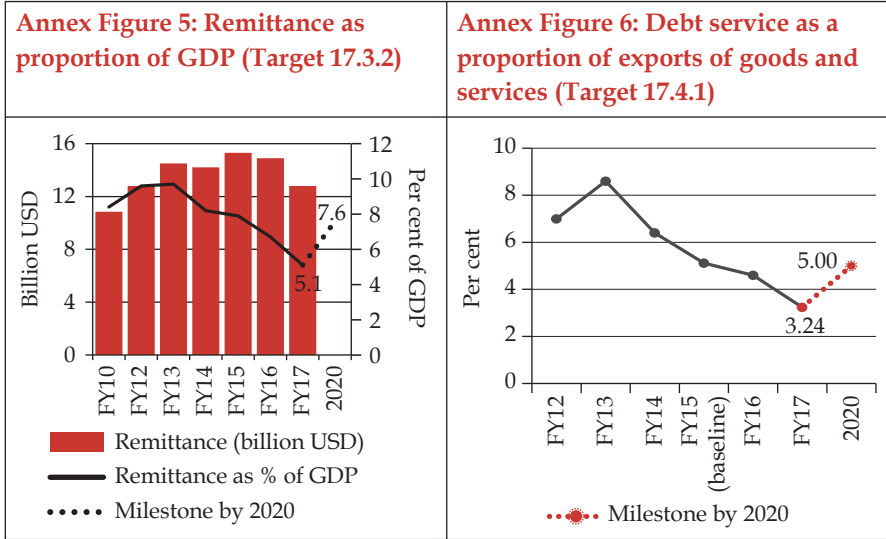
Source: MoF (2018).

Source: MoF (2018).



Source: GED (2018b); MoF (2018).

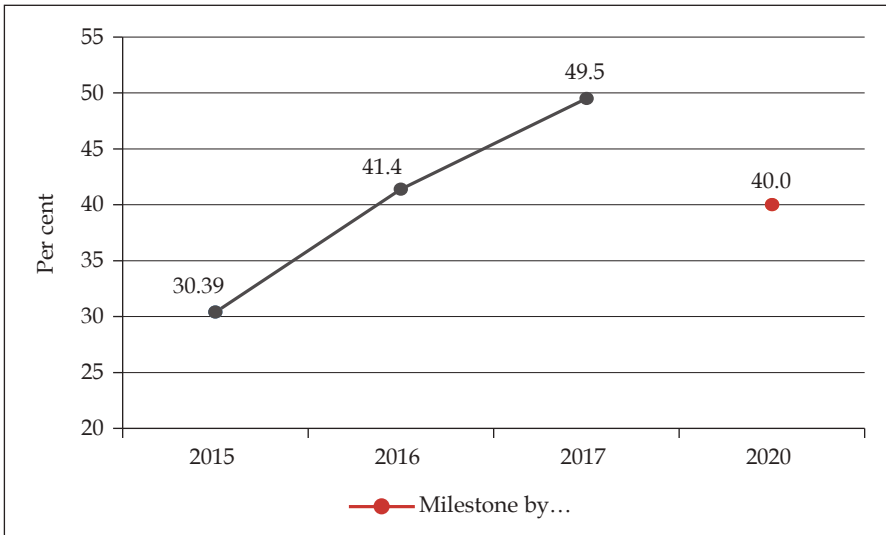
Source: GED (2018b); MoF (2018).




Source: GED (2018b); MoF (2018).

Source: GED (2018b); MoF (2018).

Annex Figure 7: Proportion of individuals using internet (Target 17.8.1)



Source: GED (2018b); calculated from the data of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).



The first ever intellectual contribution on sustainable development in Bangladesh through a non-government lens, this book is a unique analytical output that has been generated through a remarkable participatory process. The idea for this special compendium was conceived by the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*, and later validated by concerned government officials, representatives from the private sector, international development partners, media professionals and Platform's partners, through focused consultations and presentations at a national conclave and a policy dialogue in New York during the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2019.

The book offers a set of reports that evaluate the development progress of Bangladesh, with special reference to the role of non-state actors, in the six Goal areas identified to be reviewed at the HLPF 2019: Quality Education; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Reduced Inequalities; Climate Action; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Partnerships for the Goals. In the process, the reports identify key partnership challenges and possible approaches in moving forward.

As Bangladesh prepares for its second Voluntary National Review (VNR), to be presented at the HLPF 2020, this publication is offered as an input for that preparatory process. It may also provide guidance to the country's development NGOs and private sector for contributing in the HLPF 2020.



bdplatform4sdgs.net



[@BPlatform4SDGs](https://www.facebook.com/BPlatform4SDGs)



[@BPlatform4SDGs](https://twitter.com/BPlatform4SDGs)



9 789843 487490