



Speech of Mr. Neal Walker, UN Resident Coordinator and
Bangladesh Local Consultative Group (LCG) Co-Chair

**Asia Workshop on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation:
Links to the Post-2015 Development Agenda**

25 August 2013 | Dhaka

Chair of this opening session, ERD Secretary, Mr. A. K. Azad
Honourable Minister of Planning, Air Vice-Marshal (Retired) A. K. Khandker, Bir Uttam
Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. AMA Muhith
Honourable Members of Parliament
Delegates from 18 Countries and Governments from Asia and beyond
Colleagues from the Development Partner Community
Representatives from various non-state actors
Distinguished Participants

I am very pleased that I've been invited to speak today. The Workshop is a timely, important and much needed initiative. Looking at the event's objectives, the list of participants, including governments and development partners present, I will suggest three areas of action for the workshop.

But, a few words of introduction:

As you all know the deadline to the MDGs is fast approaching, less than 1000 days to go. Bangladesh has been actively engaged in the global conversation on what comes next. There has been an interactive forum directly engaging citizens, called the *World We Want*, and there's been a series of national consultations. Together, the exercises have helped to define a Bangladeshi consensus on the next development agenda. Overall, it was an immense undertaking and I would like to congratulate the Government of Bangladesh, and Dr. Q. K. Ahmed, who is here with us today, on steering this process successfully. Coming up next, we're pleased that the Prime Minister will participate personally in the upcoming UN General Assembly, putting forward the Bangladeshi positions in the global debate.

As part of this effort, we must also think critically on the implementation framework. The next development paradigm will define "what" we want to achieve in development, our task over these next days is to think about the "how". How do we ensure sustainability of results and aid effectiveness? How do we respond to the changing development landscape? How can we work better, and how can we do this -- together?

Let's start with the bad news: we are all aware that development financing has been declining: OECD figures show a 4% drop in 2012 ODA, a decline that follows a 2% decrease the year before. This marks the first ever drop in aid levels over two consecutive years. It is not acceptable, and the "global financial crisis" is no excuse. We count on your voice to emphasize the crucial importance of untied grant aid in the global equation of development.

But the problem also highlights two things. First, we must use what ODA is available as effectively as possible. Second, let's emphasize the need to strengthen government investments in development against criteria of effectiveness and impact. It is exciting that you will be addressing these very issues in the coming days of this Workshop.

Despite the global trends in ODA, it remains an important source of untied grant aid. The UN here, and in the countries you are visiting us from, remains committed to pushing for the maximum allocation of ODA, for wealthy countries to meet the target of .7 of 1% of GDP in ODA, and we also work hard to bring in the best possible aid for developing countries. What do I mean by that? I mean ODA that is untied, that is clearly linked to priority national objectives, and is effectively targeted for sustainable development results.

In this difficult context, Bangladesh has successfully mobilised resources from its own internal revenues, from new donors and has benefitted, both ways, from South-South cooperation. Private flows in the form of FDI and migrant remittances also help to fill the gap, and contribute to the country's impressive progress towards the MDGs. In every country present today, particularly the countries of Asia, there will be much to share about how to overcome this current situation, and learn from each other's strategies.

Enough on the introductory remarks! Let's recognize fact that traditional ODA can and should continue to play an important role in development, building on and complementing national investments. If we can agree on that, the first area of priority action is clear, for global action. I implore our development partners present here today: Please uphold the commitments you have made both on both the *quantity* of aid and the *quality* of aid. While it is fairly easy to define quantitative targets for aid, it is harder to define what we mean by quality. I hope all of you, in this workshop, will address the specifics of improving aid quality, including eliminating conditionality and building in the flexibility to combat external shocks.

As a second area of priority action for the Governments of the developing countries, I would ask: please don't forget the objective of development: to ensure that all -- and especially the most marginalized groups in any society, have the opportunities to achieve their full potential. Let's recognize the progress that has been made under the MDG paradigm, and let's build on those, into the future. The rising inequality within countries and sub-regions, in so many countries of the world, is a huge concern! Quality public policies, national and international investment, and good governance will be required, working in harmony, to overcome growing inequity and social exclusion. I urge you to ensure that that your own national investments prioritize equitable growth. Use ODA to effectively complement your own investments in the crucial battle to build sustainable and equitable development.

The third priority area for action is for all of us to “walk the talk.”

What approaches are we using? Are we duplicating efforts of other partners? Are we allocating resources effectively? I am positive that we can use this workshop to learn from each other. Conceptually, we all understand aid effectiveness but we must now actually do it. Briefly, I would like to touch on two ways that we are attempting to put our money where our mouth is in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh can be proud of the Joint Cooperation Strategy and the Development Results Framework, negotiated between the Government of Bangladesh and the Development Partners. These were done in 2010 and updated in 2012 defining both what we're trying to achieve, together, and how we work. The two documents are the foundation for mutual accountability and high-level coordination. The Local Consultative Group (the LCG), was established under the JCS and includes 18 working groups, each comprised of a government chair and a development partner co-chair and focused on a specific national development priority. Each group is a forum to facilitate discussion and collaboration, to take decisions and move results in the priority sectors. There is even an Aid Effectiveness Working Group, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the JCS and reporting regularly to the LCG Plenary.

Within the United Nations system, we are also innovating on effectiveness. The UN Development Assistance Framework, our UNDAF, is backed up by an Action Plan, which our UN Team volunteered to do, and that we prepared jointly with the government. Within this Action Plan, we have a single results framework and M&E system that is linked to the government's system. The Action Plan defines very specific outcomes, outputs and indicators within a framework of results-based planning and management. The M&E system is built on an inter-agency M&E group and with indicators linked to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. The M&E system has been established to ensure both situation and performance monitoring. This is an extremely important aspect of the UNDAF, because it holds accountable the whole UN system in a verifiable way – on our progress and performance against this results framework at the end of the timeline. We cannot be effective if we are not accountable.

Ladies and gentlemen, results are dependent not only on frameworks, action plans, and agreements but on the hard work of committed individuals, working in a spirit of collaboration and focused on the outcomes we're trying to achieve. As the title of this workshop explicitly states, we are here for Effective Development **Cooperation**. Every one of us has a part to play! Let's focus in the next few days on defining what's necessary to ensure that aid is, in fact, effective and targeted, that it evolves, adapting to changing circumstances, and that it is receptive to learning. We must think critically not only about 'how we work' but 'how we can work *better*'.

I'd like to give credit to the Government of Bangladesh for organizing this workshop, for their deep commitment to the effectiveness of development cooperation. I would also thank the development partners for supporting this event. I wish you all success in the next few days, and I look forward to the outcomes.

Thank you.