

# The Daily Star

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Workshop On Development Partnership

# A chance for Bangladesh to make its mark

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*The economy has seen good progress over the last one decade, with the help of small businesses. Photo: Star*

A high-level panel of the United Nations released a comprehensive report on the future development path for the globe on May 30—"A new global partnership: eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development".

The report, authored by a panel comprising some eminent politicians, economists, researchers, business leaders and human right activists from around the world, sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030.

In tandem with the considerable progress made in general in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, ranging from poverty reduction to greater access to education, the report has in fact defined the pillars of the next global development framework, called Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The report has come out two years after the global community adopted the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), as an agreed framework for inclusive development cooperation which embraced traditional donors, South-South cooperators, emerging donors, civil society organisations and private sector.

And just last month, the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa hosted the third meeting of the Global Partnership Steering Committee (of which, Bangladesh is a member), where Mexico was confirmed as the host of the first ministerial-level meeting of the global partnership to be held in 2014.

In the midst of such transition in the international development arena, Bangladesh as the member of the aforementioned steering committee is looking to have its fare share by hosting an international workshop themed simultaneously on GPEDC and the development agenda of post-2015.

The event—Asia workshop on the global partnership for effective development cooperation: links to the Post-2015 Development Agenda—to be held from August 25 to 27 would bring together both emerging donors and aid recipients from all across Asia and at the same time members of the Global Partnership Steering Committee, representatives from regional platforms and building blocks as well as delegates from OECD/UNDP joint team supporting the global partnership.

Policymakers and high level officials from the Bangladesh government as well as representatives from resident bilateral and multilateral development partners would also attend the workshop. One notable aspect of this workshop, as suggested by the title of event, is that it is simultaneously addressing two hot topics of the current global development agenda by linking the GPEDC with the post-2015 development agenda.

Secondly, the workshop has correctly underscored the need and scope for having a common voice for the Asian region in development cooperation particularly in the context of transitioning to post-MDG.

It might be mentioned here that beyond Asia, the idea of regional integrity and collaboration in development cooperation is already taking hold. In Africa for instance, the African Union has recently mandated the African Union Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa to come up with an African common position on the post-MDG.

There is obviously a scope for exploring such well established framework for the post 2015 timeframe in the context of Asia. This is because despite its varied cultural and geopolitical setup, most countries in the Asian region are characterised by some common development concerns. The continent is home to some of the world's most dynamic economic hubs together with some of the most impoverished regions. It hosts some of the biggest aid recipient nations along with some of the most important emerging donors.

The future economic course of the region would define the future of the globe in the post-2015 era. Such situation obviously calls for greater knowledge sharing and further exploration of development cooperation opportunities within Asia to ensure more equitable development throughout the region.

Against this backdrop, the stated intention of this workshop is to assist the Asian countries to clarify, take stock and devise future actions to enhance development cooperation particularly in the context of transitioning from the Millennium Development Goals to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In addition, the workshop is expected to yield a common plan of action for Asia in support of the principles embedded in the Busan Partnership at regional level.

To this end, the workshop would discuss the formalisation of a consultative and inclusive regional peer support facility to strengthen mutual collaboration and knowledge transfer between the countries of the Asian region.

The findings of this regional workshop will also be presented in the upcoming Global Partnership Ministerial Meeting to be held in Mexico next year. Thus, these findings would provide also feedback from the Asian region to influence the post-MDG agenda.

As such, Bangladesh is going to take an anchoring role through this event in moving towards greater development cooperation and knowledge sharing within the Asian region through a formal framework.

Again, this workshop would go a long way in incorporating the common development concerns of the Asian region in Post-2015 Development Agenda, which is going to be the tenet of the future development goals of the world in the years to come.

This workshop could also be an opportunity for Bangladesh to showcase its development success to the Asian region and to validate its image as the next Asian Tiger at the regional and global stage.

Because, despite its numerous constraints and challenges, Bangladesh is a success case in various development paradigms, which often remains unnoticed in the global development arena.

This country has already met several MDG parameters, including reduction of poverty gap ratio, attaining of gender parity in education, reduction of child mortality and combating of HIV and

Malaria.

It has also made remarkable strides in poverty reduction, primary school enrolment, lowering the infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio and in improving immunisation coverage. Bangladesh has also been quite successful in meeting the international commitments on aid effectiveness agenda.

This country is one of the pioneers in the Asian region to chalk out its own development result framework, which would enable it to effectively evaluate its sixth Five Year Plan outcomes as well as the future national development plans.

Bangladesh's gradual decrease in the reliance of foreign aid can be another point to showcase, as over the last few decades the country has considerably reduced its dependence on foreign aid, driven by rapidly growing private sector, including RMG, foreign remittance and greater yield in agriculture sector.

In today's world, international development cooperation is no more a concern of mere government parties and development agencies. Since the 2011 Busan conference, the roles of civil society organisations and even private sector have been recognised.

To that end, the workshop is emphasising the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders.

For decades, Bangladesh's role in international development cooperation has largely been defined from the perspective of being an aid recipient nation.

However, in the context of the country's vision 2020, this particular occasion could be seen as a stepping stone in redefining that role where Bangladesh as part of the global emerging nations' club would make its mark in the global development dialogue and policymaking in the world beyond 2015.

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