



বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় সংসদ

BANGLADESH PARLIAMENT

ডেপুটি স্পীকারের কার্যালয়

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Hon. President, Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Hon. Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union,
Hon. Delegates from the IPU Member Countries,
Distinguished Guests,
Media Personalities,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Excellencies,

Assalamualaikum and a very good morning/afternoon. It is a great honor and privilege for me to address you all in the 145 IPU Assembly here in Kigali. The theme of the general debate '*Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*' is very relevant at the present context.

Mr. President,

Gender equality is the state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender. That means women, men, trans or gender-diverse people's rights, responsibilities and opportunities should not be dependent on their assigned gender at birth. Women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and meaningful democracy. It facilitates women's direct engagement in public decision-making and ensures better accountability. Gender equality and political empowerment of women are two key elements for the consolidation of sustainable democracies worldwide.

On the other hand **gender-sensitive parliament** is a parliament that responds to the needs and interests of all the genders including both men and women in its composition, structures, operations, methods and work. It removes the barriers to women's full participation in all aspects of life and ensures effective use of resources towards promoting gender equality. It sets a positive example by promoting gender equality and women's empowerment among society both nationally and internationally.



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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh Constitution ensures equality of opportunity to all citizens. It also ensures that the state shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic inequality between citizen and citizen and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens. In 2011 we had the fifteenth amendment of our Constitution to add a clause 19 (3) *"The State Shall endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity and participation of women in all spheres of national life"*. Article 10, 19, 28 of our Constitution ensures several other rights of women such as to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life; to have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public life and to make special provision in favor of women.

As per our Constitution there are reserved fifty seats exclusively for women members on the basis of proportional representation in the Parliament. But there is no barrier for the participation of women to be elected in any of the 300 general seats of the national parliament. The fifty women MP of the reserved seats are elected by the three hundred members who are directly elected from 300 single territorial constituencies.

Distinguished Guests,

Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 under the visionary leadership of our Father of the Nation **Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**. Soon after the independence Bangabondhu gave the nation a Constitution. Now daughter of Bangabondhu, daughter of democracy and herald of change our Leader of the House Honorable Prime Minister Her Excellency **Sheikh Hasina** has transformed Bangladesh into a middle-income country with her prudent leadership. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led the country to witness the economy growing at a record pace. Her successful leading the nation through pandemic, strengthening health sector to tackle covid-19, poverty alleviation model, successful implementation of the SDG's



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all are acclaimed worldwide. Padma Bridge is now a symbol of pride and dignity of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is now the role model of the developing world.

Her visionary approaches to women empowerment and gender equality earned her global acclamation. Women empowerment is one of the 10 special initiatives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. As recognition of her outstanding performances, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been awarded with prestigious international awards such as South-South Award; Tree of Peace Award and Planet 50-50 Champion by UN WOMEN; Global Women's Leadership Award by Global Women Summit; Lifetime Contribution for Women Empowerment by Institute of South Asian Women in recognition of her leadership in the field of women education and women entrepreneurs promotion in Bangladesh and in Asia and the pacific regions as well.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh Parliament has passed several important acts and in accordance with these acts Bangladesh government has adopted **important policies** which are directly gender-responsive, such as Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000; DNA Act, 2014; Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2018; The Dowry Prohibition Act, 2018; National Women Development Policy, 2011. National Women Development Policy envisions to create a society where men and women have equal opportunities and enjoy all fundamental rights on an equal basis. The policy set 20 goals to empower women in all aspect of life socially, legally, economically and politically. In Bangladesh, there are reserved seats for women at different tiers of local government such as union parishad, upazila parishad, zilla parishad as well as at pourasava and city corporation.



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Mr. President,

Bangladesh Parliament reflects a good sign of women representation. In Bangladesh Parliament our Leader of the House and Prime Minister, Speaker, Leader of the Opposition **all are women**. At the current parliament there are 23 directly elected women MP's. Total number of women members of parliament is 73 which represent about 21 percent in the national parliament. These women MPs' are playing active roles at parliament as the chairmen and the members of different standing committees of Bangladesh Parliament. In order to ensure the participation of women in all spheres of life, current government has started gender responsive budgeting since 2009. Our Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Women and Children Affairs oversees the function of the executives and makes needful recommendations to ensure women empowerment, gender responsive budget and gender equality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Parliamentarians are well-positioned to pursue and effectively address gender issues through their legislative, oversight, budget scrutiny and representation roles. In order to mainstream gender equality concerns, the role of parliamentary committees, women's caucuses and other concerned parliamentary mechanisms are very important. Parliament plays a key role in monitoring and implementing existing and new legislation. Coordination and partnerships with all stakeholders can make the laws fruitful.

Ending violence against women requires the full engagement of all sectors of society. Parliamentarians may take the opportunity to bring police, prosecutors, judges, health care providers, social workers and religious and community leaders on board to wage the battle together and hold each other accountable. They can also take part for setting the budget for the elimination of violence against women.



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Our Members of Parliament made a concerted effort to raise awareness regarding the girls' education to prevent child marriage in Bangladesh. Under the leadership of our Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh Parliament is committed to integrating gender equality and women's empowerment. Under direct supervision of Honorable Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP Bangladesh Parliament formed a high level committee named Bangladesh Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (BAPPD) to act on three important issues such as child marriage, maternal health and youth development.

Excellencies,

To conclude, I would like to say that as parliamentarians we have a vital role to play in ensuring a meaningful and balanced debate on gender equality and women empowerment issues. We should work with parliamentarians around the world in a coherent and practical way with a consensus to address these issues fruitfully.

Thank you all. Joy Bangla.

Md. Shamsul Haque Tuku, MP
Deputy Speaker
Bangladesh Parliament
Dhaka. Bangladesh.