

## **National Statement of Commitment-Bangladesh**

The Government of Bangladesh is committed to achieve the SDG4 targets. Our progress has been disrupted by the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and Ministry of Education (covering Secondary and Higher Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Madrasha Education) took several initiatives to address the learning loss encountered by children at all stages of the education journey. Policies, actions and activities taken in the last six years have been reviewed in the context of COVID-19 to implement and achieve the Global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Bangladesh continues in its leading role in the SDG4 High Level Steering Committee. In the second Asia-Pacific Regional Education Ministerial Conference (APREMC II) in Bangkok and the Pre-Summit on Transforming Education at UNESCO HQ, the Government of Bangladesh reaffirmed its commitment to inclusive quality education for all children focusing on gender, early years and lifelong learning, digital transformation and sustainable financing. Concurrent to this, the importance of effective mechanisms for cooperation, strengthened collaboration and investment in the education sector to the global education leaders were also emphasized.

In response to the call of UN Secretary General regarding Transforming Education we consulted with the education stakeholders to outline our vision and targeted actions:

### **1. Recovery from COVID-19 disruption [short-term]:**

We will continue to address the learning recovery from COVID-19 disruption and ensure learning continuity through the following initiatives and targeted actions:

- 1.1. We will prioritize and continue to **adopt and adapt the distance learning** modalities, resource hub and development of digital contents and other forms of remote learning modalities that were introduced during COVID-19 school closures. We will also continue to utilize social media platforms that were widely used by teachers, parents, and students for online learning.
- 1.2. We are continuing implementation of a COVID-19 School Sector Response and Recovery Plan to ensure **safe reopening and operation of schools**. Major actions undertaken include – Health and hygiene supplies, Vaccination program for the students above 5 years; teacher’s recruitment and capacity building on learning recovery and continuity, mental health and psychosocial support, adolescent’s nutrition; and establishing Real Time Monitoring (RTM) mechanism to monitor and track results. We will build on these and continue to expand access to education and support learning.
- 1.3. **To catch up on learning and recover learning loss**, we have revised the pedagogical approach through a condensed curriculum with accelerated and innovative modalities. The introduction of Home-based assignments in secondary education

had a positive impact on learning, with 93% students participating in this exercise. We will integrate this along with diagnostic assessment mechanism and remedial strategies within regular teaching learning processes to address the learning loss challenges in future. We have enrolled 600,000 out of school children in Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) from December 2021 and will continue to do so to reduce the number of out of school children.

- 1.4. A study by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF confirms that although there was significant educational disruption at the primary level, it was minimum at the secondary level. On the basis of the study findings we have already made a plan to mitigate the learning gaps in general and the learning losses due to COVID-19 in particular. The universities have their own plans to mitigate their students' learning gaps and losses.
- 1.5. We will continue to provide mobile cash incentives introduced during COVID-19 for the **most marginalized** families. We will enhance the ICT facilities and connectivity to ensure that the disadvantaged students enjoy the same benefit of distance learning and are not left behind. Financial security and social recognition of teachers will also be prioritized.

## 2. Transforming education [medium-longer-term]

- 2.1. **Curriculum reform:** The government believes that education is a public good and has to be made affordable for all. Transformation rather than reform of education for ensuring sustainable future has been indispensable. In this connection, Bangladesh has endorsed a new national curriculum framework from pre-primary to Grade XII addressing the needs and demand of 21 century, 4iR, vision 2041 and disaster and climate change issues. Experiential learning, interdisciplinary approach and Formative assessment have been adopted as key pedagogical and assessment approaches to rollout the new curriculum nationally from 2023. The new curriculum has an emphasis on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and education for sustainable development to prepare learners as a global citizen to cope with a rapidly changing Bangladesh and world at large.
- 2.2. **Digital transformation:** With the advancement of technology and experiences during COVID 19, digital pedagogy, engagement of EdTech start up, use of social media and different platforms, digital literacy and skills, innovation by teachers, students and parents are some of the new elements that have been incorporated into the education system. Blended approach of learning and use of online communication have drastically changed the traditional way of communication and teaching learning that will be integrated and emphasized during implementation of new curriculum.
- 2.3. **The Blended Education Master Plan** and the national curriculum reform encourage a range of innovative transformations. The Blended Education Master Plan consists

of five key elements-Teaching-learning activities, Educational Content and Resources, Assessments, Teacher Professional Development, Policy, Management and Partnerships. Government will prioritize implementation of these reforms with appropriate resource allocation

- 2.4. **Technical and vocational education** has already been prioritized in line with the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework. We will stress on skills development of the students and help them for smooth transition from education to work.
- 2.5. Efforts have been given to **transform higher education** considering industry linkage and future needs and demands of the world of work. Investment in research has already been strengthened and will be continued to do so in future considering the adaptation with the rapid change.
- 2.6. We commit to build a highly skilled and well-recognized teaching workforce with adequate funding, quality pre-service and in-service education and training, and continuous professional development as well as social recognition of teachers.

### **3. Review of national education targets and benchmarks:**

- 3.1. We developed the National Indicator Framework for Education comprising global, thematic, and national SDG 4 indicators. We developed the benchmark values for seven SDG 4 indicators in reference to national education planning documents as part of the global benchmarking practice. We will continue to monitor, review and report our progress towards SDG 4.
- 3.2. Benchmarking targets should be established based on the data within the system/country. As part of the global practice, we will set up the targets for 2025 and 2030. Once overall national and district-wide targets are set, Upazilas can be consulted and asked what they need in order to achieve district-based targets.

### **4. Ensuring sustainable public financing:**

- 4.1. The government is committed to increasing the budget allocation in proportion to GDP as committed in the 8th Five Year Plan.
- 4.2. There is an increased effort in strengthening the Annual Development Programme to ensure timely disbursement and quality spending of the resources. We also promote decentralization and effective stakeholders' engagement at different levels for effective planning and implementation to enhance answerability towards value for money.
- 4.3. To address equity issues, Bangladesh has increased needs-based financing to reduce the digital divide, gender gap in TVET and STEM and provided other social safety net programs including the stipend, free textbooks, nutritious school meal, etc. and adopted innovative means of budget execution to ensure transparency and accountability.

- 4.4. We need sustainable funding in education to maintain the progress made in SDG4. Education funding is sourced mainly through tax revenues, but we need to improve international cooperation for financing in education as well as strengthen national resource mobilization and national capacity to increase the efficacy of investment.
- 4.5. We must encourage the developed economies to meet the benchmark of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) as Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries to enhance human capital development. Multilateral agencies should play a key role to renew commitment to global cooperation in support of education.
- 4.6. There can be increased inter-ministerial collaboration, such as indicated through the planning of the Blended Education Master Plan – since educational investments can come from multiple ministries. Government is encouraging the Non-Resident Bangladeshi (NRB) to finance education sector also.

The government acknowledges that learning needs to be expanded to our social and cultural spaces beside school premises so that our children and adults have the lifelong learning opportunities. We must urgently address the challenges to forge a new social contract for education which will help us to shape socially just and inclusive shared future.