

Marupalash report:

Dear Readers,

Since the appointment of Dr. Momen as the Permanent Representative of BD to the UN, BD saw a long road of successes in the UN corridor. Below is a short list of events our Mission in UN achieved during tenure of less than 1 year under the able leadership of Momen. PM Sheikh Hassina herself selected Dr. Momen for the post. It is now proved that her selection was not that wrong. She chose the right man to the right place. It is understood why the carrier diplomats of foreign Ministry should not be happy over this appointment. But it is not understood why some sections of US Awami Leaguers are so displeased over him! This is a big jigsaw puzzle no doubt.

Readers are requested to glance over the list & judge by themselves. Thanks.

Editor, Marupalash.

12 June 2010.

Activities of the Bangladesh Mission at the UN in FY 2009-2010

- Bangladesh Mission at the UN remained seized with myriads of activities pivoting around a wide range of UN issues including political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and peace-keeping in nature. Human Rights, MDGs, climate change, financial meltdown, counter-terrorism, food insecurity, gender mainstreaming, peacekeeping and peace building architecture are now-a-days have become cross-cutting issues. Under changing circumstances and in the face of new and emerging challenges, the scope of the activities of the Bangladesh UN Mission has increased many folds. We have been actively associated with all UN proceedings with a view to protecting and promoting our national interests. The Permanent Mission has consistently been working to portray a positive image of Bangladesh at the international level and now in the UN corridors, Bangladesh is considered as a 'model' for developing countries. The public statements of the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, UNICEF Executive Director Dr. Tony Lake, development economist Professor Jeffery Sachs testified the above contention. They applauded Bangladesh's success story and its leadership's commitment to help improve the life of the poor of Bangladesh. Newspapers also helped us.

- *New York Times* in its write-up on October 29, 2009 stated that 'since 9/11 the United States has spent \$15 billion in Pakistan mostly on military support and today Pakistan is more unstable than ever. In contrast, Bangladesh which until 1971 was a part of Pakistan, has focused on education in away that Pakistan never did. Bangladesh now has more girls in high school than boys. In contrast, only 3 percent of Pakistani women in tribal areas are literate. Those educated Bangladeshi women joined the labor force, laying the foundation for a garment industry and working in civil society groups like BRAC and Grameen Bank. That led to a virtuous spiral of development, jobs, lower birth rates, education and stability. That's one reason AL Qaeda is holed up in Pakistan, not in Bangladesh and it's a reminder that education can transform societies" (October 29, 2009, New York Times).

"If there's another terror attack on the U. S. it may be planned in those tribal areas (of Pakistan) but almost certainly not in Bangladesh" (March 3, 2010, New York Times).

- Bangladesh has become a leader in women empowerment, micro financing, non-formal education, NGO activities and it is a lead-sponsor of a resolution called "Culture of peace" and another resolution on Poverty Eradication in the General Assembly in line with Honorable Prime Minister's vision in this noble venture.

• Hon'ble PM's visit to Climate Summit and 64th UN General Assembly (Sept 22-28, 2009)

In its 34 years of UN Membership, Bangladesh Head of the government hardly got so much high level exposure at the UN General Assembly. For example, (a) Bangladesh Prime Minister was the lead speaker at the Top 10 Troops Contributing Countries Special meeting that President Obama conducted; (b) arrangements were made so that her seat was placed next to President Obama and PM of Japan at the Climate Summit dinner at the UN; (c) Honorable PM was given a leadership role at the Food Security Conference where only two Heads of Government, Bangladesh and Rwanda were honored to be seated in the podium along with co-sponsors Secretary Hillary Clinton and UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon. Again, Bangladesh PM was a lead speaker and her policy and tract-record of promoting 'self sufficiency in food' was highly appreciated by all.

- * President Obama accepted her invitation to visit Bangladesh.
- * She attended 2 Business/Investors Seminars. As a consequence, JP Morgan/ Chase Bank will open its 1st branch in Dhaka soon.
- * Inaugurated the New Bangladesh Permanent Mission Office, 1st ever in New York.
- * Delivered speech in Bangla at the UNGA and proposed to make Bangla a UN language

UN Elections

We are currently elected member of 32 UN Committees/ Commissions/ Bodies/Caucuses---highest in the recorded history. A list is given below. We did not lose in any single election yet and more importantly, we got highest votes in few elections which show that the global community has confidence on Bangladesh and its leadership. Personal sacrifice of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (her various ordeals) and the recent country-wide general election of December 2008 which was 'fair, transparent, credible and all inclusive' helped achieving global respect for Bangladesh. In addition, government's strong resolve against fanaticism and deep commitment to help improve its economy made it a 'development model' for LDCs. In spite of global financial meltdown, Bangladesh being an impoverished country with highest density of population in the world could maintain its growth rate owing to its inherent dynamism is a reason for such positive perception. Nation's image has been restored. No wonder, *New York Times* (October 29, 2009) commented that although \$15 billion has been donated to Pakistan since 9/11, it is still suffering instability while Bangladesh, owing to its emphasis on women education is a success story.

Organization/Body

Terms

1. ECOSOC	2010-12
2. International Maritime Organization Council	2010-11
3. Committee for the United Nations Population Award	2010-12
4. President, UNICEF Executive Board	2010
5. President, Disarmament Board	Jan, 2010
6. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)	2010-13
7. Chairman, NPT Credentials Committee	2010
8. Chair, Asian Group	May 2010
9. Coordinator, NAP Peacekeeping Caucus	2010
10. UNDP/UNFPA/WEP Executive Board	2011-14

11.	Programme Coordination Board (PCB) of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/ AIDS (UNAIDS) for the term 2011-13	
12.	Human Rights Council	2009-12
13.	Executive Board of UNESCO	2009-13
14.	Organizational Committee of the UN Peace-building Commission	2009-10
15.	Commission for Social Development (CSocD)	2009-13
16.	Commission on Population and Development	2009-13
17.	Governing Council of United Nation	2009-11
18.	Environmental Programme (UNEP)	2009-11
19.	UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)	2009-12
20.	International Maritime Organization Council	2008-09
21.	Commission on Sustainable Development	2008-11
22.	Committee for Programme and Coordination	2008-10
23.	Governing Body of ILO (titular membership)	2008-11
24.	Executive Board of WHO	2008-11
25.	Executive Council of International Seabed Authority (ISBA)	2009-12
26.	Executive Board of UNICEF	2009-11
27.	Postal Operations Council of UPU	2009-12
28.	Council of Administration of UPU	2009-12
29.	International Civil Service Commission	2009-12
30.	Friends of Climate Change	2009-10
31.	Friends of Trafficking	2010
32.	UNDP Technical Advisory Panel on MDGs	2010

- **Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs):** As one of the top Troop Contributing Country (top in Police contribution, 2nd in troops contribution), Bangladesh has been consistently providing at least 10% of the peacekeepers to the UN Peacekeeping Missions. Bangladesh has so far participated in 32 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in 24 different countries with approximately 83,000 personnel since 1988. Currently nearly 12,000 personnel are deployed in 12 UNPKOs. New additions are placement of one Frigate, off-shore patrol vehicle and 9 helicopters. Bangladesh has earned great reputation by sending all-female police contingent recently. Our current move is gradually up scaling our civilian presence in the peace building operations which, is arguably, going to be the future genre of UN Peace building venture. This year Bangladesh earned nearly Tk 4500 crore from peacekeeping operations.

- **Recruitment at Senior Management Posts:** Despite our large contributions to the Peacekeeping operations, Bangladesh has been underrepresented particularly at the senior management levels. This was underpinned by our Honorable Prime Minister during her speech at the 64th UNGA session last year. Embolden by her vision we channeled our persuasion and in the course of last year, Bangladesh could obtain the post of a USG & SRSG (Ameerah Haq) in Timor-Leste, a Force Commanders in Liberia and Ivory Coast and the head of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia. In addition, Bangladesh could double their positions in the DPKO HQs in New York. Our delegation has been active in the relevant committee to ensure Bangladesh's equitable representation both in the field as well at the HQs. Bangladesh also plays a constructive role in the activities of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), which conducts a comprehensive review of all issues relating to peacekeeping and sets further guidelines for the peacekeeping operations.

- **Maritime Boundary Disputes**

Bangladesh for the first time approached International Maritime Boundary and ITLOs of the UN and filed petitions to resolve outstanding disputes of continental shelf's with that of India and Myanmar.

- **Special National Events:**

The Mission observed many national events in the most befitting manner such as Bijoy Dibosh, Shaheed Dibosh and International Mother Language Day, Pohela Baisak, Bangabandhu Jomno Debosh, and Nazrul-Rabindro Joyontee for the first time in the Bangladesh Mission in last 35 years. Except Independence Day (March 26), no other days were ever been observed at the Bangladesh Mission before.

In each of these events, PRs, Ambassadors, and other diplomats of many countries plus American nationals that helped our Liberation War in 1971 participated and they spoke high of Bangladesh. For example, at the Bijoy Debosh event, PR of India Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri stated 'to my knowledge this is the 1st time since independence of Bangladesh, Bangladesh has invited me and the people of India to share the joy of Bangladesh victory' and he read out Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's statement on the recognition of Bangladesh on Dec 6, 1971. Similar comments were made by representatives of U. K. and Bhutan.

The Bangladesh Mission requested the government to especially recognize (1) Senator Edward Kennedy, (2) George Harrison, (3) Joan Baez, (4) Pandit Rabishankar, (5) Professor Robert Rhines and (6) Archer K. Blood for their services in 1971.

The Mission approached the UN Secretary General to allow it to establish (1) a Shaheed Minar inside the UN premises depicting International Mother Language Day and Cultural Diversity, and (2) a Bangladesh Lounge. The management is considering its proposals. Mission remained seized with its endeavor to establish Bangla as an official language of the UN. The Mission also arranged a Counter Terrorism Workshop in Dhaka with a view to establish a Counter Terrorism Center in Bangladesh and sent a team of legal experts from the Transitional Justice to Dhaka to assist capacity building especially for the 'war crime tribunal prosecutors' of Bangladesh. A write-up of Bangladesh Ambassador and PR Dr. Abdul Momen on Senator Edward Kennedy's death was published alongside with that of Presidents Obama, Clinton, Carter, and other leaders.