Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability, and Decent Work 2016

SPEECH
BY
HE Sheikh Hasina
Hon'ble Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Osmani Smriti Auditorium, Dhaka.
Sunday
27 Aghrahyay, 1423
11 December, 2016
Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The chair,
Director General, ILO, Mr. Guy Bernard Ryder,
Colleagues,
Distinguished Guests and Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alikum and a Very Good Morning.

I welcome you all at the “Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability, and Decent Work 2016”.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Guy Bernard Ryder, Director General of ILO and Ms. Linda Kromjong, Secretary General of IOE for being present in this summit.

December is the month of our victory. I pay my deep homage to the Greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with profound gratitude the 4-national leaders, 3 million martyrs and 200 thousand women, who lost their innocence during the war of liberation in 1971.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh is a densely populated country with limited resources. Agriculture was once the main driving force of our economy. But with the growing increase of population it became difficult to meet the demand of huge population from sustenance agriculture. As a result, our economy has gradually been shifted to manufacturing and service sectors.

It is essential to establish mills, factories and expand service sectors in order to meet the demand of employment of huge population entering into the workforce every year. At present, 54% of our GDP
comes from service sector, 30% from industries and 16% from agriculture.

We need skilled manpower in every sector to build Bangladesh as middle income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable improvement in Human Resource Development Index for last few years. The demand of skilled manpower is changed with the rapid modification of technology. We have taken the initiative to fulfill the demand.

There is no alternative to skill training to create skilled manpower. The National Skill Development Policy 2011 was formulated to transform huge population into skilled manpower prepared for international labour market. With the support of development partners, our government has been working relentlessly to implement this with our limited resources.

Technical and financial assistance from ILO and other development partners are playing a significant role to implement the government's long-term technical and vocational education and training reform program.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh has been successful in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. There is now a challenge for us to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. Increasing the supply of skilled manpower, creating new employment and income earnings capacity will help us alleviate poverty and other social indices to the desired level. I firmly believe, with our united efforts, we shall also be successful in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.
To create new employment, our government has been working relentlessly with new initiatives to encourage trade facilitation, reducing the cost of capital, infrastructure, uninterrupted power supply and so on.

We have taken initiative to establish 100 Economic Zones across the country. To set up mills and factories, initiative has been taken to establish land bank. The government has been working for the establishment of new industries, port facilities and the creation of regional and sub-regional cooperation.

To bring dynamism in the implementation of the government's activities, the process of digitalization is underway.

The harmonized industrial relations, workers' rights and the welfare of labor has embarked on various programs such as the formation of labour welfare foundation fund, insurance programs for workers in the informal sector.

Safety and Inspection Department has been strengthened to ensure the better working conditions of factories. The Wage Commission is strengthened.

The workers in Export Processing Zones got the right of Trade Union. The Bangladesh Labour Act has been amended to protect labour's rights.

Our government has been implementing various programs aimed at improving education and skills such as technical and vocational education and training system reform, action-tailored and internationally recognized training system, new workplace skills training in the scope of expansion.

The expansion of vocational education and training, the creation of new infrastructure, modernization and capacity building of the institutions growth, the disabled and women friendly environment are
taken care of by forming National Skill Development Council (NSDC). Our government has taken steps for the formation of the National Human Resources Development Fund for simplification of funding.

Steps have been taken to strengthen NSDC secretariat to form the National Skill Development Authority. The coordination of skill development, improvement, uniform training program formulation and evaluation system will be taken care of by NSDC.

**Distinguished Participants**

Climate change, technological change, mechanization of agriculture and conversion of labour demand are heavily influencing the national economy. The increase of efficiency of manpower is undeniable.

I sincerely hope that the development partners will increase their cooperation in future as in the past in the arena of efficiency improvement, increase of reliability and creation of decent work environment.

I would like to request local and international entrepreneurs to come forward with respective development of industry’s environment, ensuring labour rights, occupational health and safety, employ more women and the disabled workers, welfare measures for workers, provide support for the development of labour skills and creation of new employment.

Our exports are increasing day by day mainly from garments and other limited export oriented industries. We should diversify our products and expansion of market for our future economy and jobs.

Our government has taken various schemes and provided incentive to increase the demand for our products and to expand the market. Only
incentives are not enough, we also need to invest more in capital and technology and human resource development.

Most of our product including garments are trapped by low-wage, low quality, low cost, etc. We have to come out from this situation. At the same time, we have to think how to increase the value addition of our products. If we update our garment product design and marketed by ourselves with self-initiative, we would be able add more value.

We need to prepare ourselves with innovation, creativity and customized production capacity for the future. Only then, we can sustain in the world products and Supply Chain of services. Keeping this fact, we need to match our education system with efficiency.

The national capacity will have to be achieved by skilled labour force as well as through developing skilled managers and skilled professionals. The university-level education system must adjust according to the needs of industry. Universities will have to start making the industry needs skilled managers with proper education and training systems.

I hope that participating experts will help deliver their valuable opinions on skill, development, the creation of decent work and employability in the technical sessions in order to resolve the present challenges.

With this, I declare Bangladesh “Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability, and Decent Work 2016” open and wish it a great success of this Summit.

Thank you all again.

Khoda Hafez.
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.