

Transcript: H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations

Panelists, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Bangladesh is happy to join as a co-sponsor of this event organized by UNICEF's Early Childhood Peace Consortium. This is a commendable initiative and we appreciate its relevance and its activities. We find this event to be very timely, as it focuses on the perspective and importance of ECD as well as policy and programming that seek to protect children from the consequences of war and violent conflict. Our special thanks to Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury for his untiring work in this regard.

The UN General Assembly Resolution on the Culture of Peace, of which Bangladesh is a lead sponsor, noted the work of Early Childhood Peace Consortium, adopted last December at its 70th session. Ladies and gentlemen, the number of refugee children is growing worldwide, and therefore their needs must be addressed. Children have been severely neglected in the response to the massive ongoing refugee crisis. Significant numbers of children are deprived of the most basic human rights. Ladies and gentlemen, children are our future, and they're also the foundation of sustainable development. We should be compassionate to the children who are under migrant and refugee situations, who have been suffering and who are being deprived of all services for which they are not responsible. Unless the international community provides adequate programs for children, achieving the target of ..., particularly related to children, will be hard to come by.

Excellencies, ECD alleviates childhood trauma, unwanted ... stress, and deprivation, thereby creating the human and social capital needed for development. It protects children from exploitation and helps them become productive youth with increased access to livelihood and Bangladesh, as the current chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and as a leading country in promoting the safe and orderly migration, we believe that the focus on the needs of the children, particularly in the context of migration and refugee situations, should garner greater attention from the international community.

Subsequent to the proposals mentioned in para. 82 of the recently adopted New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, I would like to highlight the following points to ensure ECD in migration and refugee situations:

- 1) We have to recognize the rights guaranteed to all children irrespective of their migration status according to the international human rights and humanitarian law, in particular by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 2) We need to promote a child-centered approach in migration policy; the best interests of the child should be the primary consideration.
- 3) We should acknowledge the critical importance of the earliest years of life (birth through 5) and prioritize ECD programs and services.
- 4) We should recognize the high payoffs and low costs of implementing ECD and the sustainable outcomes for refugee children.

- 5) Last, but not least, ECD should get higher priority and attention not only from UNICEF but also from the UN General Assembly in view of its substantive importance.

Ladies and gentlemen, at the end I'd like to say that 2030 agenda for sustainable development provides a rationale and a framework for investing in early childhood programs and services. Therefore, it should be our common and collective endeavor to ensure ECD to all children of the world irrespective of their migration status, to ensure inclusive development where no child is left behind. I wish today's discussion a very fruitful and forward-looking outcome, and I thank you all.