

**Statement by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina on
South-South and Triangular Cooperation in**

Scaling up Innovation in Public Service Delivery

(UN HQ, NY 20 September 2016)

*Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my pleasure to join you all. I am delighted to see my colleagues – both from the North and the South – present here to share their valuable perspectives.

The South-South and Triangular Co-operations have demonstrated their effectiveness to inspire international solidarity in achieving the MDGs, and hopefully will do the same, if not more, in achieving the SDGs. In last year's UNGA side-event on "Transitioning from MDGs to SDGs", we expressed such hopes. This, however, calls for sincere commitments, deeper engagements and action oriented approaches among the parties involved in this cooperative mechanism.

Excellencies,

In Bangladesh, we have brought transformative changes to the government as we respond to rapidly rising expectations of our citizens in the context of evolving development scenario. We are committed to developing a citizen-centric and inclusive government. Our approach is three-pronged.

The first prong is to bring intense focus to develop the innovation capacity of our providers, our government officers. Thousands of officers have gone through our signature 'Empathy training' to eliminate steps in age-old processes, thereby reducing time, cost and the number of visits – known as TCV – to access services by the common citizen. We call this 'Service Process Simplification' which has taken the government officers by storm in the last three years, and has recently been mandated in our Annual Performance Agreement for all agencies.

The second prong is to utilize the near-ubiquitous presence of ICTs to decentralize service delivery through our vision of establishing a middle-income country by 2021. We call this vision 'Digital Bangladesh'. We have introduced thousands of one stop service delivery outlets, known as "Digital Centres" to bring

both public and private services to the doorsteps of millions of underserved. We have created government information portals, virtually uniting 43,000 government offices.

The third and final prong is to take an increasingly whole-of-government approach to solving problems rather than the traditional silo approach from ministries and agencies. The a2i programme at my office is orchestrating many of these changes by joining forces with the Cabinet Division, Local Government Division, ICT Division and Posts and Telecommunications Division, among other agencies. I would like to express my deep gratitude to UNDP and USAID for their support in this endeavour.

This three-pronged approach has led to creation of hundreds of innovations that ensured qualitative changes in sectors like agriculture, health, education and land use. Service Innovation Fund has been launched to support innovators to rapidly prototype solutions to development problems. Social media platforms are being used by all districts of the country to redress citizens' grievances in an unprecedented way. These fascinating changes have not only made public service delivery efficient and cost effective but also guaranteed greater transparency, accountability and quality of the service. This has contributed to strengthening of trust and confidence between the government and the citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Attaining an equitable and sustainable development would remain a distant reality, if we fail to ensure governance and encourage innovation. Bangladesh has already signed MoUs with Maldives and Bhutan to collaborate on promoting and scaling up public service innovations. In this context, we propose to establish a 'South-South Network of Public Organizations' to develop a broader understanding and exchange of public sector innovations among the global South. It would also facilitate generating ideas, sharing experiences and learning from each other. I urge my friends from the South to positively consider this proposal and friends from the North to support this initiative within the Agenda 2030 framework.

I thank you all.
