

## Current Status of ICT Development in Bangladesh

Statement delivered by ATM Ataur Rahman, Secretary, Bangladesh Parliament  
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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.

Honourable President,  
Respected Parliamentarians,  
Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum and Very good morning.

At the outset I on behalf of Bangladesh Parliament would like to congratulate the Eduskunta of Finland on celebration of the centenary of parliamentary practice and a universal and equal franchise in Finland last year.

2. I would also like to express my heartiest thanks and profound gratitude to the host country Finland for organizing the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of International Parliamentarians' Association for Information Technology (IPAIT), and providing us warm hospitality since our arrival in this beautiful city of Helsinki.

3. It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for me to have an opportunity to say a few words about the current status of ICT in Bangladesh. You know that Bangladesh is a fast growing developing country in Asia having a multiparty parliamentary system of Government. The People's Republic of Bangladesh is making all-out efforts for ICT development for enhancing overall socio-economic and political development.

4. As regards Human Competency and Skill Development in ICT and creation of learning environment in the Information Society, Bangladesh has included ICT course in all secondary schools curriculum. Initiatives have also been taken to develop a talent pool of citizens in ICT sector through arranging training and diploma programs with minimum fees by different government

organizations. Steps have also been taken to educate Parliamentarians by their capacity building and government officials of different categories in ICT field by incorporating ICT related modules in different training programs like foundation training, ACAD training, Senior Staff Course etc.

5. Many Universities, both public and private, in Bangladesh have introduced under-graduate and post-graduate courses in Computer Science or Engineering discipline to develop a large pool of ICT professionals of international standard. Besides, using the communication and media based facilities, Bangladesh Open University -a Government managed University, has introduced ICT modules in different disciplines in distance learning mode.

6. As regards Information Security as a civil skill, Bangladesh has introduced ICT-based Information System. As a result, the management authorities are now more capable of improving the security of their corporate data by adopting various redundancy and backup policies.

7. As regards Democracy and Civil Rights, Bangladesh has allowed/provided access to information for all citizens in order to ensure their democratic and civil rights in the Information Society. By publishing various public documents like government forms, applications, reports, tender documents etc. in the website, Bangladesh has ensured such access to information for all citizens. Most of the government and semi-government organizations are now publishing their tender documents in their websites in order to ensure transparency and accountability. Some government organizations have introduced “on-line file tracking system” in order to empower citizens to know the progress of their applications.

8. Besides, several pioneering steps have been taken and future action plans have been made by Bangladesh to bring the country in the Information and Knowledge arena, such as :-

- (1) Ministry of Science and Technology has been restructured as Ministry of Science and ICT;

- (2) A high-power ICT Task Force has been created;
- (3) A National ICT Policy has been formulated;
- (4) A project has been set up in Prime Minister's Office to promote and oversee ICT activities in different Government organizations;
- (5) All Ministries, Departments and other subordinate offices of the government of Bangladesh have been instructed to launch their own websites and publish documents related with public interest;
- (6) Steps have been taken to adopt an ICT Act by Bangladesh Parliament;
- (7) Bangladesh has recently joined the Information Super Highway through fiber optic backbone ensuring high bandwidth/high equipments among the citizens;
- (8) Tax and VAT have been exempted/reduced from various ICT equipments to ensure their higher usage by the citizens;
- (9) Communication has been made easier and cheaper by expansion of telecommunication infrastructure;
- (10) Mass people at coastal regions are now more prepared to fight against sudden natural disaster as they have been provided ICT-enabled system resulting in ready access to latest information; and
- (11) Rural people are using the communication technology as a tool to fight poverty, as now they have easy access to the market situation of their products.

In this connection, I would like to mention the name of Great Bangladeshi Economist Professor Dr. Mohammad Yunus, who along with his Grameen Bank have recently been awarded Nobel Peace Prize for his outstanding contribution in the field of micro credit without collateral and paper documents. Professor Yunus is also a pioneer of introducing ICT in Bangladesh through Grameen Phone facilities provided to Grameen Bank Share holders being 100% women working at about 67000 villages all over Bangladesh. This

made a silent revolution in the field of ICT in rural Bangladesh. With this, I would like to conclude.

Thank you for your kind attention. Thank you very much.

Allah Hafez.