



## Youth Conference 2018 Bangladesh and Agenda 2030: Aspirations of the Youth

### Concept Note

#### A. Background

Bangladesh is now in the journey of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The core essence of the SDGs is to *Leave No One Behind* (LNOB). The goals and targets of the SDGs are ambitious and interconnected. The 2030 Agenda identifies youth as one of the vulnerable groups which at the same time have the potential to arise as the driving force of any development approach.

The SDGs recognise the need of providing a nurturing environment to the youth generation through ensuring quality education and training, and decent jobs. So that they can apprehend the full realisation of their rights and capabilities. Achieving this global agenda will require the knowledge, innovation and enthusiasm of the dynamic youth force.

It is necessary to have strong and effective partnerships between young people and all implementing stakeholders. More than ten goals of the SDGs are directly related to the youth. The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) identified 86 indicators, among the 232 of the SDGs, which are relevant and provide information on the development of the youth.

The *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*, acknowledges the fact that the youth cohort are the major beneficiaries and stakeholders of 2030 Agenda, as well as the other development aspirations. The youth of Bangladesh have become increasingly visible and effectively active in influencing national policy with new ideas, philosophy and technological expertise. They have set their marks in international arena as well. Pro-actively they are engaging themselves in shaping the development of Bangladesh using new tools of communications.

They have the capacity to bring fresh perspectives to the present development approach and through critical thinking, innovation and their own style of communication, they can drive changes in their communities and countries as the future leaders. In case of SDGs, the youth generation has huge role to play, for instance, in advocating for the climate actions, influencing policymaking at the education sector and on several issues, like gender and inequalities and introducing new dimensions in the development approach through entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership.

According to the *National Youth Policy 2016* all Bangladeshi citizens aging 18-35 years shall be treated as youth. The *Citizen's Platform* fully complies with the national policy and considers the 'youth cohort' above of all kinds of discriminations. The *Citizen's Platform* observes that it will not be possible to fulfil the pledge of LNOB if we cannot ensure inclusion with active participation of youth (from/with gender diversity, disability, ethnic/religious minority and all kinds of vulnerable groups including refugees,

geographically or professionally lagged behind community etc.) in the SDGs implementation process.

The 'Youth' as the key actors of delivering the SDGs are facing various challenges of the implementation process. The youth are still experiencing discrimination, limited political inclusion, poverty, limited access to quality education, decent jobs, proper health systems and sanitation etc. Most importantly they are not completely aware about their rights, opportunities and responsibilities. These challenges need to be addressed to smoothen the SDG journey.

As may be noted, Bangladesh's Labour Force Surveys (LFSs) define youth population belonging to the 15-24 years age group. According to the LFS 2016-17, out of 109.1 million working age population, youth constitutes 41.3 million (about 37.8 per cent). Besides, the youth comprises 18.4 million (29.0 per cent) of total labour force (63.5 million) and 18.0 million (29.5 per cent) of total employed population (60.8 million) [BBS 2018]. Moreover, about 30.0 per cent of youth (12.3 million) are not in employment, education and training. This generation needs to be engaged with the development process and, their voices need to be recognised in the policymaking.

The *Platform* believes, the role of young people and their organisations, in implementing SDGs, must be recognised as a critical one and their voices need to be reflected in national policies. The core intention behind organising this conference is to bring forward the youth perspectives on the new global development agenda in Bangladesh context.

## **B. Objectives and expected outcomes**

The conference will be organised with three major objectives-

- Improving awareness and knowledge among the youth, both in rural and urban, about the SDGs and their roles in the implementation process;
- Providing a Platform for the youth of Bangladesh to showcase and explore their aspirations as regards national development; and,
- Exploring the youth agenda in the context of the upcoming policy discussions at national and local levels.

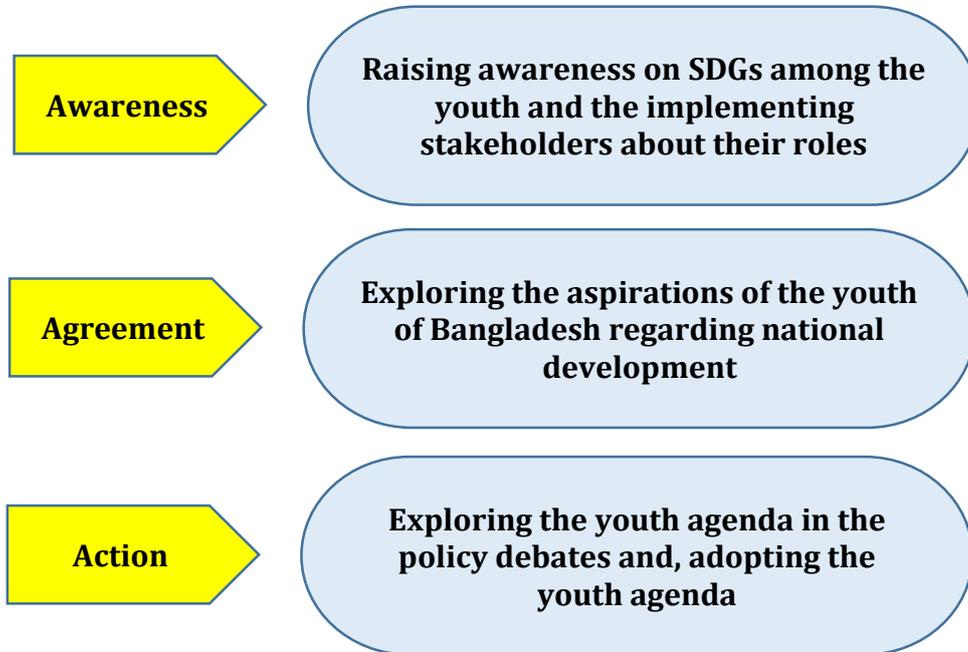
A detailed design of the conference will be prepared in due course and, will be reviewed and validated with the participation of the Partners, particularly with the organisations working on youth issues.

The Conference will be designed to achieve the following outcomes-

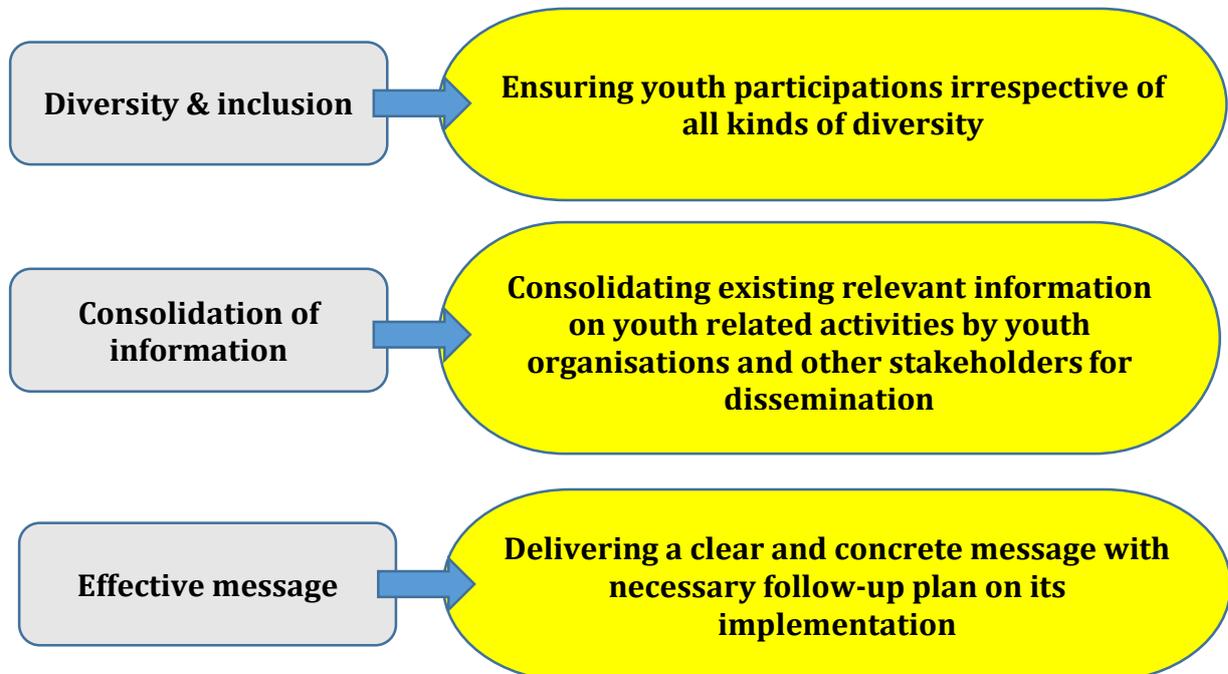
- Improved appreciation about the SDGs and increased roles of the youth in this implementation process;
- A network has been established among the youth with a work plan/agenda to support the national delivery of SDGs;
- Aspirations of the youth documented, declared and disseminated at national level to be recommended for incorporation with national development policies.

### C. Approach and operational principles

To achieve the objectives and delivery of the outcomes, the Conference will be designed following an **AAA** framework - *awareness, agreement and action*.



The implementation of the approaches are planned to be guided by three operational principles – *diversity & inclusion, consolidation of information, and effective message*.



## D. Implementation and delivery

The implementation process consists three phases-

- Pre-Conference awareness activities
- Conference
- Post-Conference follow-up

### Pre-Conference awareness activities

**An action plan has been developed for the pre-conference activities (see annex).**

The Partner organisations of the Platform will organise various awareness raising activities throughout the country, specially, in the rural areas. The objective of such activities will be to inform the youth communities about the upcoming Conference and receiving their feedback on the conference contents and declaration.

Platform Partners can organise new events or accommodate within their existing workplan for *Pre-Conference awareness activities*. These can be implemented at divisional levels or at district or upazila, City Corporation, and municipality levels according to the convenience of the implementing Partner.

### Conference

The event is proposed to be a **day-long** conference and open to media while social media platforms will be key instruments for interactions both at the preparation and implementation phases. The *Platform* may partner with other youth organisations in organising the event. The design of the Conference will be finalised upon consultation with the Partners and stakeholders.

**A draft design has been developed and this will be finalised upon consultations with Partners and feedback from the pre-conference awareness activities.** The draft design includes the following instruments-

Phases (3)	Instruments (6)	Day hours	Description
<b>Awareness</b>	<b>1. Youth Rally</b> Cycle Rally/Walkathon/Marathon	Morning on the day before the event	The rally will be organised in consultation with the <i>BD Cyclists</i> on the day before the event to inform the urban youth about the Conference Agenda.
	<b>2. Research Paper on</b> <i>Youth Employment and Left Behind</i>	Morning on the event day	The research will be presented to the Conference participants in presence of the

Phases (3)	Instruments (6)	Day hours	Description
			policymakers and other stakeholders.
	<b>3. Youth Fair</b> Showcasing youth initiatives in national development		This fair will showcase the activities on youth development which are done by various government and non-government initiatives.
	<b>4. Policy Dialogues on</b> socioeconomic, political, human rights  <b>Proposed themes of Policy Dialogues-</b> <i>Youth with Diversity/Disability; Youth and Employment; Youth in Leadership &amp; Policymaking; Youth in Climate Actions; Youth and Technology; Youth and Entrepreneurships etc. [to be finalised]</i>	Midmorning to Afternoon	From these parallel sessions participants will share and learn about the challenges, solutions and policy recommendations to reach the SDGs from youth perspectives. Youth icons from various sectors will be invited in these sessions to share motivational learnings and share their pledge to the national development.
<b>Agreement</b>			
	<b>5. Adoption of Declaration</b> <i>National Aspirations of the Youth in Bangladesh 2018</i>	Late Afternoon	The declaration will be approved and declared by the Participants. Youth icon/s will announce the declaration.
<b>Action</b>			
	<b>6. Cultural Event</b>	Evening	This will be an inclusive and diversified cultural event participated by Partner organisations.

### Post-Conference follow-up

The adopted declaration *National Aspirations of the Youth in Bangladesh 2018* will be used as the follow-up tool to perceive the Conference outcome in various national policy agenda. Partner organisations will be associated with the follow-up events and monitoring process.

## E. Venue and date

It has been planned to organise the Conference in Dhaka at the *Krishibid Institution Bangladesh* on Sunday 14 October 2018.

## F. Organisation and participation

The Conference will be organised by the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*, in consultation with the *Core Group Members* and under the guidance of and the *Advisory Body of the Platform*. The *Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)*, the Secretariat of the *Platform*, will be responsible for execution of the planned Conference in cooperation, support and suggestion from the Platform Partners. The organisations which are not Partners of the *Platform* can also be engaged with this Conference in various modes.

- Lead Institution – *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*
- Secretariat – *Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)*
- Partners – 80 Partners (as of today) of *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*
- Partnership with concerned agencies of the Government – (eg. Ministry/Department of Youth Development)
- Development partners and non-govt/private sectors stakeholders - development partners and stakeholders working and interested in implementing SDGs

Participation of the representatives of the youth generation from across the country will be the highest priority for this Conference. Online registration process will be open for participants. The participation guidelines will be finalised upon consultation with the Platform Partners and organising stakeholders. The following categories of participants can be outlined-

- Youth representatives from various youth organisations;
- Policymakers and government officials;
- Professionals- academicians, NGO and civil society officials, development partners;
- Political leaders, representatives from private sector and business community;
- Journalists and media people;
- Students.

## G. Communication and outreach

The Platform is aiming for a holistic communication approach for the Conference. It will consist three phases of – **pre, during and post event** – activities. A comprehensive communication and outreach plan for national, regional and global level will be developed upon consultation with the Communication Focal Persons of the Platform.

## H. Budget and financing

The required cost for the Conference will be shared among the Partners. CPD, as the Secretariat of the Platform, will make an effort to raise funds from external sources as appropriate.

## I. Working timeline

The Conference is planned to be held on Sunday 14 October 2018. The tentative timeline, mentioned below, considered various preparations required for the Conference-

- a) Conceptualisation, mobilisation and fund raising for the Conference: June - July 2018
- b) Formal decision and meeting with the *Platform Partners*: July 2018
- c) Preparation of the Conference contents: June - September 2018

These will include-

- Finalising guidelines and necessary documents for the planned pre-conference activities;
  - Drafting the declaration: *National Aspirations of the Youth in Bangladesh 2018*;
  - Completing the research;
  - Finalising the format of the *Youth Fair*;
  - Preparing *Communication and Outreach Plan*;
  - Determining participation modalities.
- d) Pre-event Communication and Outreach activities: July - September 2018
  - e) Follow Up: 2019 and onwards

## J. Contact

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## K. Conclusion

This concept will be elaborated and finalised through successive discussions with the Platform Partners and other stakeholders.

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