



Concept Note
For High-Level Side Event on
“Renewed partnership in South-South and Triangular Cooperation: leveraging Innovation and Cutting-Edge Technology”

Date & Time: 14 July 2023; 18:30-20:00 (New York Time)

Venue: Conference Room 8, UNHQ

Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/LHWjmbXpYyMRFsTX9>

Organizer: Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Background

Developing nations, particularly in the Global South, face challenges in accessing the benefits of technological development. They lack expertise, digital access, and innovation capabilities necessary for inclusive and resilient development. South-South cooperation offers tailored solutions to address these needs and facilitate digital transformation. Digital technologies are transforming societies in all aspects ranging across connectivity, financial inclusion, public services, health, education, trade and commerce, media communication, and transportation. By harnessing advanced technologies, it bridges the digital divide and accelerates sustainable development in these nations.

Developing countries as well as LDCs can learn from Southern counterparts to transition towards higher value-added products and advanced technology, enabling them to integrate into global value chains and improve their economic prospects. But as it is witnessed, in digital development, there has been expansion, but not necessarily inclusion. The tide of digital revolution has lifted boats – but not all boats, and not to the same extent. In fact, digital divide has contributed to significant overall disparities in society. But digital development, if managed properly, is a powerful equalizing factor in overall economic and social development.

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in digital transformation of public services over a decade and a half, starting almost from scratch. This digital revolution resulted in savings of 19 billion workdays and USD 22 billion, and eliminated 13 billion visits to government offices by common citizens, especially the marginalized and underserved population.

Leveraging this success, Bangladesh has actively functioned as the Secretariat of South-South Network for Public Service Innovation (SSN4PSI), jointly launched by Government of Bangladesh and UN Office for South South Cooperation, and reaching to over 60 countries and international organizations as members. Through this network, Bangladesh has supported a number of LDCs and developing countries with know-how and technology transfer. Notable examples are the Philippines (myGov, aggregation of all government e-services in one platform), Somalia and Jordan (skills and employment matchmaking platform), Yemen, Turkey and South Sudan (e-commerce aggregation platform to develop digital inclusion of cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises), and Fiji (service delivery tracker for disbursing allowances to distressed population).

As more countries are reaching out to Bangladesh for support and guidance, the country is in the process of establishing **e-Quality Centre for Inclusive Innovation** with a vision to ensure zero



digital divide for the world. The near-namesake term “e-Quality” refers to the quality of the digital experience designed to serve all to bring equality in society.

The major focus areas of the centre are:

- South-South technology transfer from Bangladesh of digital solutions proven to transform underserved communities
- International ICT Innovation (i³) matching fund facility from Bangladesh to support LDCs
- Digital divide research (standards, e-Quality index, strategies for addressing the most pressing digital divide issues)

Objective

The High-level Side Event, organized by the Bangladesh Government, seeks to identify how South South Cooperation can be leveraged to dramatically reduce digital divide through e-Quality Center for Inclusive Innovation. Through panel discussion and interactive dialogues, distinguished speakers and participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, lessons learned, and effective strategies in leveraging innovation and technology for sustainable development.

The side event will also focus on exploring the opportunities and challenges in strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation in the context of reducing digital divide.

Participants

The High-Level Side Event aims to engage a diverse range of participants who can contribute to the discussions and collaborations on South-South and triangular cooperation. This event will draw participation of representatives from United Nations member states attending the HLPF, Government officials and delegates from various countries, development agencies, representatives from international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. The diverse composition of the target audience ensures a comprehensive and inclusive dialogue among stakeholders, promoting knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the formation of partnerships among different sectors and actors involved in this cooperation.

Expected Outcomes

- a. Leveraging South South Cooperation as a medium to reduce existing digital divide in global southern countries.
- b. Enhancing understanding of the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation in tackling global challenges by harnessing frontier technology, research and development, and innovation.
- c. Recognition of effective approaches, achievements, and valuable insights in utilizing advanced science and future-oriented technologies for sustainable development.
- d. Exploration of possibilities for collaborative research, joint initiatives, and partnerships in common areas of interest.



Session Plan

Format – 90 minutes duration

Moderator: Mr. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh - 8 minutes

- Welcome remarks by: **Mr. Masud Bin Momen**, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (5 minutes) (TBC)
- Welcome remarks by: **H.E. Ambassador Mr. Mohan Pieris**, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (5 minutes) (TBC)
- Keynote Presentation by: **Mr. Anir Chowdhury**, Policy Advisor, a2i Programme, Government of Bangladesh and UNDP Bangladesh (8 minutes)

Panel Discussion - 32 minutes

- H. E. Cina Lawson**, Minister of Digital Economy and Transformation, Ministry of Posts, Digital Economy and Technological Innovation of Togo, The Togolese Republic (TBC)
- H. E. Naguib Sinarimbo**, Minister, Ministry of Interior and Local Government, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Republic of Philippines (TBC)
- Mr. Haoliang Xu**, Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Director of Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), UNDP
- Ms. Dima Al-Khatib**, Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) (TBC)
- Ms. Feyza Eldeniz**, Head of Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department, Presidency of Strategy and Budget, Office of the President of Türkiye (TBC)
- Ms. Christine Zhenwei Qiang**, Director, Digital Development Global Practice, The World Bank (TBC)
- Ms. Sonia Jorge**, Founder and Director, Global Digital Inclusion Partnership (GDIP), Tufts University, United States of America (TBC)
- Dr. Selim Jahan**, Former Director of the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York and the Lead Author of the global Human Development Report (HDR) (TBC)

Open Discussion: 27 minutes

Closing remarks by: **Mr. Md Shamsul Arefin**, Secretary, Information and Communication Technology Division, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (5 minutes) (TBC)