

A COFFEE TABLE BOOK OF REFLECTIONS



About the Book

This coffee table book brings together the moments and voices of the National Conference on Social Protection 2025. It captures the images and reflections that shaped the dialogue on building a more inclusive and resilient Bangladesh, and may pave the way for the next generation of social protection for Bangladesh.

Conference Opening



“From design to delivery, social protection reform must focus on four interlinked areas: pursuing universal but phased coverage to ensure no one is left behind, and establishing redistributive fiscal policies with sustainable financing so that social protection is reliable, evidence-based, and not merely ad hoc”

Chief Guest, Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud
Hon'ble Adviser, Ministry of Planning



“Bangladesh is inherently susceptible to large-scale crises like floods, cyclones, river erosion, and droughts. In addition, global shocks such as food price volatility and economic downturns further increase vulnerability. Therefore, a key objective of our Ministry is to strengthen shock-responsive safety nets and adaptive workfare programmes, ensuring a system that not only responds to crises but also helps communities anticipate, withstand, and recover from them”

Special Guest, Faruk E Azam, Bir Protik
Hon’ble Adviser, Ministry of Disaster Management
and Relief and Ministry of Liberation War Affairs



“We remain firmly anchored to the priorities of our government towards social equity, guided by the fundamental principle of social justice. Towards that end, precision targeting is critical; we must ensure that only the deserving individuals are receiving the benefits of social protection programs. At the same time, we must leave no one behind, ensuring inclusion and dignity for all vulnerable groups”

Chair of the Conference, Dr. Sheikh Abdur Rashid,
Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Division



“The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) itself has underscored the importance of developing a system of social insurance for employees, covering death, injury, and disability, to further strengthen this safety net. The Ministry of Public Administration remains firmly committed to strengthening the capacity of the social protection delivery mechanism and ensuring that our public servants are equipped, supported, and motivated to serve the nation”

Dr. Md. Mokhles ur Rahman
Senior Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration



“The SDG Progress Report reflects encouraging strides in poverty reduction, health, and education. While challenges remain in areas such as gender equality, decent work, and strong institutions, these are opportunities for us to do better. By building stronger institutions, ensuring efficient delivery, and fostering a more inclusive labour market, Bangladesh can transform its growth into sustainable prosperity for all”

Dr. Monzur Hossain, Member (Secretary)
General Economics Division, Bangladesh Planning Commission



“Bangladesh has achieved remarkable progress in reducing poverty over the past decade, yet significant challenges remain. The latest National Multidimensional Poverty Index shows that millions continue to be vulnerable, with one-third of children still trapped in multidimensional poverty. This highlights that social protection is not only essential but urgent; more critical than ever to safeguard the lives and futures of our most vulnerable citizens”

Dr. Michal Krejza, Head of Development Cooperation
Minister Counsellor, European Union to Bangladesh



“The Australian Government remains committed to continuing our support, deepening our collaboration, and enhancing our technical engagement with Bangladesh in this vital area. At the core of our development priorities is a simple but important principle: social protection must be inclusive, ensuring that every citizen particularly the most vulnerable has the opportunity to live with dignity and security”

H.E. Clinton Pobke
Deputy High Commissioner of the Australian Government



“Social protection helps smooth the rough edges of a market-based economy. While markets generate wealth, they also risk leaving people behind, those who, through no fault of their own, lack access to opportunities. Social protection gives them a chance to stand again and contribute to national development. This truth must remain at the center of our work as we move forward, anchoring our shared commitment to invest in the people and future of Bangladesh”

Stefan Liller, Resident Representative, UNDP



“We must also acknowledge that social protection is more than just safety nets. It is about building springboards. It is not only about helping people survive, but also enabling them to thrive. This is why human capital development must be central so that every child can go to school, every mother can access healthcare, every person with a disability can live with dignity, and every worker can seize opportunities for decent livelihoods”

**Zaheda Parveen, Secretary
Coordination and Reforms, Cabinet Division**



“Our strategies for social empowerment go deeper. We focus on advancing gender development through financial inclusion, legal reforms, and education. We protect marginalized populations with legislative safeguards, grievance mechanisms, and strong monitoring systems. And we promote inclusive growth through asset transfers, digital inclusion, and local governance support. For persons with disabilities, we emphasize both development for persons with disabilities and development by persons with disabilities”

Mohammad Khaled Hasan, Additional Secretary, Coordination Wing, &
Member-Secretary, CMC for National Social Security Programmes
Cabinet Division

Concluding Ceremony



“We all dream of a country free from poverty, where all youth are employed, and where our planet is protected. The three zeros are the dream we have always held: a nation without poverty, a nation with employment, a nation with a healthy environment. This gives us vision and direction, and social protection can be central to all these efforts”

Sharmeen S. Murshid, Honourable Adviser
Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh



“It is now time to rethink and reshape these programs in alignment with international best practices, ensuring that they are inclusive, equitable, and effective. Many initiatives have been implemented, even if not explicitly labeled as social protection, and they have contributed to improving the lives of our citizens”

Mamtaz Ahmed, NDC, Senior Secretary
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs



“Our goal is to firmly embed the human rights approach in social protection ensuring that all persons, especially those historically marginalized, enjoy equal opportunities to thrive. In doing so, we are not only addressing past exclusions but also shaping a future grounded in fairness, dignity, and hope for all”

Dr. Mohammad Abu Yusuf, Secretary
Ministry of Social Welfare



“As Bangladesh moves forward, Australia welcomes the renewed focus on transparency, institutional renewal, and building citizens’ trust. The establishment of reform commissions and the integration of social protection into broader governance efforts are both timely and essential. Australia remains steadfastly committed to supporting Bangladesh in building a more inclusive, resilient, and responsive social protection system. We look forward to continuing our partnership and supporting the next phase of reform as it unfolds”

Syed Haider, First Secretary and
Head of Development, Australian High Commission, Dhaka, Bangladesh



“Social protection now reaches over half the world’s population; a significant increase from just a decade ago. Access to education is rising, child marriage is declining, renewable energy capacity is growing, and women’s representation is increasing across governments, businesses, and societies. These gains show that investments in development and inclusion yield results. But let’s be clear: only 35 per cent of SDG targets are on track or making moderate progress. Nearly half are moving too slowly. And 18 per cent are going in reverse”

Sonali Dayaratne, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP



“We also recognized throughout working sessions that effective governance, transparency, and digital solutions from single registry MIS systems to mobile financial services are vital for ensuring efficiency, accountability, and timely delivery to the most vulnerable populations. The discussions highlighted the importance of multisectoral coordination, technical capacity-building, and anticipatory action to address shocks from climate change, pandemics, and economic disruptions”

Murshida Sharmin, Joint Secretary
Coordination Wing, Cabinet Division

Conclusion & Way Forward

The National Conference on Social Protection 2025 was more than an event; it was a gathering of voices, ideas, and aspirations for an inclusive Bangladesh. This coffee table book captures those moments, images, and reflections that shaped the dialogue on building a resilient and people-centered social protection system. The conference united the optimistic rigor of government and development partners, working together to strengthen the system and ensure that no one is left behind. As these pages reveal, social protection is ultimately about people, dignity, and shared hope. May this book stand as both a testament to progress and an inspiration for the next generation of social protection in Bangladesh.

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