

## Yearly Report- 2019 on the activities of the Bangladesh High Commission, Abuja, Nigeria

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### **Bilateral/Political:**

- The High Commissioner met a good number of dignitaries (Vice President, Women Affairs Minister, State Foreign Minister), elected officials including Speaker of the Assembly, Chairmen of the Foreign Affairs Committee, influential Governors, Assemblymen, Senators, high officials (Permanent) Secretaries, Service Chiefs (Army, Air and Navy & Intelligence), Immigration Chief, IGP & opinion leaders, among others, to cultivate friendship & brief about Bangladesh and sensitise them on important issues.
- There has been visible progress in signing MoUs/Agreements on FOC, cooperation in the fields of Agriculture and Education, among others.

### **Multilateral:**

- A 2-member Bangladesh delegation from the M/o Health and Family welfare participated at the Inaugural Consultation Meeting of the D8 Health and Social Protection Programme held on 19-20 June, 2019 in Abuja.
- The Mission strongly lobbied for all candidates of Bangladesh and also kept close contact with the Nigerian Government on Rohingya issue and Nigeria voted in favour of the UNGA Resolution on Myanmar adopted on 14 November, 2019.

### **Economic Diplomacy:**

- The Mission launched a **Commercial Display Room** at the Chancery with a wide collection of exportables as a part of its commercial drive to showcase the export potentials of Bangladesh to the visitors/potential importers and investors.
- This Mission actively participated at 06 (Six) Trade Fairs during the year 2019 in Abuja, Lagos and other outlying cities utilising the exhibits of its Commercial Display Room. Bangladesh received **Best Foreign Exhibitor Award** at the Abuja International Trade Fair (21 September-2 October, 2019) and **Best Foreign Participant Award** at the 40<sup>th</sup> Kaduna International Trade Fair (29 March-7 April 2019).
- During the Independence and National day Reception (2019) held at a five star hotel, the Mission put up a large Stall (Bangladesh Corner) in the Hall in which an array of exportables were on display.
- Tea-sets (Made in Bangladesh) were handed over to the CEOs of the prominent Stores in Nigeria in addition to the potential importers. Jute-bags (Hessian, btwell) were also given to both public and private sector representatives as it has huge demand in the local market.

### **Public Diplomacy:**

- The High Commissioner hosted 06 (Six) interactive meetings/Receptions with the presence of the journalists, academics, members of the civil society, trade and investment leaders, among others, to portray a positive image of Bangladesh.
- The High Commissioner met almost all the CEOs/Editors of the Media Houses in Abuja and Lagos and briefed them extensively on Bangladesh and on Rohingya issue,

among others. He also gave interviews to local media houses including TV and Radio. Influential local Daily Leadership carried two stories on the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, among others, positively highlighting her achievements. Well-respected "Acclaim Nigeria Magazine" carried a special feature story on Bangladesh in 2019.

- Four Nigerian journalists attended the "Visit Bangladesh Programme" organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka in April and December, 2019. They already published a good number of positive articles on Bangladesh. Two Nigerian academics/resource persons visited Bangladesh to attend "The Dhaka Global Dialogue" in November, 2019.
- A multi-colour, 3-pager Special Supplement, first time by the Mission, was published in the influential Daily Leadership to mark the Independence and National Day (2019).
- The Mission encourages visits to the Chancery by young Nigerians. Eighteen students including four teachers from local school visited the Chancery in 2019 to familiarise themselves with Bangladesh.

#### **Cultural Diplomacy:**

- The Mission took the initiative and a 19-member delegation with members from the M/o Cultural Affairs & MOFA participated for the first time at the "Carnival Calabar" (27-29 December, 2019) known as the "Africa's Biggest Street Party" and showcased cultural beauty of Bangladesh.
- A 10-member team comprising members from the M/o Cultural Affairs & MOFA actively participated at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Arts and Crafts (INAC) Expo, 20-24 November, 2019 and received **Best Designed Pavilion Award**. Artists (vocal, flute & dance) from Bangladesh also performed at the "Bangladesh Day" event on 23 November 2019 on the sideline of the 12<sup>th</sup> INAC before few hundred foreign guests.
- Bangladesh High Commission and National Council of Arts and Culture (NCAC) of Nigeria jointly organised a "Bangladesh-Nigeria Cultural Night" and launched "Nigeria-Bangladesh Friendship Club" on 26 November 2019 in Abuja at which artists from both countries performed. Prof. Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, former Nigerian Foreign Minister and ex-Ambassador and Permanent Representative to UN and Under Secretary General of the UNSG, Mr. Md. Shameem Ahsan, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Nigeria and Mr. Otunba Olusegun Runsewe, Director General, NCAC jointly cut the cake to mark the launching. It symbolized the beginning of a new relationship between Bangladesh and Nigeria.

- **Military/Defence:**

Over 230 Nigerian Defence Officers received training at various Defence Institutions in Bangladesh so far (28 in 2019) while three Bangladeshi Officers (two Brigadier Generals and one Major) received training in Nigeria in 2019.

#### **Preparatory Work for the celebration of Mujib Borsho:**

The Mission has launched **Bangabandhu Corner** as a part of the year-long(17 March,2020-17 March,2021) celebration of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Mujib Year) with due honor and festivity. Relevant publications etc. and paintings are prominently on display while the surrounding area has already assumed a festive look.

#### **Diaspora Diplomacy:**

- Operationalization of the “Dutabash” Mobile Application.
- Launching of a pilot number (+234-816736-1027) to reach the Mission Officials (24/7/365).
- Suggestion/Complain Box has been introduced at the Chancery.
- Pursued with the concerned authorities in Bangladesh on receipt of complain etc. from expatriates about alleged illegal occupation of their properties/any grievances in the home country.
- Occasional visits to Detention Centres in Nigeria.
- Sending one Officer to Kinshasa, DRC to extend urgent consular service following the death of AIG Rowshan Ara Begum in a road accident on 5 May,2019 as per the instruction of the Ministry.
- Creation of a WhatsApp Group for the Bangladesh Community in Nigeria to keep them updated with important information/notifications on the welfare of NRBs etc. invitations/important developments/dissemination of Daily News Brief each day.
- Distribution of Bangla Books to the children of the expatriate Bangladeshi families and sharing publications/periodicals of the Government among the community.

#### **Others:**

- The Mission actively organised all major national events with the presence of the community as well as foreigners. Artistes from 07 languages performed at the IMLD event in 2019.
- Weekly and special reports (political, commercial etc.) were sent to the Ministry and relevant communications were also endorsed to the line Ministries/bodies.
- The Chancery has been tastefully decorated with a number of roll-up-banners at the entrance, visitor’s area and around containing pictorial description of Bangladesh’s success stories. Framed pictures reflecting history, tourism, cultural heritage, investment and economic potentials of the country have also been placed prominently. The new look strongly conveys the ambience of the sending country.

#### **Challenges and Opportunities :**

- Bangladeshi business community needs to explore the untapped potentials of the country of 200 million people as a good number of Asian countries have developed mutually beneficial & strong (commercial) relationship with Nigeria.

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