

Editorial Adaptation of Sustainable Consumption and Production

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) was defined as “the use of service and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or products so as not to jeopardize the needs of further generations” by the Oslo Symposium in 1994.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, SCP was defined as one of the three overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development, together with poverty eradication and the management of natural resources on order to foster economic and social development in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Development of a 10-year framework of programmes (10YFP) in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems is a global commitment, made by member states at the RIO+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

Active participatory involvement of Bangladesh was observed throughout the development of SCP since 1992. Prior joining to Rio+20, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), GoB prepared RIO+20: National Report on Sustainable Development in May 2012 describing the achievements in respect of various dimensions of sustainable development in Bangladesh since the 1992 Rio UN Conference on Environment and Development and outlining the future directions and challenges in relation to carrying the process forward in future. However, the country lagged behind in developing the 10YFP a concrete outcome of RIO+20. The African Region, the Mediterranean Region and many Asian countries for example: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand have already developed the 10 Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP and have developed several projects relating to the targets where Bangladesh has taken the initiative in 2018 to develop the 10YFP.

BUILD has completed two studies titled: “SCP Assessment Report for Bangladesh” and “Roadmap/ Vision 2030 Document for Bangladesh: A Background Paper” which will be used as base studies for developing the 10YFP.

“SCP Assessment Report for Bangladesh” brought the issues of waste generation in apparel sector and leather sector; and public procurement to provide an overview of the status of Bangladesh on SCP implementation. “Roadmap/ Vision 2030 Document for Bangladesh: A Background Paper” identifies existing data gap, strategy gap, implementation gap, resource gap and capacity gap in attaining SCP. It is found from both studies that the conceptualization of SCP in both public and private sector is still not up to the level. Some organizations have come forward to adopting SCP practices in their production cycles; however there is a gap of proper documentation of these initiatives. Coordination between public sector and private sector should be the top most priority for successful implementation of 10YFP which is an implementation of GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal. The aspect of consumer’s involvement who is the key players for SCP is also ignored. Awareness and involvement of the consumers is another key requirement for SCP. The media can play a vital role in building awareness, information sharing and communication with the mass population.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD

EVs- the Future of Transportation- Commerce Minister



Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi speaks as the Chief Guest at a Dialogue on Prospects and Policies of Electric Vehicles in Bangladesh, organized by BUILD, JETRO and Terra Motors at Amari Dhaka, on March 13, 2019.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said electric vehicles (EVs) are the future of transportation, as decarbonizing the transport sector has become a buzzword.

Highlighting the need for a clear policy framework on regulating Battery Run Three Wheelers (BRTWs), he called for devising new rules at the earliest.

Bangladesh has been losing Tk 192.5 million a year by not bringing the battery-run three-wheelers under registration and licensing, according to the study of BUILD.

Presently, around one million such vehicles are plying in the country. Also over one million employments have been created in this sector, including 58,000 jobs in five districts where 52,000 battery-driven three-wheelers run, said the study report of BUILD. These vehicles consume around 450 MW electricity a day, it added. But due to absence of monitoring, regulations and charging stations, this sector witnesses unauthorised consumption of power, said the BUILD report.

It also said Bangladesh can save US\$ 200 million to \$ 400 million a year by reducing air pollution in four cities of the country. The study report of BUILD was placed at the dialogue on 'Prospects and Policies of EV in Bangladesh' where the speakers stressed the need for formulating a comprehensive policy to streamline the sector.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister laid emphasis on the need for establishing charging stations for electric vehicles.

"As greenhouse gases are spoiling our environment, I feel it is the right time to introduce the policies for electric vehicles," said the Minister.

Referring to the potential of foreign investment in this sector, he said Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) can work in this regard.

Abul Kalam Azad, Principal Coordinator (SDG) of Prime Minister's Office (PMO), said that (EV) are the future of transport, as decarbonising transport is a must to achieve SDG.

He said that efficient policies are needed to harness the benefits of development of electric three-wheelers. He also emphasised the need for research and development activities on battery manufacturing, focusing on lithium-ion (LI) battery, recycling of battery and attraction of FDI in manufacturing electric vehicles in the country.

"The private sector and donor organisations have come forward. We need to develop our capacity to address the Fourth Industrial Revolution issues," he added.

Speaking as a special guest, Hiroyasu Isumi, ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh, said that although there is a huge demand for battery-run three-wheelers in Bangladesh, there is lack of government initiative for the formalisation of the sector.

He also put emphasis on SDG-11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities for which a sustainable transport system is an imperative.

The battery-driven three-wheelers can be an alternative which has already been proved to be a very useful means of transport in Bangladesh like in India, Vietnam and China, he said.

Osama Taseer, president, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), who was also present as a special guest, highlighted the regulatory aspects of the EV.

The transport sector in Bangladesh will be dominated by 40 per cent of the EVs in the next 20 years, he added. He also suggested providing subsidies for the EV consumers, which can be a way to promote the use of EV in the country.

Daisuke Arai, Country Representative, JETRO Dhaka Office, underscored the need for framing policies to attract more investment in this sector. Asif Ibrahim, former chairman, BUILD, highlighted the organisation's continued mission to address regulatory barriers by evidence-based research and policy advocacy.

Tahmid Zami, additional research director of BUILD, presented the findings of the study on 'Battery-Run Three Wheelers in Bangladesh' while Akihiro Ueda, Director of Asia EV Business and MD of Terra Motors, India, presented the private sector perspectives on the existing scenario of the battery-run three wheelers.

The study finds that Bangladesh has been losing Tk 192.5 million a year by not bringing the battery-run three-wheelers under registration and licensing, according to an observation report. Presently, around one million such vehicles are currently plying in the country.

Siddique Zobair, Member (Additional Secretary, Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA), reflected on the charging infrastructure policy being prepared by SREDA.

He said that most of the charging systems are not efficient. Regarding a different type of tariff rate for easy bikes, he said the government is ready to lower it, if the users charge the vehicles at off-peak hours.

He also said that SREDA has almost completed the draft policy for charging stations. Other Resource speakers Dr. Md. Ziaur Rahman Khan, Professor, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Dr. Syed Md. Ihsanul Karim, Director, BITAC, Munawar Misbah Moin, President, Accumulator Battery Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh and Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, General Manager and Head of Corporate Division, IDLC Finance Limited who contributed and endorsed the proposals made by the study of BUILD.

About two hundred representatives from different public and private sectors were present to interact in the session.

BUILD CEO informed that BUILD will follow up the proposals for implementation through its public private dialogue platform.

BUILD for Increasing the Tax-free Limit for Individual Taxpayers



BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum speaks at the pre-budget meeting of NBR with BUILD, BEZA, BEPZA, BIDA and Hi-Tech Park Authority.

BUILD Chief Executive Officer (CEO) proposed an increase in the tax-free ceiling for individual taxpayers to Tk 0.3 million. BUILD calculation demonstrates that the government will not lose revenue due to the proposed increase of tax free threshold. She proposed a new slab of minimum tax at TK 5,500 the income group who are earning between TK 0.25 to 0.3 million, the proposed new slab for minimum tax would help to earn additional TK 100 crore revenue. She also highlighted the issue of rationalization of Advance Income Tax (AIT) on industrial raw materials at import stage along with other tax related proposals.

She also suggested offering tax cards to all taxpayers, while extending the existing facility at the prebudget meeting the National Board of Revenue organized on April 15, 2019 at NBR. Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA) and BUILD joined the meeting.

BIDA sought adequate policy support from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to further promote investment while making the existing initiatives successful. They said such policy support from the NBR will help generate more employment and transform the country's existing trade-based economy into a production-based one.

NBR Chairman Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan chaired the meeting.

BIDA Executive Chairman Kazi M Aminul Islam said the NBR will have to incorporate required policies in the budget for promoting investment.

"We don't want a 'cut-paste' type national budget this year like in the previous years." The national budget should address the employment situation seriously, as technological advancement is eating up share of employment despite higher export growth, he added.

BEZA Executive Chairman Paban Chowdhury said implementation of the existing investment proposals largely depends on the NBR's policy support. "No investment initiative can be fully successful without its policy support." He expects a liberal attitude of the NBR towards investors in a bid to improve the country's investment scenario. He also proposed automation for the bonded warehouse licensing process to reduce the NBR officials' involvement.

BHTPA Managing Director Hosne Ara Begum appreciated the NBR's role in offering incentive packages for investors of the hi-tech park. "Some of our aggrieved investors, who earlier left the park, have returned to the site with their investment following the NBR's support." She suggested holding workshops with the investment development authorities to resolve confusion on tax matters.

BEPZA Member (Finance) Mizanur Rahman said tax holiday facility for investors affiliated with BEPZA and BEZA should be equal. Currently, the investors with BEZA enjoy full tax waiver for ten years, while those with BEPZA get reduced tax holiday for five to seven years on the basis of location.

Responding to the suggestions, the NBR chairman said he is also considering an option to give 'Taxpayers Identification Number (TIN) Card' to the taxpayers just after submission of tax returns.

"It can be a permanent card that the taxpayers can use for availing different services, including licensing and renewal." A copy of the TIN card can be made mandatory for availing different services, he added.

NBR Member Kanon Kumar Roy said earlier the TIN database was in a mess that has been cleaned up through introducing e-TIN.

He, however, said still there are a huge number of fake TINs that could not be identified easily. Some 80-90 per cent of the fake TINs were used for purchase of land and credit card. The BUILD CEO suggested the NBR prepare a policy guideline for offering tax holiday facility to the industries.

"In a study, we have found that some 408 industries have been getting tax holiday facility uninterruptedly for the last 15-16 years."

Some of the potential sectors are not getting the facility, while some sectors have been enjoying the same for last 10 years, she noted. On VAT law, she proposed introduction of four-layer VAT rates, increase in the VAT-free ceiling to Tk 5.0 million from the existing Tk 3.6 million, and phasing out of the supplementary duty (SD) from 1,271 products gradually that are currently enjoying the protection.

Responding to the proposals, the NBR chief said some think-tanks have proposed to the NBR to cut the high tariff protection to the local industries to make the market competitive. "We're not doing so, but we're looking into the issue to see to what extent the NBR can offer the protective tariff."

Preparatory Meeting of FSDWC Held



Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Ahmed Jamal and BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum are seen in the meeting.

A meeting was held between Deputy Governor, Bangladesh Bank and CEO, BUILD on 21 April, 2019.

In the meeting CEO, BUILD introduced BUILD and its activities in the Financial Sector Development Working Committee (FSDWC) to the Deputy Governor. A paper named 'Financing Schemes & Available Credit Facilities for Export Competitiveness of Bangladesh' was presented by BUILD in the meeting. It has been highlighted that Most of the export financing schemes and credit facilities are inclined to RMG sector depriving other non-traditional sectors.

Various issues regarding available credit lines such as Export Development Fund, Green Transformation Fund and other funds such as Refinancing Schemes for 52 products were highlighted in the meeting.

Bangladesh Bank highlighted that plastic sector is going to be approved for availing GTF. Bangladesh Bank will think about involving SFD technical advisory committee for the purpose of environmental certification. The Deputy Governor, Bangladesh Bank will set a date for the 7th FSDWC meeting soon.

Representatives from Bangladesh Bank, IFC-WBG and BUILD were present in the meeting.

Technology-based Education to Reap Benefits in 4th Industrial Revolution



Md Abdul Halim, Secretary of Industries Ministry speaks as the Chief Guest at Seminar on the 4th Industrial Revolution: Potentials for Bangladesh Economy" organized by Industries Ministry at Bangabadhu International Conference Center on April 1, 2019

Speakers at a seminar called upon the government to lay emphasis on technology-based education at college and university level to reap benefits in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4 IR).

Ferdaus Ara Begum, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of BUILD said a technology transfer center should be built in the country. It will transfer ideas to industries.

"Now we can buy all things from online market sitting at home. So many workers are being jobless. We must increase technological activities for job creation," she also said.

The speakers made the remarks while speaking at a seminar on "4th Industrial Revolution: Potentials for Bangladesh Economy" organized by Industries Ministry at Bangabadhu International Conference Center.

Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) delivered the keynote.

She said that the nature of jobs will change following the 4 IR. New employment will be created so labour should be skilled and innovative. Garment workers, especially women, should be trained up about modern machineries and new technology.

Dr. M. Rokonzaman, professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering Department of North South University, claimed that there can be no proper research in universities without incentives.

"There are lower budgets on science and technology in poor countries. We should think of knowledge-based economy not only labour-based economy. We are upset to see that an uneducated driver's salary and a graduated youth's salary are same in our country. Where is our country's education value," he added.

Md. Abdul Halim, Secretary of Industries Ministry as chief guest said that there are many questions as to whether the country is in the first second or third Industrial Revolution. "Actually we can go to the 4 IR from the first. We are working to make policy for 4 IR," he added.

Salahuddin Mahmud, Additional Secretary of the Ministry, presided over the function. He said that the fourth industrial revolution seminar is a pragmatic initiative as Bangladesh is now a role model of development. "We will take ideas from the discussion and incorporate them in the policy" Mahmud said.

She Trades Outlook Stakeholder Consultation and Pilot Surveys in Bangladesh Organized by MOC, BUILD and ITC



Participants from different public and private entities join the workshop.

BUILD, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Ministry of Commerce, GoB co-hosted a national stakeholder consultation meeting on April 1, 2019 at Apparel Club of BGMEA in Dhaka.

The purpose of the workshop was to present the new She Trades Outlook (STO) policy tool, discuss good practices, as well as identify areas for collaboration aligned with Bangladesh's policy priorities. The event in Bangladesh follows the launch of the pilot phase in Malaysia, Jamaica, and Ghana, with a view to administer surveys in 25 countries by the end of 2019.

Chaired by CEO, BUILD Ferdaus Ara Begum, the inaugural ceremony was attended by Dr. Judith Fessehaie, Policy Lead, SheTrade Initiative, who explained how this initiative has been working in other countries where policy commitments for supporting Women in Business is very important.

Dr Selim Raihan, Professor of Economics of Dhaka University and Executive Director, SANEM was also present. Mashfique Ibne Akbar, Private Sector Development Adviser of DFID elaborated how UKAid is supporting the program and has a plan to expand it. Highlighting the role of women in the economy, the CEO of BUILD informed that Bangladesh attained 48th position among 148 countries and is top among South Asian countries in gender equality. SheTrades could be a supporting element for further development of women in business in Bangladesh.

The STO is supporting evidence-based policy-making by collecting and analyzing data, identifying gaps, and enabling dialogues and consensus on high impact policy measures. Taking into account different dimensions, contexts, and geographies, the STO creates an innovative digital tool for Commonwealth governments, trade and investment support institutions, development partners, lead firms and women's business associations to pinpoint actionable items and benefit from evidence-based policy change.

In the initiation of launching of Bangladesh pilot of STO, more than 35 government and private organizations supporting different initiatives of Women in Business were present to inform different policies in the country. Group work was held to identify institutions, good practices to share with the international community as a feedback on some indicators covering areas such as: Trade Policy, Business Environment, Culture, Legal Basis, Access to Finance and Access to Skills. The survey has been enriched from the inputs given by the workshop participants.

Senior and midlevel officials of Ministry of Finance, Agriculture, Environment Forest and Climate Change, Commerce, Women and Children Affairs, Planning, and BIDA, along with representatives from Dhaka University, Bangladesh Bank, SME Foundation, BFTI were present. Private sector representatives from MCCI, DCCI, SANEM, TTBC, ICCB, BGMEA, PRISM, LFMEAB, Institute of Hotel Management and Hospitality, Rahimafrooz etc. were present and interacted in the workshop.

Meeting between BEZA and BUILD Held



BUILD CEO hands over a report on current scenario of investment in Bangladesh, initiatives as well as reform policy papers prepared by BUILD to attract foreign investment in Bangladesh and areas need to be focused to ensure an investment friendly environment for both the domestic and foreign investors.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD met Paban Chowdhury, (Secretary) Executive Chairman, BEZA on 24th April, 2019 to discuss some policy related issues of BEZA which are underway.

CEO, BUILD gave a brief of the study that BUILD and BIGD are conducting together and enquired Executive Chairman of BEZA about the policies of BEZA to address the gender base violence, action against sexual harassment, initiation of investment friendly policy, introducing a child care facility in Economic Zones in Bangladesh. Executive Chairman of BEZA thanked the team for initiating the study and ensured for all support. He gave a brief overview of the status of BEZA, its plan of extension and informed about the One Stop Services (OSS) center which is almost ready to provide about 59 services to the foreign investors. He also requested the Delegates from BUILD to have a look around of the OSS of BEZA.

In the OSS BUILD team had detailed interaction with the plan and operational structure of the OSS, which would be a number one business facilitation center along with all related infrastructure.

Executive Chairman of BEZA assured CEO, BUILD that all the issues placed by BUILD will be addressed properly. He placed some examples of policy simplification for the investors at EZs in getting a trade license and other related permission to attract investment as well as to reduce the time and cost of investment in EZs.

BUILD in partnership of Centre for Gender and Social Transformation at the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) is jointly conducting a study on "Incorporating Gender Best Practices Gender Based Violence (GBV) and in BEZA's Institutional Policy" to review Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA)'s institutional policies and procedures to recommend measures related to gender mainstreaming as well as preventing and appropriately addressing incidents of gender based violence (GBV) in BEZA and industries/entities established in economic zones under BEZA. As part of the initiative, BUILD and BIGD met BEZA Officials.

MD. Abdul Quader Khan, Consultant, Support to Capacity Building of Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, said that the issues like; addressing the gender base violence (GBV), action against sexual harassment, initiation of investment friendly policy, introducing a child care facility, find out the policy gaps needs to be focused while preparing a guideline to ensure the effectiveness of EZs in the betterment of women as a workforce.

Dr. Malay Choudhury, Chief Law Officer (Joint Secretary), Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, said that recommendations of the study should be linked with existing policy. Consultant, Support to Capacity Building of Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority; Gender Consultant and Research Associate of BUILD were present in the meeting. BIGD Team Leader Maheen Sultan attended the meeting.

Need Assessment Workshop on SMEs Held



BUILD CEO speaks at the workshop at SME Foundation.

BUILD and PRISM Project organized a workshop on the Need Assessment of SME Women Entrepreneurs-Focusing on Product Quality and Technological Issues on 6th March 2019 at Conference Room of SME Foundation. As part of supporting the agenda of the SME Development Working Committee (SMEDWC) of BUILD, this assessment workshop is specifically scheduled to assess the SMEs' needs on 'Product Development-Quality and Technological Issues' pertaining to Light Engineering, Leather, Jute and Plastic Sub-sectors.

The workshop was chaired by Md. Mahbubur Rahman, Project Director of PRISM National Project and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industries (MoI), GoB. The main objective of the workshop was to collaborate varied stakeholders for taking inputs from relevant stakeholders focusing on the need of SMEs in Bangladesh. Challenges of SMEs mainly women entrepreneurs regarding lack of knowledge and ideas about the marketing activities, product quality maintenance and problem in getting loan from financial institutions came out of that workshop. Ferdous Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD summarized the discussion and highlighted financial and support for maintenance of quality of their produced products, separate HS code for Handicrafts products, long term capital for women entrepreneurs, adequate and updated technological information for marketing of products produced by the SMEs and ensured for policy advocacy through SME Development working committee of BUILD as a platform and utilizing the PRISM project support.

Meeting between BUILD and GIZ on Electric Vehicle



A Team of GIZ joined a meeting with BUILD CEO for discussion on Electric Vehicle on April 9, 2019 at BUILD. Michael Fink, Consultant, Transport Policy of GIZ and Sabah Shamsy, Technical Advisor, Energy Efficiency and Grid Integration of Renewable Energy (EEGIRE) and Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI), Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH joined the meeting. The meeting put light on sustainable transport policies as GIZ is currently working on sustainable transport with Singra Municipality, Natore on Electric vehicle.

Meeting with Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor in Rajshahi



CEO BUILD handed over a set of publication of BUILD to the Mayor of Rajshahi. As part of the consultation on identifying opportunities for business growth in collaboration with the Government and climate change funding, BUILD CEO briefed the Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation AHM Khairuzzman Liton at the Nagar Bhavan about the consultation taking place at the Parjatan Motel Rajshahi. The meeting was attended by Jerry Fox, Team Leader, PROKAS, British Council.

Consultation on Identifying Opportunities for Business Growth in Collaboration with Government and Climate Change Funding



Representatives from BUILD, PROKAS, RCCI and District Level Chambers around Rajshahi Division took part at the Dialogue.

A Dialogue named "Consultation on Identifying Opportunities for Business Growth in Collaboration with Governments and Climate Change Funding" was organized at the Parjatan Motel, Rajshahi on March 24, 2019.

In the session, CEO of BUILD, Ferdous Ara Begum gave her welcome remarks on behalf of BUILD and PROKAS to the participants for joining the program. She also expressed her special gratitude to Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry for their cooperation in arranging the event.

Gerry Fox, Team Leader, PROKAS expressed his thanks and mentioned that this consultation program is organized to find out the growth potentials of different sectors of this region. He also said that private sectors are the important driver of the economy. So, huge contribution of private sectors for the development of the country is compulsory.

Aminul Islam from Chapai Nawabgonh Chamber of Commerce and Industries stated that not only Bangladesh but also other countries are observing irregular weather pattern.

Md. Ishhak Ali, Sr. Vice President of Sirajgonj Chamber of Commerce and Industries said that Sirajgonj is surrounded by rivers. For this reason river erosion is a big problem here. Many people have to be displaced from their house because of this natural disaster. River situation is also a very alarming problem in that area.

Rosette Naznin, President of Rajshahi Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that RMG industries are rarely found in Rajshahi division. This sector could be a great source of employment for both male and female.

The dialogue aimed at gathering views of the private sector to identify new business opportunities to absorb climate induced migrants.

Partner's Corner

Cut corporate tax rates, focus on investment: MCCI



Senior Secretary of IRD and National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, NDC addressing the MCCI Members at MCCI on March 13, 2019

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) urged the tax authority to reduce corporate tax rates and focus on boosting investment through fiscal measures at a first quarterly luncheon meeting.

They also demanded an end to harassment in the name of audit and complete annual audit of tax files within a stipulated time. They put forward the proposals to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) chairman Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan who attended the programme as the chief guest.

In the welcome note, MCCI President Nihad Kabir said a vast majority of non-listed companies have to pay 35 per cent corporate tax which is 'too high'. "When coupled with 20 per cent tax on dividends, entrepreneurs and investors indeed have an onerous tax exposure in Bangladesh," she said.

Apex Group Chairman Syed Manzur Elahi said the fiscal measures should be 'investment-oriented' rather than 'revenue-oriented'.

Responding to the demands of the businesses, the NBR Chairman said he is now under 'dual pressure'-- one is to mobilise higher revenue and other is to make the revenue administration business-friendly.

"We have to collect around 40-42 per cent higher revenue this year compared to that of the last year's target," he said.

All citizens should pay tax, even if it is in lower rate, but the NBR will not impose tax 'irrationally', he said. "We can consider a gradual reduction in the corporate tax rates. The NBR will explore how it can reduce tax rates without affecting the revenue collection," he said.

He said foreign companies are most compliant taxpayers and maintain one book of accounts. MCCI Vice President and BAT Chairman Golam Mainuddin delivered vote of thanks in the programme.

DCCI Urges for Investment and Business Friendly Revenue System



President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Osama Taseer placed Chamber's budget proposal for the year 2019-20 to the Chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR) Md. Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, ndc at a pre-budget discussion meeting with NBR held on 2 April, 2019.

DCCI President Osama Taseer urged for easy and business friendly taxation system, automation of tax system and investment friendly environment to attain 8.5% GDP. He proposed for 25% corporate tax for non-listed companies which is 35% now and 15% corporate tax for listed companies which is 25% now. DCCI President requested to increase tax free income limit for individual from existing 2,50,000 taka to 3,00,000 taka. He said at present 2 million people are submitting income tax return but the tax net should be increased and he urged to bring service sector under tax net. He also proposed for VAT free annual turnover of taka 5 million and requested to keep package VAT system in the next budget. Regarding VAT he also proposed for different slabs of VAT like 5%, 7.5% and 10% instead of existing 15%. He also recommended for widening VAT net as well. The DCCI President proposed 5% source tax on the interest rate of current account which is 10%-15% now.

NBR Chairman Md. Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, ndc said that government reduced corporate tax rate in the last budget and it will be reduced gradually in future. He said corporate tax rate is quite lower in Bangladesh than many other countries. He also said that our investment to GDP ratio is high but our tax to GDP ratio is very low. He also said that every year in order to meet up increased revenue target, NBR has to depend on its existing tax payers.

DCCI Senior Vice President Waqar Ahmed Choudhury, Vice President Imran Ahmed, Directors Alhaj Deen Mohammed, Enamul Haque Patwary, Hossain A Sikder, K.M.N. Manjurul Hoque, Engr. Md. Al Amin, Md. Rashedul Karim Munna, Mohammad Bashiruddin, and S.M. Zillur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

CCCI Holds Pre budget Discussion with NBR



National Board of Revenue Chairman Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan flanked by Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) President Mahbubula Alam, CCCI Senior Vice President Mohammad Nurun Newaj Salim and CCCI Vice President Syed Jamal Ahmed, speaking at a pre-budget meeting with the members of the chamber at the World Trade Centre in Chittagong on April 4, 2019

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) held a pre budgetary discussion meeting with NBR (National Board of Revenue) Chairman Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, NDC at the World Trade Center in the port city.

Organized by CCCI the event was presided over by CCCI President M Mahabubul Alam while NBR Chairman was the Chief Guest.

In his speech, NBR Chairman said the next budget for the fiscal 20-19-20 will be business and investment friendly for attracting more local and foreign investment. However, he said enhancement of revenue collection will be in focus.

He further said the Women Entrepreneurs and disabled people would get extra benefits to smooth their business in the next budget.

Md Mosharraf Hossain also said the next budget would emphasize developing a skilled workforce, tax reform and multi-layer tax.

BUILD Scope

BUILD for Sustainable Consumption and Production

Embracing the SDG 12, Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) as a guiding principle could significantly contribute to a more environmentally friendly and healthy society and contribute to the country's economic growth and development. To achieve this, a collective conscious decision to develop a sustainability transition approach of the society as a whole is crucial. Two significant studies by BUILD in collaboration with GIZ, "SCP Assessment Report for Bangladesh" and "Sustainable Consumption and Production Roadmap/ Vision 2030 Document for Bangladesh" are such an attempt to guide the path of how Bangladesh can move towards mainstreaming SCP.

Incorporating Gender Best Practices Gender Based Violence

BUILD in partnership of Centre for Gender and Social Transformation at the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) are jointly conducting a study on "Incorporating Gender Best Practices Gender Based Violence (GBV) and in BEZA's Institutional Policy". This study is supported by the World Bank Bangladesh Gender Platform. Objectives of the study is to review Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA)'s institutional policies and procedures to recommend measures related to gender mainstreaming as well as preventing and appropriately addressing incidents of gender based violence (GBV) in BEZA and industries/entities established in economic zones under BEZA. For the Economic Zones to fulfill their potential for creating employment for women, it is important to ensure gender mainstreaming in institutional structures and processes to address constraints to women's participation as well as incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) and child care needs.

To conduct the study, the research team will meet stakeholders which will help BUILD and BIGD Joint Research Team to suggest fruitful recommendations for incorporating policies for gender best practices and addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) in BEZA's institutional policy.

BUILD Reforms

Bangladesh Bank Rewarded Good Borrowers

The Bangladesh Bank has recently issued an order for offering incentives to its good borrowers in compliance for which BUILD placed a proposal in the 6th Financial Sector Development Working Committee chaired by the Deputy Governor of BB. BUILD hails this move of the central Bank as it will buoy up the borrowers to be regular with their loan repayment.

As the earlier instruction for giving rebates to good borrowers did not ensure good results, on May 16, 2019, the Bangladesh Bank has reissued incentives for good borrowers, meaning the banks will give good borrowers 10 percent rebate from total interests on their loans now. This initiative of the central bank is well appreciated and helpful to those who are trying to be good loan takers. We think this type of incentives of the Government should be more public and in this regard the banks may pass this information of rebates to their borrowers.

BUILD Articles in National Dailies

SME Policy on the anvil: Addressing finance, information, training, marketing issues

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/reviews/sme-policy-on-the-anvil-addressing-finance-information-training-marketing-issues-1552924911>

NBR pre-budget discussions: Rationalising taxation policy

<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/views/nbr-pre-budget-discussion-s-rationalising-taxation-policy-1556552649>

BUILD working for GDP growth

https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2019/03/09/build-working-for-gdp-growth?fbclid=IwAR1Ji1c2rk89-O9DrW7A-X_kCqgQaivPGjDmueNw_oe_lkw7-aiHhFQTWau

2nd International Conference on Climate Finance by BCAS in Collaboration with BUILD



BUILD CEO chairs the session in presence of other dignitaries.

The International Conference on Climate Finance (ICCF) 2019 was held on March 9-10, 2019. BUILD was the private sector partner of the event. Government officials, academic experts, private sector representatives, and international delegates from a range of developed and developing countries attended the event. In Day 2 of the conference, the session 6 was held on engaging private sector for climate finance. The session was chaired by Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD. Md. Tahmid Zami, Additional Research Director, BUILD made the keynote presentation "Electric Vehicles and Sustainable Transport in Bangladesh". The study provided an assessment of how to promote climate finance for harnessing environment-friendly electric vehicles in Bangladesh.

Meeting between BUILD and Department of Environment

A meeting was held with Director General, DoE on April 29, 2019, 10:00 am at the Office of the Department of Environment (DoE), Dhaka. The main agenda of the meeting was to discuss initiatives taken by the DoE for the management of waste of the plastic sector to be implemented by the Private sector. Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD gave a brief about the agenda of the meeting where she mentioned about the inclusion of plastic manufacturing sector in Green Category of Environment Certificate (EC) proposed in the Export Policy -2018-21. As per the stakeholders of the plastic sector, manufacturing plastic products are less hazardous for the environment because raw materials are 100% useable.

A draft SRO has been prepared by the DoE to phase down plastic pollution an implemented by the stakeholders of the plastic sector which is in the Ministry of Law for vetting. Through this SRO it is expected that the government may pursue extended producers responsibility (EPR) issue with a more structured way to the private sector. CEO, BUILD said, to prepare the private sector for managing plastic waste in an efficient way and get accustomed with EPR will require long term advocacy and policy incentives. To formalize plastic recycle industry and channelized into a circular economy also requires proper policy intervention and advocacy. In view of these, an awareness dialogue program is suggested which can be organized jointly by DoE and BUILD.

A Working Committee has already been formed in DoE to work for pollution control in the plastic sector. In behalf of BUILD, CEO proposed to be a member of this committee to work in association with this committee as BUILD is also advocating policies for the benefits of the plastic sector. At this point, DG, DoE requested BUILD to give comments on draft E-waste Rules for Electrical and Electronics products which are in process of finalization. In regard to queries about GHG emission, He gave a copy of the 'Third National Communication of Bangladesh to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change' to BUILD for better understating.

Meeting between BUILD and PUM

As part of conducting a technical scan of a number of tanneries with a specific aim to assess the status of expertise and the understanding of processes: what is known, what needs to be done, where is practical support required etc, PUM senior leather experts Hans Akkerman and Jan Willem Merx including the leather consultant K.M. Asadun Noor met BUILD CEO on April 11, 2019 at BUILD. In general, BUILD CEO discussed the leather industry situation with the mission.

Pre-HLPF Consultation Session by BRAC



With the HLPF on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) scheduled on July 4, 2019, BUILD worked as a Co-Anchor while BRAC acted as the main Anchor to do a study to take citizen's views on the progress in achieving the development targets of SDG 8 and highlight the role and achievements of private sectors and CSOs in Bangladesh on this goal. BUILD, CEO attended a consultation process to develop the status report to be presented in the HLPF. At the meeting, she critically mentioned that training programs being organized by different CSOs are almost same, skill development have diversified requirements, taking a look on these issues we need to develop skill based on the context and need of the country.

Private Sector's Contribution to Delivering SDGs



A "Roundtable Discussion on the Contribution of the Private Sector in Delivering SDGs" was jointly organized by Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) on 11 April 2019 to share and receive opinion of private sector for the ongoing study reports on six goals to be presented at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in 2019. During the consultation process, the need of proper documentation on private sector's contribution in SDG delivery was highlighted. Asif Ibrahim, Former Chairman of BUILD and BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum attended the meeting among others.

BUILD and IFC Organized Baseline Survey for Women Traders



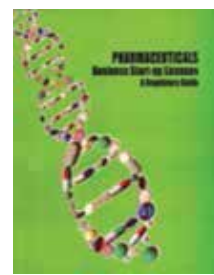
BUILD is jointly working with IFC under BICF-II project to carry out a baseline survey to collect information regarding how much time and cost women entrepreneur need to obtain different certificates, licenses and permits. Different bottlenecks of the export/import process are aimed to be analyzed through this study. To conduct this study, BUILD in collaboration with IFC-WBG is going to organize five survey workshops to measure the time, cost and process requirements related to export and import for women-owned enterprises in Bangladesh. The 1st survey workshop on women owned Businesses to measure time, cost and process for export and import was held at IFC Conference Room on 20 April, 2019.

Baseline Survey-2nd Workshop on Women Importers



The survey workshop on men owned businesses to measure time, cost and process for export and import was held at IFC Conference Room on 28 April, 2019. The workshop was organized for conducting a survey on the measurement of time, cost and process for import and export for the men entrepreneurs. The survey questionnaire was prepared by BUILD in collaboration with IFC-WBG to capture some issues such as time, costs and process for export, import by the men owned business in Bangladesh. IFC and BUILD jointly conducted the survey aimed at observing whether women in conducting businesses and trade face any kinds of challenges in the whole process in comparison with that of the men entrepreneurs.

Publications



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