



YOUTH CALL TO ACTION BANGLADESH

Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for a sustainable future for young people in all their diversity

Situational Analysis

Bangladesh has recently elected a new government, creating an important moment to renew commitments to sustainable and inclusive, and people-centered development. As the country navigates climate vulnerability, rapid urbanisation, economic transformation, and persistent inequality, progress across water and sanitation, energy, infrastructure, cities, and partnerships must remain interconnected and people-centered.

Despite progress in basic coverage, structural inequality, climate vulnerability, and weak governance continue to hinder the shift to safely managed, resilient Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) systems. Only about 59% of the population uses safely managed drinking water, and roughly 39% uses safely managed sanitation (WHO & UNICEF JMP, 2024), with the greatest gaps in rural and informal urban areas. These challenges directly affect public health outcomes. Women and girls

bear a disproportionate burden through unpaid water collection and caregiving. At the same time, inadequate menstrual hygiene management (MHM) facilities undermine dignity, educational participation, and economic opportunities.

Energy access (SDG 7) has expanded significantly; however, energy poverty persists in climate-vulnerable and marginalised communities. Continued reliance on polluting fuels exposes families to health risks. At the same time, unequal access to skills, financing, and leadership limits the participation of women and marginalised youth in the growing renewable energy and green economy sectors.

Industrial growth under SDG 9 has boosted economic progress, especially in urban areas. Still, it is constrained by poor infrastructure, limited adoption of innovation, and weak support for youth- and community-led solutions. Although youth-led digital monitoring and climate-adaptive technologies

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In collaboration



In partnership



show promise, they lack sustained financing and policy integration. Opportunities remain unevenly distributed, highlighting the need for infrastructure development that balances economic growth with environmental protection, public health, and equitable access to innovation and digital tools.

Rapid, unplanned urbanisation has intensified service delivery challenges under SDG 11. Many rural and urban informal settlements lack safe housing, improved sanitation, and access to water, energy, and waste services, while facing pollution and climate risks. Climate-induced migration strains secondary cities, and weak coordination among urban planning, WASH, energy, and health authorities undermines effectiveness. Strengthened local governance, community participation, and inclusive planning are essential to ensure resilient cities that address the needs of women, persons with disabilities, and climate-displaced populations.

Effective partnerships under SDG 17 remain critical,

yet infrastructure financing is declining, centralised, and skewed toward major urban utilities, limiting support for rural and secondary towns. Weak operation and maintenance reduce service reliability, while poor coordination among government, donors, private actors, and communities undermines sustainability. At the same time, rising youth engagement, strong civil society, and growing focus on the climate–health–gender nexus offer a timely opportunity for the new government to strengthen coordination, accountability, and inclusive, youth-centered partnerships.

At this pivotal moment, development must move beyond fragmented approaches. Water and sanitation, energy, infrastructure, urban systems, health, equality, and partnerships are fundamentally interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Meaningful progress depends on integrated, inclusive, and climate-resilient strategies that ensure equitable benefits for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- » Expand climate-resilient WASH infrastructure in coastal, flood-prone, drought-affected, rural, and informal urban areas by investing in sustainable WASH systems, technologies, and wastewater treatment facilities.
- » Integrate WASH with public health systems to reduce waterborne diseases, improve maternal and child health, and strengthen school attendance, particularly for adolescent girls.
- » Institutionalise gender-responsive and disability-inclusive WASH, treating menstrual hygiene as a public service obligation across schools, health facilities, cyclone shelters, and public spaces.
- » Introduce pro-poor financing mechanisms, targeted subsidies, and social protection measures to ensure safe water and sanitation remain affordable for low-income and climate-vulnerable households.
- » Institutionalise youth- and community-

led monitoring mechanisms to enhance transparency, accountability, and long-term maintenance of WASH services at the local level.

- » Strengthen multi-stakeholder coordination among government agencies, local authorities, civil society, and development partners to improve governance and sustainability of WASH resources.

SDG 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- » Accelerate the deployment of affordable and clean energy, including decentralised microgrid and mini-grid systems, while gradually reducing reliance on fossil fuels to ensure long-term sustainability and climate resilience.
- » Guarantee affordable and reliable electricity access for rural, off-grid, and marginalised communities, ensuring that energy poverty does not deepen socioeconomic inequality.
- » Operationalise the plan for “Solar Cities”

[mentioned in MCPP and the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP)], making Dhaka the first model with mandatory rooftop solar on all new commercial buildings and public housing.

- » Scale clean cooking solutions to reduce indoor air pollution and associated health risks, particularly for women and children in low-income households.
- » Promote gender-responsive energy policies that increase women's participation in the energy workforce and decision-making processes while reducing unpaid care burdens.
- » Invest in green skills development and youth entrepreneurship to enable young people to access decent jobs and lead innovation in the renewable energy sector.
- » Strengthen partnerships to ensure transparent, inclusive, and accountable energy transition strategies.

SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- » Develop climate-resilient infrastructure that can withstand floods, cyclones, and heatwaves, particularly in vulnerable and underserved regions.
- » Expand digital connectivity and technological access to bridge rural-urban disparities and ensure equitable participation in the digital economy.
- » Support youth- and women-led enterprises through innovation hubs, access to finance, technical training, and mentorship programs.
- » Promote environmentally sustainable industrial practices, including green technologies, energy efficiency, and circular economy models.
- » Strengthen occupational health, safety, and labor protections to safeguard workers and promote decent work standards.
- » Prioritise equitable growth, sustainability, and community benefits over short-term profit.

SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- » Promote inclusive urban planning that prioritises affordable housing, climate-resilient infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction measures.
- » Upgrade informal settlements with improved access to water, sanitation, electricity, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities.
- » Improve public transportation systems to ensure safe, gender-sensitive mobility and economic participation for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups.
- » Integrate air pollution control, waste management reforms, and green public spaces into municipal planning frameworks.
- » Institutionalise youth, women, and community participation in local governance, budgeting, and urban decision-making processes.
- » Strengthen coordination among municipalities, civil society, and private actors to promote resilient, inclusive urban development.

SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

- » Establish formal, government-led multi-stakeholder SDG coordination platforms to co-create policy, monitor implementation, and ensure meaningful representation of youth, women, marginalised communities, academia, and the private sector.
- » Increase domestic resource mobilization through transparent and participatory budgeting, while leveraging climate finance, blended finance, and international cooperation to support equitable SDG implementation.
- » Strengthen disaggregated, accessible data systems and promote open data sharing to track progress across gender, age, disability, geography, and income levels for evidence-based, inclusive policymaking.
- » Create accessible and flexible funding mechanisms for youth and community-led initiatives to advance localised SDG solutions,

grassroots innovation, and ownership.

- » Promote long-term, trust-based partnerships rather than short-term, project-based engagement to ensure sustainability and accountability.
- » Align national and local SDG strategies to ensure coherent implementation and avoid duplication of efforts.

- » Promote knowledge exchange, digital collaboration, and South-South and triangular cooperation by strengthening regional mechanisms such as SAARC and national coalitions, such as the Bangladesh Youth Coalition (BYC), to scale context-responsive solutions and reduce inequality in access to technology and expertise.

The Bangladesh Call to Action was developed through collaborative discussions among youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok from 18-20 February 2026. The contributors to this document are Sidratul Moontaha (Technovation), Quazi Rokaiya Haque (BRAC), Md Tanjid Hasan (Climate Connects), Chowdhury Anika Farah (SUST), Md Al Mamun Rakib (Lal Sabuj Society), Sultana

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