



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)
1/46 Old Elephant Road, Eskaton, Dhaka

Address of the Chief Guest

Dr. Dipu Moni, MP
Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

on the occasion of a Round-table Discussion on
Bangladesh-China Dialogue

organised by BIISS

Sunday, 14 March 2010

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Chair of this Session Major General Firdaus, Chairman, Board of Governors, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS),
The Director General of BIISS Major General Monir,
Distinguished participants from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Dhaka,
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Learned Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Afternoon.

It is my great pleasure to have this opportunity to speak as the Chief Guest in today's Round-table Discussion on **Bangladesh-China Dialogue** organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS). As the Foreign Minister of the country, it is also my privilege to join this august gathering and say something on Bangladesh-China relations. I am particularly pleased that BIISS has undertaken the initiative to arrange a Round-table on a topic that is so timely and important prior to Prime Minister's scheduled official visit to China from 17-21 March 2010. I thank BIISS

for organizing this Round-table. I also take this opportunity to thank today's presenters and the participants for such a lively discussion on the subject matter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh and China is enjoying profound friendship dating back to ancient time. In olden days, Bangladesh was the region which had the closest communications with China in the entire sub-continent. The People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Bangladesh officially established diplomatic relations on October 4, 1975 which opened up a new page in the friendship and cooperation among the two countries. The bi-lateral relationship between the two countries has been growing smoothly. Fruitful results have been observed in the exchange and cooperation in fields like politics, economy, trade, culture, science, technology and security affairs. Contact and communication among the people is also playing important role in enhancing relations between the two countries. Both the countries have also maintained sound coordination and collaboration in international and regional affairs.

Distinguished Guests,

According to her foreign policy, China persists in building good neighbourly relationships and partnership with neighbouring countries and continues to bring harmony, security and prosperity in the region. This policy would help to further strengthen the exchange and cooperation in bilateral and multilateral relationship between the two countries. The traditional friendship and good neighbourly ties should be consolidated. It is necessary to deepen the mutual understanding and trust through all kinds of exchanges, particularly direct contacts and dialogues between various levels of people of the two countries. It is also necessary to vigorously develop our economic and trade relations and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation. Further efforts should be made to extend the areas of cooperation on the basis of increasing traditional commodities. More investments from China would help to grow the economy of Bangladesh. Both the countries should enhance scientific and technological exchanges

and give priorities to cooperate in the development and management of agricultural technologies and other areas. Cultural and educational exchanges and strengthening cooperation in human resources development and training should also be expanded. Enhancing people-to-people exchanges will broaden the foundation of the friendship between the two countries. Exchanges between non-governmental organizations and groups and sharing their experiences would be helpful for us in nation-building.

Distinguished Participants,

After winning the 7th Parliamentary election in June 1996, the Awami League Government paid importance to the friendly ties with China and the relations continued to develop steadily. In September 1996, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid an official visit to China, which was her first visit to any foreign country after assuming the Prime Minister's office and signed the Agreement on Encouraging and Protecting Investment, the Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Agreement of the Prevention of Tax Evasion. After the victory of the 9th Parliamentary election held in December 2008, the Bangladesh Awami League again came to power and Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took the office of the government once again. As outlined in the Constitution, the election manifesto of the Bangladesh Awami League also underlined adherence to the principles of friendship with all and malice to none. It also depicts that friendly relations will be continued with the neighbouring countries. Bangladesh has been striving to further strengthen bilateral and sub-regional ties with the neighbours, especially in the fields of trade, commerce, investment, tourism, etc. which have positive impacts on the economy of the country. Since the formation of the government, our relations with the neighbouring countries received further impetus. Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is also visiting different countries to enhance foreign relationship of Bangladesh with other countries.

Distinguished Guests,

China is a very important development partner of Bangladesh. In recent years, the economic and trade ties between China and Bangladesh have considerably developed with gradual expansion in cooperation fields. But the trade deficit remains very high and

it is in favour of China. Bangladesh should look for alternative markets beyond the traditional ones. Chinese experience of economic reforms can also be utilized in Bangladesh. With increased interaction with the Chinese entrepreneurs, Bangladeshi entrepreneurs can also learn how to improve the quality of their products to enter the Chinese markets. We also invite joint venture projects and more investments in various sectors to boost our economic development. China is also supporting Bangladesh by building many infrastructures. We also hope that this kind of support from China will continue in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think today's Seminar organised by BISS has been a fruitful one. I thank the distinguished speakers and the participants for their intellectual output on very important topics. We are eagerly looking forward to the forthcoming visit to China by the Honourable Prime Minister which I strongly believe would enable us to build on the already solid foundation of our existing friendly relations with China. I hope that both the countries will join their hands together for the positive outcomes of the mutual benefits of the peoples of the two friendly countries. We have every reason to believe that, with the joint efforts of the two governments and peoples, the firmly-established Sino-Bangladesh relations will shine out glorious splendour and bear more fruits in the days to come.

Before I conclude, once again I would like to thank BISS for inviting me as Chief Guest in this forum. I congratulate the scholars involved in the Round-table and those who have come here to participate in the discussion. I hope your observations and recommendations will have not only academic value but will also be of practical use in our foreign policy.

I thank you all.