**Statement by H.E. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, Hon’ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh**

**at the 2nd ACD Summit**

**Bangkok, 10 October 2016**

**His Excellency, Mr. Prayut Chan O-cha**, **Chair of the 2nd ACD Summit. Excellencies, Distinguished delegates**

At the outset I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our host, His Excellency, the Hon’ble Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, for the generous Thai hospitality showered upon all delegates to the 2nd ACD Summit.

Bangladesh also places on record our commendations for Thailand for its stewardship of the ACD process including successful holding of the14th ACD Ministerial in Bangkok, leading up to a culturally vibrant 2nd ACD Summit. We particularly recognize Thailand’s contribution in steering the ACD framework in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and skillfully negotiating a forward looking ACD Vision 2030, the 2017-2021 Blueprint and the Bangkok Declaration.

I join my colleagues in congratulating the Government of UAE for assuming the Chair of the ACD. We remain confident that under the able leadership of UAE, ACD’s work would gain further momentum. Bangladesh also recognizes with appreciation the contributions of the State of Kuwait in supporting the work of the provisional ACD secretariat. We look forward to the hosting of the 3rd ACD Summit by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Bangladesh welcomes the two newest members of ACD Nepal and Turkey to the ACD family.

**Excellencies,**

ACD is a unique forum for the most culturally diverse continent in the world -- Asia. As a founding member of the ACD it has been Bangladesh’s firm conviction that our diversity is our strength and no matter how diverse we are, it is possible to achieve one prosperous, inclusive and sustainable Asian community under the ACD.

Recognizing our strengths, diversity and economic potential, it has been a foreign policy aspiration of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to work closely with all our Asian neighbours to realize the vision of a prosperous, peaceful and seamlessly connected Asian continent. Connectivity is no longer a 'choice' but a compelling foreign policy priority for our Prime Minister who nurtures her own vision to develop Bangladesh as a regional connectivity hub. We must not only connect ‘nodes’ and ‘modes’ for physical connectivity but aspire for connectivity of our peoples, cultures and ideas, connectivity of our trade, investment, technology, enterprises and labour force to secure inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Bangladesh thus firmly supports the Connectivity Pillar of the ACD and as a co-prime mover would be happy to host the first ACD Working Group meeting on Connectivity in Dhaka.

**Excellencies,**

With a 6.5% growth rate Bangladesh has embarked on a higher trajectory of large-scale infrastructure projects to match our development aspirations. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s government is pursuing strong national and regional policies for sustained food, water and energy security not only for our 165 million people but for more than a billion people in our region. As a co-prime mover of the ACD Pillar on interrelations of food, water and energy security, Bangladesh would work closely with other ACD members to seriously explore newer regional partnerships.

Partnerships for technical assistance, capacity building, sharing of knowledge and best practices for sustainable management of water and energy resources for food security.

With a digital Bangladesh Vision we are harnessing the power of digital technology and innovation for our people. In Bangladesh, for instance, 4.5 million citizens receive over 70 e-services from 5,300 Digital Centers across the country; we are also bringing 43,000 government offices under a single national e-portal. We are providing 4 million of our non-grid population in the coastal area homestead solar panel electricity, the highest in the region. We look forward to strongly supporting the science technology and innovation pillar of the ACD Vision and hosting of Working group meetings in the future.

**Excellencies,**

There can be no peace and prosperity in Asia or elsewhere with the looming and persistent threats of terrorism or the dire humanitarian crises pervasive around the world. As all our States remain vulnerable to transboundary security threats, Bangladesh is pursuing a zero tolerance policy against terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization and human trafficking. We have just concluded a historic UN Summit on Migrants and Refugees. The outcome of the Summit should help redefine perceptions and realities of human mobility in our times and in our region. That is why our Prime Minister has proposed for a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration at the UN. Bangladesh looks forward to receiving all our ACD delegations at the 9th Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) that we are hosting in Dhaka in December this year.

I thank you all.