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From left, Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue; AHM Mustafa Kamal, planning minister; Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of CPD; and Robert Watkins, UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh, attend a discussion on financing Sustainable Development Goals in Dhaka yesterday.

Raise revenue for new development agenda

Analysts say at discussion on Sustainable Development Goals

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Analysts yesterday urged the policymakers of developing countries, including Bangladesh, to shore up efforts to raise revenue collection and accelerate investment and intra-regional trade to attain the post-2015 development targets.

The call came at the opening of a two-day Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Asian Partnership in Financing Sustainable Development Goals at Brac Centre Inn.

SDGs are the next global development agenda after the expiry of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) later this year.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue in association with Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals and the UN Millennium Campaign organised the discussion on financing SDGs.

There are 17 overarching goals and 169 targets in the SDGs compared to only eight goals in the MDGs, which mainly focused on the poor in the

low-income countries.

The suggestions were placed noting the declining flow of aid from developed countries, and gradual reduction of aid dependence by a number of developing nations, including Bangladesh.

The context of financing changes fast with the falling dependence of developing countries on overseas development assistance (ODA), said Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of CPD.

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Global seminar begins today in Dhaka to mobilise funds for post-2015 goals

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Around \$5-\$11 trillion would be required to achieve the post-2015 development goals, which include eradication of poverty in developing countries such as Bangladesh.

To mobilise such vast amounts of resources, a two-day international seminar will start in Dhaka today, which will be attended by ministers, senior officials and development practitioners from 45 countries.

The meeting is being organised by the Economic Relations Division in partnership with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and United Nations Development Programme.

At a press briefing yesterday to highlight the different aspects of the seminar, ERD Senior Secretary Mohammad Mejbahuddin said the post-2015 development goals cannot be financed from a single source.

As a result, different alternative sources have to be found to mobilise the funds, he said.

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Garment factories now safer after inspections

Rob Wayss, Accord's executive director, says as they complete two years in Bangladesh

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Safety in the garment sector has improved over the last two years as factory owners started implementing the corrective actions plans recommended by the engineers of two foreign inspection agencies -- Accord and Alliance.

"Factories in Bangladesh producing garments for Accord signatory companies have become safer," said Rob Wayss, Accord's executive director for Bangladesh operations.

"Safety hazards identified through our inspections are being remediated and will ultimately be completed. There is a lot of work remaining to do to complete the remediation work but progress has been made and this has made factories safer."

After the Rana Plaza building collapse, nearly 200 retailers and brands, mainly European, formed the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh on May 13, 2013 to ensure workplace safety and improve worker rights in the garment sector.

The engineers of Accord, a legally binding five-year agreement, formally started factory inspections on February 20 last year and completed preliminary inspections in September.

Through two batches of initial inspections -- one in Feb-Sept of 2014 and the other in Jan-April of 2015 -- Accord has inspected 1,286 factories for fire, electrical, and structural issues, Wayss said in an email interview as they completed two years in Bangladesh.

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Apparel exports to face more tax

Muhith speaks at discussion organised by BIDS

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Muhith said on Friday. The minister spoke at a discussion on "budget 2015-16: some selected analysis" organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies or BIDS at its office in Dhaka.

The sector receives a lot of benefits from the government, and now it is time for the exporters to give back -- at least something, according to Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

The tax at source on export receipts had been reduced to 0.3 percent for this fiscal year from 0.8 percent in the previous one.

"If the rate is increased, we can collect a large amount of revenue from the sector,"

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