

Statement of qualifications

This is a statement submitted in accordance with paragraph 6 of the resolution of the Assembly of States Parties relating to the procedure for the nomination and election of members of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims for the benefit of Victims (ICC-ASP/1/Res.7), adopted on 9 September 2002.

Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal meets the criteria established in paragraph 1 of the above mentioned resolution; “the candidates [shall] be of high moral character, impartiality, integrity and have competence in the assistance to victims of serious crimes.”

Following obtaining his Masters in Public Administration from Harvard University of USA in 2012, Mr. Belal devoted his career towards furthering Bangladesh's advocacy for diplomacy, disarmament and justice for the victims. His quest for working for peace and justice took a boost when he was appointed as Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands with residence in The Hague-the city of peace and justice.

In his role as Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands, Ambassador Belal has been working as Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the International Criminal Court (ICC), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), Common Fund for Commodity (CFC), etc.

Ambassador Belal has been a frequent participant and speaker, as Bangladesh representative, in events at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)/ United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (MICT), Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), etc. Mr. Belal is a frequent speaker and guest at the T.M.C Asser Institute, The Hague in his quest to make a knowledge-bridge between institutions of Bangladesh and the Netherlands. Ambassador Belal has been working constantly to make connectivity between the legal institutions based in The Hague and Bangladesh. Ambassador Belal has been instrumental in arranging a good number of judicial delegation visits between Bangladesh and the Netherlands including that of the Chief Justice of Bangladesh.

Ambassador Belal represented Bangladesh during his nation's historic achievement of peaceful settlement of maritime disputes with India at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) and led the process that resulted in gaining access to a maritime territory that has changed Bangladesh's maritime history forever. Ever since, Ambassador Belal has involved himself in a series of speaking engagements highlighting the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes and importance of diplomacy.

During his stay in the Netherlands, Ambassador Belal was elected as Chairperson of the Executive Council of the OPCW for the 2017-2018 term. Mr. Belal was the first-ever Chairperson from Bangladesh in the twenty years' plus history of the OCPW. Although his tenure as the Chair of the Executive Council, an apex organ of OPCW comprising 41 of the OPCW's 193 member States, was hugely challenging because of ongoing civil war in Syria and repeated alleged uses of chemical weapons in several countries, Mr. Belal conducted his business with utmost professionalism and sincerity.

Ambassador Belal oversaw the process of appointment of the incumbent Director-General of the OPCW, which happens only after eight years, to the satisfaction of all. His innovative, calm and candid approach helped conclude this rather arduous job in the shortest possible time. The hallmark of Mr. Belal's tenure as Chairperson of the Executive Council was his ability to engage almost all 193 State Parties in the affairs of the OPCW despite his mandate to work as Chair of the 41-member Executive Council.

Always on the look-out for innovations and creativity, Mr. Belal remained engaged with all key stakeholders in dialogue and negotiations to pursue consensus culture of the organization. In addition to his role as Chair of the Executive Council, Mr. Belal also worked in a host of other capacities like Chairperson of Credential Committee for the Conference of State Parties (CSP), Vice Chairperson for the CSP of OPCW as well as Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Council of the CFC.

While working with all these organizations, Mr. Belal was also instrumental in arranging hosts of training programs in his home country, including trainings for "First Respondents for Chemical Attack" with the assistance of OPCW and other organizations.

Mr. Belal always pursues a policy of "humanity first" despite being a representative of a nation state. In his pursuit for peace and justice, Mr. Belal has been able to vindicate that when resolution is for the "common good" it is always good for one's nation's interests as well.

In his engagements with the ICC, Mr. Belal has been a constant voice and activist for the cause of victims. Perhaps this was the reason why the Bureau appointed him as "Facilitator for the Trust Fund of Victims" for the term 2015-2016. Ambassador Belal was also a member of the panel of Ambassadors, appointed by the President of ASP for nomination of Head of IOM at the ICC in the recent past.

While working with TFV, Mr. Belal had been a constant promoter of innovative outreach for fund raising and has since been pursuing TFV to appoint at least one professional fund raising expert at the TFV. Mr. Belal has been a constant catalyst to TFV for fund raising, even after the completion of his tenure as Facilitator for the TFV. He made innumerable suggestions to the TFV. Mr. Belal is a believer in sincere outreach no matter how odd it may initially seem. Given his years of experiences in Washington DC, as Deputy Ambassador of Bangladesh Embassy in the USA, Mr. Belal is not only conversant with the fund-raising culture in the USA, also remained in contact with a good number of fund raising experts there. It is expected that Mr. Belal will be hugely helpful in complementing TFV's fund raising drive in the future.

Mr. Belal's conviction in the well being of victims is more than personal. Given his upbringing, in the early years of Bangladesh's independence, after a bloody war and genocide, Ambassador Belal took upon himself the cause of coming to the aid of victims. It is because of this belief and spirit of making a difference, Mr. Belal has represented Bangladesh to all the Sessions of the Assembly of State Parties (ASP) of the ICC from 2015 to 2017. He has been a voice for geographical and gender balance in the ICC and beyond. It is during his tenure, Bangladesh was elected during ASP 2017 as a member of the Bureau, for the first time ever.

Before coming over to The Hague, Mr. Belal worked as Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh with jurisdiction over East Asia and the Pacific. During his tenure as Director General, Mr. Belal was instrumental in spearheading Bangladesh's relations with a good number of countries like Australia, New Zealand, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Korea, Japan and a number of Pacific Island countries. At the same time, Mr. Belal also acted as focal point for the government of Bangladesh for a number of international and regional organizations. During this time, Mr. Belal also led his country's delegation in a number of international and regional organizations.

Mr. Belal, despite overwhelming engagements with his present job, continues his voluntary portfolio as President of Alumni Association of Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences (IFESCU), Chittagong University in his home country. Given his leadership and known fund raising prowess, Ambassador Belal has been working hard to establish the first-ever career development center for students of his Institute and making sure that incoming students will be much better endowed to take up the challenges of a climatically vulnerable country like Bangladesh.

During his tenure in The Hague, there have been quite a few 'firsts' ever: first ever official visit of any Prime Minister from Bangladesh to the Netherlands, visit of Her Majesty Queen of the Netherlands to Bangladesh, Bangladesh's election as Chairperson of the Executive Council of the OPCW, Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Council of CFC and counting.

In his pro bono role as Director of "Center for Asia Leadership" in the Harvard University, USA, Mr. Belal has been instrumental in arranging exchange of visits of students and fellows from Harvard University to Bangladesh on a regular basis. As an active member of alumni in the Harvard and few other universities, Mr. Belal is blessed to have a vast network of friends and peers across the globe. Ambassador Belal looks forward to availing their good will to make the workings of TFV as a vocation for all people to bring much needed solace to the victims.

Personal details:

Name: Sheikh Mohammed Belal (Mr.)

Place and date of birth: Chittagong, Bangladesh, October 05, 1964.

Marital status: Married, two children

Nationality: Bangladeshi

Profession: Diplomat and International Foreign Service.

University education:

2012: Masters in Public Administration (MPA), Harvard Kennedy School, United States of America.

1995: Masters in Foreign Affairs and Trade, Monash University, Australia

1990: Bachelor of Science in Forestry, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

Profile:

-Diplomat and International Civil Servant with experience of over 27 years in diplomacy, trade, investment, disarmament, peace and justice.

- Passionate activist of justice, rule of law and human rights.
- Professional Mediator with excellent negotiating skills.
- Manager with proven innovative and creative leadership skills.
- Economic diplomat with entrepreneurship skills in both the public and private sectors.
- Environmental activist aimed at honing skills to address the challenges of climate change.
- Helped planning Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and promoting "Digital Bangladesh" campaign to impart innovations and creativity in aspects of our national planning.
- A promoter of geographical and gender balance in all organizations.
- A strong advocate for international judicial mechanisms and inter-state cooperation to bring perpetrators to justice while ensuring justice to victims.
- An activist for a connectivity driven world where poverty is a responsibility of all.

Professional working experience:

2014 to present:

- Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary to TheNetherlands, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia; and Poland (now concluded).
- Bangladesh Permanent Representative to all legal institutions including: the International Criminal Court (ICC), International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration(PCA), the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapon (OPCW).
- Chairperson of the Executive Council of OPCW for 2017-2018.
- Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole of OPCW for 2014-2015.
- Chairperson of the Credential Committee of the Conference of State Parties to 2015-2016.
- Vice-Chairperson of the CSP of OPCW for the term 2016-2017.
- Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Council of the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC).

2012 – 2013:

Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh with jurisdiction over East Asia and the Pacific and Bangladesh focal point for a number of regional and international organizations. Helped bringing "connectivity" as a core activity of Bangladesh Foreign Policy.

2011-2012:

Attended Masters in Public Administration in the Harvard Kennedy School, USA.

2010-2011:

Deputy Ambassador in Uzbekistan with concurrent accreditation to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Oversaw bilateral trade of over one and a half billion while bringing the concept of "clean" cotton in our sourcing practices.

2005 – 2010:

Deputy Ambassador to United States of America. Bangladesh country focal point in the Capitol Hill and all leading Think Tanks in Washington DC. Trade Representative to all trade negotiations. Also worked as "Press Minister" in the Embassy.

2003 – 2005:

Chief of Cabinet of Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. Advising Foreign Minister in all affairs

of diplomacy and trade while accompanying the Minister, as a delegate and advisor, to numerous international and regional conferences, seminars and bilateral visits.

2000-2003:

Counsellor at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. Helped installing the first ever-automated consular payment system in any of Bangladesh Embassies abroad.

1996-2000:

Second/First Secretary at Bangladesh High Commission in Australia. Designed and hosted first-ever website of an Embassy of Bangladesh.

1995-1996:

Completed Masters in Foreign Affairs and Trade, Monash University, Australia with high distinction.

1996-1991:

Undergone trainings in Bangladesh as a junior diplomat and subsequently worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with exposure in United Nations, SAARC, Legal and Administrative affairs.

Publications:

"Ganges Water Treaty: Water security for Bangladesh", Master's Thesis at the University of Bangladesh, 1989.

-Regular contributing writer to Diplomat Magazine, Diplomatic Affairs, Holland Times, etc.

Conference and International Scholarly activities:

-Led/represented Bangladesh in over a hundred conferences and seminars.

-Delivered speeches and Bangladesh country statements in fora like United Nations, Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Assembly of State Parties of ICC, OPCW, PCA, CFC, etc.

Membership and awards:

- Mason Scholarship for MPA in Harvard University, USA.
- AusAID scholarship for Masters in Monash University, Australia.
- Member of Bangladesh Foreign Service Association.
- President of Alumni Association (IAA) of Institute of Forestry and Environmental Association.
- Life Gold Member of IAA.
- Director, Center for Asia Leadership, Harvard University.

Languages:

Excellent knowledge and proficiency in English and Bengali. Working knowledge in Urdu, Hindi and Bahasa Malay.

Hobbies:

Reading, Cricket, Football, American NFL, travelling, reading and "giving back" activities.

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