



**MDG Advocacy**  
**Communications Strategy 2006 - 07**

**Bringing the MDGs closer to the Bangladeshi people**

## Executive Summary

The MDGs represent a simple, but powerful idea. By setting basic targets for a number of critically important development outcomes, they provide guidance and direction towards the achievement of eight key goals, beginning with decisive reduction of poverty. If the world achieves the MDGs, more than 500 million people will be lifted out of poverty. A further 250 million will no longer suffer from hunger. 30 million children and two million mothers who might reasonably have been expected to die will be saved.

With a view to fulfil the commitments, Bangladesh has made significant progress in achieving universal primary education (goal 2), which is just 17% below than the target set for 2015 and in promoting gender equality and women empowerment (goal 3) which is very close to fulfil its target set for 2015. Also, Bangladesh's strong initiative to reduce child mortality (goal 4) as presently the number of deaths per thousand stands 82 for children under the age of five while the target for 2015 is to bring that figure to 50 deaths per thousand.

But, challenges still remain in other fields like eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (goal 1), improving maternal health (goal 5), to ensure environmental sustainability (goal 7) and in terms of combating HIV/AIDS.

In Bangladesh still now there is very little knowledge about the MDGs in the grassroots level, although Bangladesh is committed to fulfil the targets by 2015 and until and unless the concept is well understood by the mass people, the achievement of the MDGs might be hampered. In June 2005, a field survey conducted by the UNDP Bangladesh communications unit shows that less than 3% people knows about the MDGs, although it is very much close to the heart of the present government.

So this is the time to localize the MDGs through a strategic communications and advocacy plan and expand its outreach from policy level to grassroots level. Also, there remains considerable distance to go to achieve all of the MDGs and to assure a balanced progress of the whole nation consisting of 140 million people, UN has to play a major role considering the fact, vast majority lives in the rural areas and Bangladesh's commitment to the global goals of the MDGs can only be realized through local action.

Again, to develop a global partnership for development with the developed countries, Bangladesh needs strong communications policy to assure cooperation from the donors. Thus the aim of this project is to bring the MDGs closer to people with elements of education or advocacy that is planned to have maximum effect towards localizing the MDGs within a defined time frame by developing a realistic and sustainable communications strategy, which can be replicated in other developing countries like Bangladesh.

Finally the project outcome can be summed up like this: ***Increase public awareness of the MDGs and public pressure on Governments and developed countries to deliver on their commitments.***

The development partners in Bangladesh are very keen to be a part of this initiative and already DFID, British High Commission and European Commission has come forward to help the UN led communications initiatives with funding. Till now around 40,000 US dollars has been received from the British High Commission out of the total approximate budget of 300,000 US dollars and other development partners are willing to come forward with the remaining funding. Also, the UN Resident Coordinator's office in Bangladesh is very much supportive towards this initiative

## **Project Rationale**

During the past five years progress towards the MDGs in Bangladesh has been substantial, and in some cases like achieving universal primary education (Goal 2) there has been remarkable progress given the country's low level income.

Again, to assure the overall success a realistic and sustainable communications plan is much required to create mass awareness to be a part of this global agenda. The rationale's for this project is as follows,

### **1. UNDP Priorities & Goals**

Being responsible for the administrative side of the UN, UNDP has been putted on the forefront in terms of achieving the MDGs globally. As stated in the "Second multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007" (MYFF),

"The MDGs, taken together with the Millennium Declaration, comprise an agenda for achieving human development that enjoys the political commitment of the international community. It is significant that the MDGs codify and crystallize in very specific targets, for the first time, the concepts of human development and poverty eradication long advocated by UNDP."

The 2004-2007 MYFF also states,

"In addition to the directive provided to UNDP by Executive Board decision 2003/8 to place the MDGs at the center of the organizations strategic goals, the Secretary-General has entrusted the Administrator of UNDP to act as the coordinator for the MDGs in the United Nations system. In fulfilling this role, UNDP is working with counterparts at the country level to set national MDG targets, establish monitoring mechanisms, mobilize public support for the MDGs and plan national MDG reports."

Thus, each and every UNDP country office are taking lots of initiatives in terms of achieving the MDGs and in this respect a strategic communications plan will provide lots of support in this sector, which will assure the achievement of the MDGs at a national level supplementing into global success.

### **2. Specific Business Process Context**

Recently communications has become a major part of UNDP, which has the potential of contributing towards UNDP service lines and outcomes. This project is both "product and process oriented" and the expected output will be mass awareness about the MDGs and replication in other developing countries for the same purpose.

### **3. Statement of the Problem**

UNDP Bangladesh is doing a lot of work to achieve the MDGs in Bangladesh, but they are very much limited within the policy level and among the development organizations. A field survey done by the UNDP communications team in July 2005 shows that less than 3% people in the grassroots level in Bangladesh knows vaguely about the MDGs and those 3% are mainly coming from urban background, whereas more than 80% inhabitants of Bangladesh are based in rural areas. To achieve the MDGs each and every individual has to be a part of this global movement and to motivate people in doing so, a strong, realistic and sustainable communications strategy will be of great use.

## **Project Goals & Objectives**

- To create social mobilization - *grassroots movements*
- To garner public attention- *press coverage*
- To work with special interest *groups-women, environment, artistes*
- To work on technical issues- *policy analysts, academics*
- To work behind the scenes –*lobbying high level partners*

## **Project Description: Process of Project Set-up & Implementation**

The first step of the project will involve identifying the means and methods of advocating for the MDGs in the grassroots level and finding possible entry points through the existing UNDP projects in Bangladesh. Also, the recent MDG progress report published by the UN in Bangladesh in 2005 will be an important tool while planning the advocacy campaign.

The proposed communications strategy will concentrate on advocating in various levels, which includes the following,

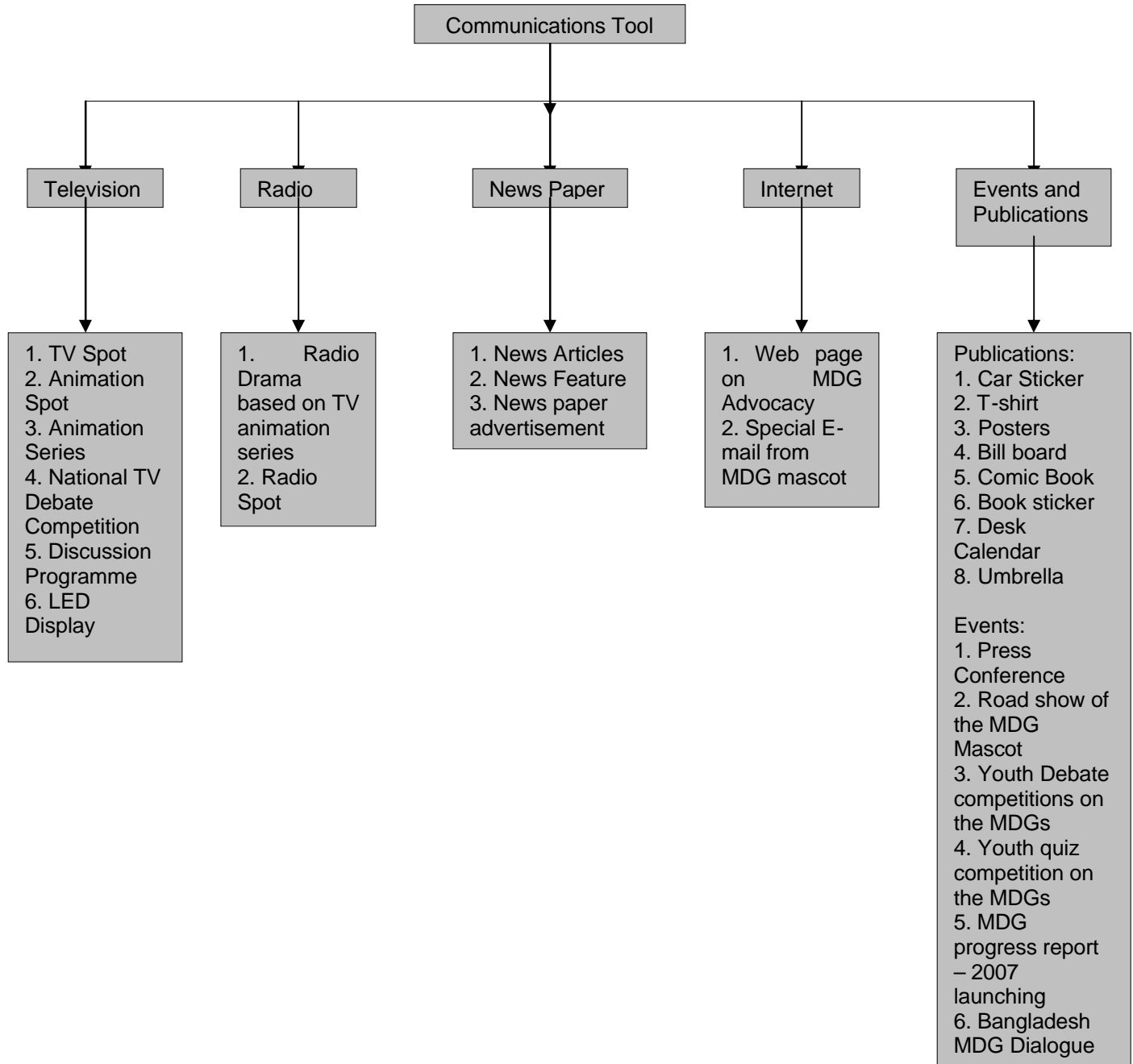
- At organisational level
- Local or community
- Regional
- National
- International level or
- Personal

After identifying various entry points and methods the project will be implemented through means like, community groups, focus groups, media coverage, special TV and radio programmes, seminars, workshops, publications etc.

Since the proposed project is intended at changing attitudes or behaviours of various audience groups, it will involve educating the audience and building coalitions of like-minded partners.

## Expected Outputs/End Deliverables

The expected output of this project is to get a realistic communications strategy to create mass awareness about the MDGs, which will ultimately localize the MDGs. Also, through the implementation of the project, creating public pressure on Governments and developed countries to deliver on their commitments. The expected deliverables can be better understood from the following chart,



## **Monitoring & Evaluation: Evidence & Measures of Success**

**Monitoring:** UN Resident Coordinators office and the UN Communications and Advocacy Group (UNCAG) in Bangladesh will monitor the project implementation, under the overall supervision of the UN Resident Coordinator.

**Evaluative Measures of Success:** The production of the communications strategy and the implementation of the suggested activities to localize the MDGs within a definite timeframe.

**Evaluative Measures of Success:** The proposed activities will be shared and discussed with the UNDP programme colleagues, UN resident Coordinator, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, other UN communications officials from different agencies, NGOs and donors.

## **Benefit derived for UNDP and/or other targeted beneficiaries**

- UNDP Bangladesh office will benefit from this strategy in terms strengthening its efforts in achieving the MDGs.
- UN country team will work together with a common goal with a specific work plan.
- The successful implementation of this project work in Bangladesh will certainly encourage other developing countries to replicate this strategy.
- Government and donors will get a clear vision about the activities of the UN in terms of advocating for the MDGs.
- Mass awareness about the MDGs will be created all over the country.

## **Partners & Stakeholders**

- UNDP country team
- UN Resident Coordinator
- Government
- Donors
- UNDP projects

## **Proposed areas of partnership:**

### 1. News Paper:

News Paper Advertisement

### 2. Events and Publications:

Publication:

1. Comic Book
2. Book sticker (school Kids)
3. T-shirt
4. Posters
5. Bill Board
6. Car sticker
7. Desk Calendar
8. Umbrella

Events:

1. Bangladesh MDG Dialogue
2. Youth Debate Competition on the MDGs
3. Youth quiz competition on the MDGs

### **Required Resources Available (guaranteed)**

The UN Resident Coordinators office will provide all the possible cooperation, as well as the communications personnel's working for various UN agencies in Bangladesh. Also, the development partners in Bangladesh are very keen to be a part of this initiative and already DFID, British High Commission and European Commission has come forward to help the communications initiatives with funding. Recently British High Commission and UNICEF have jointly funded 41,000 US dollars for implementing one of the activities proposed in the strategy.

### **Required Resources to be Mobilized**

Around 260,000 US dollars has to be mobilized from external sources to implement the suggested activities in the strategy and development partners like British High Commission, DFID and European commission are showing their interest to fund this amount jointly.

### **Risks, Constraints & Limitations, Mitigating Strategies**

In terms of preparing the communications strategy there is no risk associated. The only risk associated with this project lies with implementation stages, which are as follows,

- A lack of *Political will* for involving politicians in various public events;
- Lack of interest from the donors;
- Natural disasters may delay campaign activities;
- Disturbing activities leading to and from the forthcoming election may delay campaign activities;

To manage the above mentioned risks the following strategies will be adopted,

- Entry points for reaching the grass roots level and the politicians will be the existing projects of UNDP.
- During the whole implementation stage other stakeholders namely donors, NGOs, civil society will remain as partners, so that they, from their own respective positions can support the communications strategy.
- If campaign activities are delayed owing to natural disaster and other destabilising events, special effort will be made to catch up with the proposed timeline.
- The existing UN Communications and Advocacy Group (UNCAG) in Bangladesh, consisting of communications officials from all the UN agencies, will regularly monitor and evaluate the campaign.
- The UN Communications and Advocacy Group (UNCAG) will ensure constant monitoring and adaptation of the lessons learned from M&E.