



MEDIA RELEASE

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Senior MPs from major parties meet to forge partnership for progress

Revising political party manifestos to include globally agreed development goals was among the ideas tabled earlier today when senior Members of Parliament from the major parties met in Dhaka. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to seek MP's views on realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Bangladesh by 2015.

Bangladesh is among 189 nations to have signed the 2000 Millennium Declaration, committing to a set of eight internationally agreed targets called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim at reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, combating HIV/AIDS and discrimination against women by 2015.

According to a recent report jointly prepared by the United Nations and the Government, Bangladesh was on track for meeting some of the eight goals. The nation is one of only two South Asian countries to have achieved parity in school enrolment for boys and girls. "Bangladesh's success proves that, while funding is important for the achievement of the MDGs, the introduction of good policies is even more important," the meeting chair, UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner said.

However, significant challenges still remain, particularly in the areas of reducing poverty (goal 1), decreasing child malnutrition (goal 1), improving the quality of education (goal 2), and improving maternal health (goal 5). After China and India, Bangladesh has the third largest number (worldwide) of people living below the poverty line (63 million citizens). Meanwhile, child malnutrition is among the highest in the world.

Meeting participants agreed that in order for Bangladesh to meet the Goals a stronger and clearer commitment from all sides of the political spectrum was required. A one-day debate in parliament involving all parties was suggested as a next step following today's meeting. **ENDS....** For further information please contact: Ms. Lisa Hiller, via email: lisa.hiller@undp.org, ph: 811 8600, ext. 2043, mob: 011812042, or Mr. Sakil Faizullah via email: sakil.faizullah@undp.org, ph: 811 8600, ext. 2415, mob: 011 812046.