



MEDIA RELEASE

ATTENTION: NEWS EDITOR

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The European Commission and UNDP partners to address trafficking of human beings

Dhaka: The European Commission (EC) has signed an agreement today with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to contribute two million euros (taka 15.20 crore) to boost the fight against *Trafficking of Human Beings* as a pivotal part of the Police Reform Programme. The Police Reform Programme is currently being implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and Bangladesh Police. The Anti trafficking component will be implemented from 2007 until the end of 2008.

The European Commission and the UNDP signed the agreement at the office of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh.

"I am delighted that the European Commission and UNDP are working together to tackle human trafficking", said Ambassador Stefan Frowein, Head of the Delegation of the EC. "It is a crime that has destroyed the lives of countless women and children in Bangladesh. The police force is in the front-line of efforts to fight trafficking and it is therefore vital that the police are well-resourced and well-trained in this field. This project with the UNDP will contribute to ensuring that this is the case".

The purpose of "**Anti trafficking of Human Beings**" component is to substantially reduce the trafficking of human beings by developing a well-trained and responsive police force. The EC supported component will focus on various areas which includes development of national *Trafficking of Human Beings* strategy and action plan, building policing capacity to analyze trafficking networks and operations, improving investigative capacity and prosecution effectiveness, developing effective victim support mechanisms and building community-police partnership to combat human trafficking.

Bangladesh is a source and transit country for women, children, and men for the purposes of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, in conditions akin to slavery. These practices constitute serious violations of the victims' human rights as enshrined in international laws. Although the exact scale of human trafficking is unknown in Bangladesh, stakeholders agree on its significance, the gravity of the offence and the necessity to treat it as a crime, and to prevent and combat it.



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In 2005, the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP and the Department for International Development (DFID) launched the first phase of the Police Reform Programme that aims at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bangladesh Police by supporting key areas of access to justice; including investigations, police operations and prosecutions; human resource management and training; and strategic capacity and oversight.

The overall purpose of the Police Reform Programme is to develop a safer and more secure environment based on respect for human rights and equitable access to justice through police reform, transforming it from a colonial government order model to a public service, which is responsive to all of the Bangladesh population including the poor, vulnerable, women, and children.

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