

MEDIA RELEASE

Children demand national strategy to end violence against them

Dhaka, March 22, 2007: Children representatives participating in a national consultation from 20 districts across the country demanded an end to violence against them in family, schools, workplaces, institutions and communities, and urged for a comprehensive national strategy to ensure their protection.

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, UNICEF and Save the Children Sweden-Denmark on behalf of technical partnership project: “Girls and Boys Voices on Violence against Children – Phase 1” organised a national consultation “To Develop National Strategy for Bangladesh on Prevention of Violence against Children” at the BIAM Foundation in the city Wednesday.

During the consultation, children, civil society members, rights-based organizations, media, concerned government ministries, international NGOs, and UN through a participatory process analysed, reviewed and shared recommendations on the findings of the district level consultation reports on the incidence of violence.

Children and adult representatives divided into five groups made presentations following a day-long working session on the nature and impact of violence against children in family, educational institutions, workplaces, children living in the streets, government or private residential homes and recommended on ways to overcome those.

The overarching policy recommendations that emerged included, among other things, enacting stronger child protection laws, effective implementation of existing laws and policies, greater government-NGO collaboration, increased coordination among various line ministries with Ministry of Children and Women Affairs taking the lead role.

Other recommendations included incorporating protection aspects and life skills education in the school curricula, sensitizing teachers and parents, mainstreaming child rights issues into the organizational aspects of institutions, enacting a national policy for working children and street children, creation of database for children with vulnerability, disability, working and trafficked children and having both public and private media mobilized to systematically advocate child protection issues.

Earlier, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Ms. Mushfeka Ikfat reaffirmed the commitment of the government of Bangladesh on protecting children from all forms of violence.

Senior Programme Coordinator of UNICEF Bangladesh Ms. Rosella Morelli said: “No violence against children is justifiable and all forms of violence against children are preventable.” Stating that in South Asia violence against children is one of the most under reported crimes, she said tackling violence against children requires a concerted effort by many actors and all need to work together.

MEDIA RELEASE

UNICEF has been working closely with Save the Children Sweden-Denmark to co-ordinate and run the sub-national consultations. So far, 20 have been held with a further 44 to be run throughout the year, she added.

Meanwhile, Acting Country Representative of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark Ms. Kristine Zeuthen Jeppesen, stated that protection of children from violence is one of the areas where Save the Children has been heavily involved.

In the closing session, Programme Support Manager of Plan Bangladesh Mr. Haider W Yakub, Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Begum Shahjadi Anjuman Ara and Chief of Protection section in UNICEF Mr. Ghassan Khalil also spoke.

For more information, please contact:

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