

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT EVERY WOMAN, EVERY CHILD DINNER  
WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS  
Dhaka, Bangladesh, 15 November 2011**

This is my second trip to Bangladesh as Secretary-General.

The UN has 193 Member States. Some I have not visited even once.

So you might wonder why I wanted to visit.

Partly, I have to admit, I love *ilish mach*, the national fish dish in Bangladesh. You must have already tasted it.

But mostly I am here to meet with you.

You and the women and children of Bangladesh, the soldiers and the students, the leaders in government and the people in the villages.

Yesterday, I visited a peacekeeping training centre.

Bangladesh has given the United Nations one of its best peacekeeping assets: an all-female Police Unit in Haiti.

The day their Unit touched down in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, the Commander announced that they were there “especially for the women and children.” And they have been!

We can do no less than follow their example.

Tonight, I want to talk with you about what we are doing for the health of Every Woman and Every Child.

The United Nations has initiated a global movement to empower women and children of our world.

The United Nations has been working very closely with all business leaders and humanitarian workers and philanthropists. And I am very much grateful for all of your personal engagement and leadership and contribution. With your support, the results are remarkable. And nowhere is this more important than here in Bangladesh.

Together, your collective effort is making a world of difference.

Each of you has enormous strength. Together, you have unstoppable power.

Financial institutions worth billions of dollars.

Communications networks criss-crossing the world.

Energy companies powering progress.

NGOs helping those who are struggling.

Public health foundations caring for families.

Collectively, you are as great as the mighty rivers of Bangladesh.

I came to Bangladesh because this country works so closely with the United Nations. And I came here because Bangladesh has so much to teach the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the turn of this millennium, world leaders met at the United Nations and made an historic pledge:

To end poverty.

To treat curable diseases.

To give all children the schooling, food and future they deserve.

To empower women.

And to protect the planet, our only home.

Over a decade has passed. There has been enormous progress. But for too long, we lagged in two areas: women and children's health.

As Secretary-General, this problem kept me awake at night.

I was haunted by the obvious fact that we were failing women and children – the very people we need most.

Travelling around the world, I saw women caring for families, driving progress, advancing their communities and their countries.

But I also saw the tragic, needless deaths. The babies who died in their mothers' arms. The mothers who died giving life. The families that lost a teacher, a caregiver, a provider and a pillar of hope.

Women are the world's most underutilized resource. Children are our future. Their health should have been our first priority.

We knew what worked.

But we could not seem to budge the numbers on women's and children's health.

Every Woman Every Child was launched last year to bring the world together to stop this tragedy.

Governments, international bodies, major philanthropists, private companies and civil society joined forces.

More than \$40 billion were committed.

More than 200 partners have engaged.

Bangladesh showed its vision early on.

Your government met our great challenge with ambitious plans:

To bolster the health workforce.

To double the number of babies who are born with the supervision of a skilled health worker.

This morning, when I visited the Mobarakapar community clinic centre, I was told by the health minister, he said that this year, there was not a single death reported while delivering babies. That is [how we are making a big difference]. Bangladesh is now on the right track to reduce mortality - children's and women's deaths. [It is] on the right track and it will be one of the 16 countries, if everything goes well, one of the 16 countries which will be able to meet this target

To make sure that all health centres in all sub-districts have a midwife available at all times, day or night.

This dedication has paid off.

Bangladesh is proof that governments have to set the stage for effective healthcare.

But the private sector and civil society have to help deliver it.

Your operations. Your innovations and your solutions.

Bangladesh can lead the way.

For too long, Bangladesh was associated with terrible cycles of poverty.

But then Bangladesh turned this equation on its head.

Bangladesh started to view the impoverished as a resource, not a burden.

Bangladesh invested in people, in education, and they produced results.

Bangladeshi private resources, expertise and networks are making a difference.

You are reducing the cost of medicines and vaccines.

You are making sure that health care reaches more people in poor communities.

And your innovations are now spreading around the world.

Simple solutions that can save lives.

Like using zinc to treat diarrhoea.

Or using special mats to measure blood loss in childbirth.

All of these things I saw yesterday when I visited ICDDR, B [International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh].

And protecting pregnant women from passing tetanus to their babies.

All companies that commit to Every Woman Every Child can start by caring for the females in their workforce.

Many of you are already proving that corporate responsibility is good for individuals and economies.

You set the pace on research and technology.

You understand logistics, finance and marketing.

A company that can deliver cold drinks or fuel to the most remote communities can also send in vaccines, bed nets or life-saving public health materials.

Imagine a nurse in a health centre in the countryside being able to send an ultrasound image from her mobile to a doctor in Chittagong or Chicago – and get advice back immediately.

Real time. Real results. Real progress.

We have already made headway in pricing vaccines and other important medicines.

We can build on this to save even more lives.

The key is to develop and distribute the right products.

For proof, just look at our two co-hosts.

ICDDR,B developed oral rehydration salts. Then, working with BRAC, they delivered these special salts to nearly every household in Bangladesh. This saved millions of lives.

There are many other opportunities for providing extraordinary benefits to the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.

In Bangladesh, the Global Compact Network has showed the leadership and collaboration that is greatly needed to reach our goals.

I urge you to expand this network and encourage companies of all sizes to join in this common effort.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Next month, women, girls, people across Bangladesh will mark Begum Rokeya Day.

I will not be here, but I will be celebrating in my heart.

Begum Rokeya stood up for the values that the United Nations defends each day. Equality. Justice. Human Rights.

She made a famous call: “Jago Bhogini.”

This means: Wake Up, Sisters!

It is a call that resonates with women around the world.

But we must also wake up. We must wake up and help our sisters. Our wives and mothers, our daughters and friends. Our children and our future. And ourselves and all of us.

Tonight I want you to think about what more you can do – together – to reach this goal.

For the women and children of Bangladesh.

And for the future of this great country.

And for its contributions to our world, where everybody can live in a better and more prosperous world. Let us work together to make this world better for all. And I again thank you very much for your contribution to make this world happy.

Thank you very much.