

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury**  
**Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations**

**Launching of “International Human Solidarity Day”**  
**10 November 2006**

Madam Chair,

It gives me enormous pleasure to participate in this event celebrating the International Human Solidarity Day. Thank you for organizing this. I should also like to facilitate the President of ECOSOC Ambassador Ali Hachani, and Under-Secretary-General of DESA Jose Antonio Ocampo for their stimulating remarks. Last but not least we owe a debt of gratitude for a Titan of our times, Lech Walesa, for his inspiring words. He is doubtless one of the heroes who have shaped our age.

And it is an age, which is different from others. What makes it so is that today we believe that humanity is linked to one another by such a bond of solidarity that the responsibility of alleviating the pains of some, fall on all. This is the essence of solidarity and partnership. Also in our lifetime, the world has witnessed significant progress. More people than ever before live in democracies. More are succeeding every year in breaking out of the claptrap of poverty and in rising out of the morass of oppression, famine, sickness and illiteracy. We are able to intervene more to prevent conflict and to make, keep and build peace. Many live in great progress and prosperity than ever before.

But all in this world do not enjoy the fruits of these advances. One quarter of the world's population live on less than a dollar a day. Income inequality among rich and poor are rising and the global economy often appears to be skewed against the weak. Protectionist sentiments are rising impeding trade and exports from developing and least developed countries. The voice of the poor in organizing the global economic architecture is not listened to, or even heard.

Happily, though, change for the better is occurring, and the process is inexorable. It is true that in this journey along the path of development, the developing countries must be in the driver's seat. But the international community must provide the enabling ambiance, and support when needed. Solidarity in the creation of such a framework of global cooperation must be the bedrock of today's international relations. The creation and strengthening of such a culture of peace is the overreaching aim of the Millennium Development Goals. It is in this spirit that the General Assembly has proclaimed 20 December as the International Human Solidarity Day.

In my own country, Bangladesh, a developing country of over 140 million people, we believe that we must ourselves be in control of our development destiny. From our experience we know that every society performs best when it depends on its own intellectual and cultural resources. We have found that the simplest home-grown ideas can often effect the profoundest changes. Take micro-credit and women's non-formal education for instance, that have transformed our societal landscape. It is no wonder that the contribution of that thought-leader of micro-finance, Professor Muhammad Yunus has been acknowledged with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize. He says he aspires to the day when poverty would be put away to be shown in a museum showcase.

So, it remains our view that development is best achievable through a prudent mix of appropriate strategies, sound macro-economic management, careful use of external support, all within a culture of pluralism, democracy, good governance, human rights, gender justice and women's empowerment,. The existence of a vibrant civil society is key. The modest achievements of Bangladesh, and there have been many despite our manifold constraints, are attributable to the conformity to these values.

Bangladesh views the UN as a platform to transform the goals and vision of global solidarity into reality. It must be one from which we can work to alleviate poverty and reduce the incidence of debilitating diseases. Unless we are able to do so the achievement of MDGs will remain a chimera devoutly to be wished. And the UN must be a tool for change; an instrument to help create a global community where peace and stability reign, which is free of dangerous weapons of mass-destruction, where extremist and fundamentalist thought and action are marginalized, where different cultures, civilization and religions coexist happily side by side, where poverty and disease are drastically reduced, where human rights and rule of law prevail, where the strong does not aggress against the weak and occupy his land and crush his hopes, and where governments learn it is better to live with an inconvenient idea that to try and suppress it. It is the pursuing of these noble goals that will lend our lives the dignity that we seek to cherish.

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