

Highlights of 7/7/7 Programs in Bangladesh

- **Poverty is decreasing in Bangladesh but rich-poor disparity is widening**
Civil Society Progress Report on MDGs 2007 reveals



Bangladesh will not be able to achieve the MDGs at the current slow pace, unless urgent interventions are made with effective action plans and necessary budgetary supports, says the independent

study report. It has mentioned regional imbalance in development, higher birth rates

among the poor, negligence to women and newborns, poor public healthcare services, low quality education, and inefficient resource utilization as the major shortcomings of the country in attaining the MDGs by 2015.

Poverty has declined, but in an uncertain manner, and the disparity between the rich and poor is widening day by day. The high incidence of maternal mortality and low nutritional status of both adults and children remain major areas of concern, the report mentioned.

The People's Forum on MDGs (PFM), the G-CAP alliance in Bangladesh shared the Independent Civil Society Report on the progress of MDGs in Bangladesh 2007 at a **Press Briefing** organized in cooperation with the Campaign for Popular Education at the National Press Club on Saturday in observance of '07.07.07, halfway towards the 2015 deadline'.

The convener of the PFM and a member of IFT-GCAP, Rasheda K. Chowdhury, said the country would not be able to achieve even what she termed "the minimalist MDG targets" at the current pace of national development. 'It is the responsibility of us all, apart from the government, to take renewed initiative to overcome the slow pace of progress,' she added.

- **Launching of *Bhumi (Land)***

The premier of *Bhumi (Land)*, a documentary on the continuous struggle of the landless poor to gain access to land, which in turn entails their basic human rights was held on Saturday, 7th July 2007 at Drik Gallery in Dhaka, Bangladesh at 5pm. This documentary presents the woes of landless people in their quest for gaining access to a piece of "Khas" (public) land and their initiatives to bring an end to the vicious cycle of poverty. Access to land is the fundamental right

of every human being. Yet it remains an unfulfilled dream for many in a number of countries like Bangladesh.

As part of the Global observance of 7 July 2007 - the mid-point of attaining MDGs, PFM, the GCAP Coalition in Bangladesh, in cooperation with Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), has produced *Bhumi* under the direction of Morshedul Islam, an internationally famed Bangladeshi filmmaker. The purpose of the work was to project the struggle of poor people for gaining access to land and the difference it brings about in reducing poverty and how it creates scope for participation in the economic growth process.

The program was largely attended by representatives of women's movements, trade unions, youth groups, teachers' federations, NGOs and other groups of civil society including media professionals.

"Bhumi" was also telecast on ATN Bangla (a private TV Channel) on 7/7/7 at 11-30pm BD time. Other TV channel broadcast will follow.

PFM Bangladesh has planned to use this documentary as a tool for raising public awareness and pressurizing decision makers for pro-poor land reform plans and practices.

• Other Programs on 7/7/7

Among other programs carried out by a number of PFM members, the following are worth mentioning:

- **Prip Trust and Oxfam-GB** Round Table on "The half way through towards achieving the MDG and where we are" At BRAC Center Inn Dhaka, at 3:00pm
- **Campaign for Good Governance** Press Briefing on "the Report on MDG Mid Point" on 6th July 2007, Reporters Unity office, Dhaka at 11:00 am
- **Hunger Free World** Discussion meeting on MDGs in Dhaka on 7th July 2007, 5:00pm
- **WAVE Foundation** Sharing meeting on Achieving Universal Education, MDG-2 July 7, 2007 10:30am Dhaka and Chuadanga district