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Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association President Sigma Huda speaks at the Children Convention 2006 at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday.

Political commitment a must to stop child trafficking

Speakers tell children convention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a children convention yesterday underscored the need for political commitment to stop trafficking in children.

They also demanded rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking.

Over 100 child victims of trafficking attended the convention by singing "We want to build a happy and beautiful life".

"We do not want anyone to give us hope rather we want concrete commitment. We want the political persons to commit that they will work for rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking and stop trafficking at any cost," said Fatematuz Zohra, a child victim of trafficking, and currently President of CRC Shishu Sangathan.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) organised the convention on "Developing protection and preventive mechanism for the child victims of trafficking" at Bangladesh Institute of Administrative Management (Biam) auditorium in the city.

From the convention, the children placed 16-point demand that includes safe shelter home for the trafficked children instead of keeping them in police custody, quality improvement in government shelter homes, immediate actions against the criminals involved in trafficking, formulation of a body to control trafficking and rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking.

There should be a Speedy Trial Tribunal for quick disposal of the trafficking cases and no criminal involved in trafficking should get bail, they said, adding there should be separate laws for the witnesses and complainants.

While inaugurating the convention, BNWLA President Sigma Huda said, "We need some friends in the Parliament who will work to realise the rights of children and to fulfil their dreams."

"Children are insecure home and outside. They are tortured in families, police stations, and factories. Many of them are trafficked and forced to prostitution. Even after recovery, the victims of trafficking have to stay at safe custody or at shelter homes, whereas the culprits roam around freely," said BNWLA Executive Director Salma Ali.

She stressed the need for implementation of Saarc convention, finalisation of victim witness protection draft prepared by the BNWLA and implementation of the existing laws.

NGO activists, lawmakers and police officials were also present at the convention and said the government is working hard to stop trafficking and has already formed a monitoring cell.

A total of 71 people have been punished since the year 2004 due to their involvement in child trafficking and 394 have been arrested, they added.

Expressing condolence at the sudden death of Senior Investigation Officer (IO) Mominul Islam Suruj, who was a familiar and helpful figure to the victims of trafficking, the children stood silent for a minute and wished for peace and salvation of his departed soul.