

## 'UN has failed to establish peace, cut poverty'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations has failed to establish world peace and eradicate poverty as many countries are still plagued by war and starvation, speakers at a symposium said yesterday.

In many parts of the world, the UN Security Council appears to have lost its moral authority and remain unrepresentative, they said and called for strengthening the UN activities to achieve global peace.

The United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) organised the symposium at the Brac Centre Inn in the city to mark the 60th anniversary of the world body.

In his keynote paper, Ambassador Muhammad Zamir said the critics pointed out that the UN has failed to exploit the situation in the wake of the end of the Cold War. It could have played a major role in a unipolar world, particu-

larly in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and in many countries in Africa, he added.

He said the September UN Summit failed to rise to the occasion with regards to measures required to alleviate poverty and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The biggest failure was in the area of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the eminent diplomat said, adding that democracy and suitable representation were swept underneath the blue carpet of the UN.

He said all these factors created a great pressure on the UN and its policy formulation calling for radical changes in the existing mechanism for stricter observance of human rights, boosting of global trade and the much-needed overhaul of the UN bureaucracy.

Referring to the charges of corruption and mismanagement in the oil for food programme, human rights violations in Sudan and revelations of sexual exploita-

tions by UN peacekeepers in Congo, he said, "We hoped that necessary reforms would be introduced to facilitate efficiency and effectiveness in the world body, but unfortunately it was not so in the September Summit."

Speaking as the chief guest, Information Minister M Shamsul Islam said the recent incidents in Iraq have put the role of the UN into question.

"At this moment there is an urgent need to strengthen the UN activities, and that can be done only through global cooperation," he said, adding that strengthening the civil society's relations with the UN is an important element to this end.

Citing Bangladesh's role as active partner and promoter of global peace through the UN, the minister said, "Bangladesh found the activities increasingly acceptable and diplomatically beneficial and got more and more involved in the UN efforts for global peacekeeping."

The United Nations is an unparalleled and unmatched international body with the highest level of universality, representation and authority, he noted.

"Whatever might be the criticism of this organisation, the UN has attained achievements in maintaining world and regional peace, furthering human progress and development significantly."

Chairman of the University Grants Commission Prof M Asaduzzaman presided over the symposium moderated by UNAB Secretary General Syed Mohammad Shahed.



A total of 870 pieces of blankets donated by five voluntary women's organisations of Bangladesh – National Association of Resource Improvement (NARI), Zonta International Clubs of Dhaka 1, 3, 4 and Chittagong – and five boxes of warm jackets by Westec were handed over to the High Commissioner of Pakistan on October 19 for the earthquake victims. From left are: Zonta Club 1 President Hasna J Moudud, Pakistan High Commissioner Alamgir Babar, Zonta District 25 Governor Dilruba Ahmed, MD of PIA Shahnaz Shahab, Zonta District 25 Secretary Nahid Moin and Zonta Club 4 President Nazma Islam.