



Constitution Day of Denmark



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MESSAGE

It is a privilege and honour for me to address the people of Bangladesh on the occasion of the Constitution Day of Denmark. On the 5th of June 1849 King Frederik VII of Denmark approved a democratic constitution with a two-chamber parliament and political parties. All subsequent changes of our constitution have entered into force on the 5th of June.

As Denmark's Ambassador to Bangladesh since September 2006, I am pleased to use the celebration of our Constitution Day as an opportunity to assess the relations between our two countries. Denmark has supported Bangladesh in its development endeavours since its independence in 1971. The long history of development cooperation and now also strong business cooperation between Bangladesh and Denmark is an expression of the strong ties that exist between our two countries.

On behalf of Denmark I would like to congratulate Bangladesh on the restoration of parliamentary democracy following the general election on 29 December 2008, as well as the subsequent peaceful handover of power on 6 January 2009. This is a major achievement, which Bangladesh has reason to be very proud of. Also, it is very encouraging to see that all Parliamentary and Standing Committees have been formed during Parliament's first session.

At this juncture, I would like to stress the importance of establishing a functional parliament, where the opposition plays a constructive role. This is one of the cornerstones of a democracy. The Government has inherited a legacy of comprehensive reforms and Denmark appreciates that some of the important

Ordinances on reforms have been ratified by Parliament. However, I would like to stress the need for not losing momentum in the reform process. It is important that guardian institutions are further strengthened. We do find it important that the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance is enacted by Parliament as soon as possible. We are also hoping that the Anti Corruption Commission will be kept a strong institution free from political influence and at the forefront of fighting corruption in the country.

Furthermore, may I also emphasise, with reference to previous and consistent EU messages, the importance of balancing the concern for stability and security on the one side with the respect for individuals' rights, press freedom and the rule of law on the other. Getting this balance right is another cornerstone in a democracy. Upholding the rule of law and ensuring due process is not always an easy task, and Denmark appreciates the efforts by the Government of Bangladesh.

On behalf of the Danish people, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep felt sorrow for the victims of the BDR mutiny in February 2009. Our thoughts go to the affected families at this difficult time.

I would like to congratulate the Government on its efforts in bringing

Bangladesh through the global recession in a manner which has so far spared the majority of Bangladeshis from extremely adverse effects. The coming year or years might however be challenging when it comes to ensuring remittances and export earnings, especially from the garments industry. I am pleased to note that to counter some of the effects of the global recession, the government, has outlined an economic stimulus package. Bangladesh might be facing some difficult times ahead, but there will be scope for development and emerging stronger on the other side of the recession, particularly as far as the private sector is concerned.

Denmark provides substantial development assistance to Bangladesh, especially within the areas of agriculture (crops, aquaculture, livestock, and rural roads), drinking water supply and sanitation and human rights, democratisation and good governance. Our 5 year country programme involves grant assistance of 1200 crore Taka. In all programmes supported by Denmark special attention is given to the alignment of Danish development assistance with the national policies, systems and procedures. We therefore continuously explore opportunities for strengthening donor harmonisation and alignment with Government in order to ensure maximum efficiency and impact of the

combined development assistance. One such initiative is the cooperation between the Government and the Development Partners to develop a Joint Cooperation Strategy in support to the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In early February this year, the Danish Minister for Climate and Energy, Mrs. Connie Hedegaard, visited Bangladesh to discuss the global and national challenges of coping with climate changes. She met with the Government of Bangladesh and with local communities in the Coastal Belt, who are severely affected by the effects of climate changes. In December 2009 the global UN Conference on Climate Change (COP15) will be held in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. As a host, the Danish government's overarching goal is that COP15 will result in an ambitious global agreement that includes all the countries of the world and which sets ambitious targets for reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. Bangladesh has previously played a crucial role in speaking up for the least developed countries in the climate negotiations. In Copenhagen, the Bangladesh voice is more important than ever, and I therefore sincerely hope and anticipate that a strong team of negotiators from Bangladesh will participate in COP15 in December.

Denmark is also supporting a successful private sector instrument in Bangladesh called the B2B (business-to-business) Programme. The B2B Programme seeks to match and support long-term commercially viable business collaborations between companies in Bangladesh and in Denmark. The Programme has supported more than 65 long-term projects in sectors such as IT, shipbuilding sector, food processing and sustainable energy. I am very pleased to say that the Programme contributes to creating jobs and in linking Bangladeshi private companies with the international markets. Over the years more than 250 crore Taka has been committed in the form of grants for the private sector business co-operations and the level of support will continue in the years to come.

In closing, I would like to reassure Denmark's continued commitment to the longstanding and strong partnership with Bangladesh that has been ongoing ever since Independence. I am hopeful that the warm relations between Denmark and Bangladesh will continue and become even stronger in the coming years.

Einar Hebogaard Jensen
Ambassador of Denmark to Bangladesh

The COP15 climate conference in Copenhagen

Denmark is hosting the 15th UN climate change conference in December 2009. The goal of the Danish government is to agree on an ambitious agreement that includes all the countries of the world

IN December 2009 Denmark is hosting the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The climate change conference, also known as COP 15, will take place in Copenhagen from 7 to 18th December 2009.

The Conference of Parties (COP) is the highest organ in climate negotiations and it is here all decisions of importance to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are made. All countries that have signed the UNFCCC are represented.

COP15 in Copenhagen in December 2009 is crucial for the international climate change negotiations. The

parties to the UNFCCC agreed at COP13 in Bali in December 2007 that negotiations on a future agreement have to be concluded at COP15 in Copenhagen. The decision was made on the backdrop to the increased emphasis on the need for swift action made in the latest report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. And also the recognition that 2009 will be one of the last chances for an agreement if it is to be approved and ratified prior to the expiry of the commitments set in the Kyoto Protocol in 2012.

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Bangladesh-Denmark cooperation in combating the climate challenge

How does Denmark help Bangladesh adapt to climate change?

CLIMATE change will severely challenge Bangladesh' ability



The Danish Minister for Climate and Energy, Ms. Connie Hedegaard, visiting local communities coping with climate changes. Patuakhali district, February 2009.

to achieve the high rates of economic growth needed to reduce poverty. Increased global temperatures are likely to increase the frequency and intensity of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal, to increase mon-

soon rainfall which will result in additional flooding in the Ganges Brahmaputra-Meghan Basin, and to elevate sea level which would then increase coastal flooding and saline intrusion into aquifers.

Catching fish in Chittagong

Cooperation on production of modern fishing gear in Chittagong

Significant efficiency need and potential in the local fishing industry

Bangladesh is a country where a large number of people are dependent on the fishing industry. In most instances, the local fish-catch follows a comparatively less efficient locally invented technology. On the other hand, Denmark is well known for its modern and handy technology used for fishing. A recent cooperation between Cosmos Trawl A/S of Denmark and Sea Resources Ltd is aiming at decreasing the efficiency gap between the two countries by transferring the Danish know-how to Bangladesh.

Sea Resources Ltd. of Chittagong well known for its maritime activities in deep sea fishing, fish processing, ship repair, maintenance and others is today running the

biggest fishing fleet registered in Bangladesh.

The cooperation which is right now in pilot phase aims to set up a modern net loft for manufacturing modern and efficient fishing gear for the fleet of trawlers in Bangladesh and in neighboring countries. Under the pilot phase, the partners are working on a modern fishing trawl able to ply on deep sea with necessary equipment for fishing. The second trial of this trawl is expected to take place during end of May and beginning of June 2009. Successful piloting of this trawl will lead to a decision of producing other equipment in Bangladesh as well.

Both partners have great hopes for the future

"By introducing this new fishing technology we hope to be able to demonstrate to the

The resulting impact on people's livelihood can be devastating, especially in light of Bangladesh high population's density.

Bangladesh is one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world. Up to 40% of the country may be affected by frequent floods by 2050, which will have an effect on 70 million people. Sea level rise may permanently flood 6%-8% of the coastal and low-lying lands and may force thousands of people to relocate. Bangladesh is therefore in urgent need of support to climate adaptation and Denmark is spearheading assistance to agriculture and safe drinking water and sanitation', says Einar H. Jensen, Danish ambassador to Bangladesh.

Denmark also provides support to 2 pilot projects. The one (46 million Taka) helps Bangladesh to develop an early flood forecasting and warning system, which will provide flood and cyclone warning in due time for people to seek shelter. Further, the project will provide salinity intrusion forecasts, and thereby improve the farmers' capability to adapt crops and agricultural techniques to climate change.

The other project (58 million Taka) gives support to poor rural people's adaption to climate change induced hazards, such as cyclones, floods, erosion, draught and saltwater intrusion.

Finally, Denmark has contributed to the development of a joint donor trust



fund, where Denmark alongside with a number of other development partners will provide assistance to the Bangladesh Government's implementation of its new Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Denmark has allocated an initial 120 million Taka to the fund.

Heartiest congratulations to the people of Denmark on the occasion of the Danish Constitution Day

We express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the people of Denmark for their relentless support in the technological advancement of Bangladesh



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