



Establishing business linkages between Denmark and Bangladesh

70 partnerships between Danish and Bangladeshi companies since 2000

PPRIVATE sector development is becoming more and more prominent on the Danish foreign development aid agenda. And for obvious reasons as job creation directly leads to income and poverty reduction.

Denmark has since 1999/2000 been active in private sector development in Bangladesh. The flagship has been the Business-to-Business Programme, which has helped close to 70 Danish companies to establish Joint Ventures or engage in other forms of strategic partnerships with Bangladeshi companies.

Business relations have been established within e.g. the garment industry, the IT industry, the medical industry and the shipbuilding industry.

For the last few years, the main focus has been on establishing partnerships within the IT industry, where Bangladesh has a very large untapped potential. More than 20 partnerships have been established within this sector.

The Danish ambassador is very proud of the results in the sector: "I don't think we had ever dreamed about the number of Danish companies that would get involved in the IT-sector here in Bangladesh. And we have seen surprisingly good results within both desktop publishing and software development", he says.



The Danish ship "Stella Maris" under construction at Ananda shipyard.

Shipbuilding, food processing, sustainable energy and ship breaking in future focus

The Danish Embassy will continue to focus on the IT sector, but it is also time to look at other areas.

"Bangladesh has a huge potential within a number of sectors and in some of these sectors Denmark is also very strong and in possession of introducing cutting edge technologies. If we could combine Bangladesh entrepreneurship, manpower and willingness to run the extra mile with Danish technical know-how, market knowledge and management culture I think we could create very strong partnerships, which would do very well in Bangladesh as well as the international market" states the Danish ambassador.

The ambassador foresees four areas of interests: Shipbuilding, food processing, sustainable energy and ship breaking.

Analysis of the current practices, the gaps to reach world class efficiency and quality etc. has already been initiated within shipbuilding and food processing.

The results of the analysis are expected by June, where they will be presented to a number of Danish companies and hopefully a delegation of Danish companies within the shipbuilding sector will be visiting Bangladesh end of this year.

Denmark provides assistance for improving conditions of the indigenous peoples in Bangladesh

ON 13 September 2007, following more than 20 years' preparation, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, making this a red-letter day for indigenous peoples and their organizations. Denmark worked intensely for the declaration and will work to ensure that the declaration is complied with and implemented.

The rights of indigenous peoples are one of the seven priority areas in Danish development assistance and Denmark is working to strengthen the capacity of indigenous peoples and their organizations to take part in the national and international development process.

For many years Denmark has been supporting the widely acknowledged work performed by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). Also, Denmark supports the International Labour Organisation, (ILO), in implementing Convention 169 concerning indigenous and Tribal Peoples. Work to incorporate the rights of indigenous peoples into development assistance is taking place including in Bangladesh.

Indigenous Peoples (or adivasi as they are called in Bangla) in Bangladesh constitute about 1% of the total population of the country and belong to as many as 45 different ethnic groups. They are almost equally divided between the region of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the plain districts and are some of the most marginalized groups in Bangladesh.

Since 2001, Denmark has been supporting the Government of Bangladesh to promote the rights of indigenous peoples through its Human Rights and Good Governance (HRGG) Programme. The objective of

Danish support to indigenous people is to strengthen the right of indigenous peoples to manage their own development and to determine matters concerning their own economic, social, political and cultural situation. Specifically, the Danish support is focused on six key strategic areas: (1) Land Rights, (2) Natural Resources Management, (3) Language and Cultural Traditions, (4) Access to Justice, (5) Organizational Development and (6) Participation in Local Government, and divided into two initiatives based on geographical locations, (1) Chittagong Hill Tracts and (2) the remaining districts in the plains. In both cases, the support is principally channeled in partnership with civil society organizations, preferably with organizations led by the indigenous peoples themselves.

In the plain lands, Danish support is channeled in partnership with Oxfam GB through a project started in September 2007 that currently covers 32 upazillas in 12 districts of the Rajshahi division, greater Mymensingh and Sylhet regions, and has a target of directly involving at least 100,000 beneficiaries from 18 different adivasi groups. The primary focus of the project is to provide support in three key areas: land rights, bilingual education and organizational development. The project is being implemented in partnership with 21 NGOs, most of which are adivasi-led organizations.

With regard to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Denmark remains committed in supporting the full implementation of the CHT Peace Accord signed in December 1997. As mentioned earlier within this overarching objective, Denmark also supports a number of civil society projects in the region, led by adivasi-run organizations. In Khagrachari and Bandarban



Adivasi gathered around the Para Resource Centre in Khagrachari Hill District. The project is implemented by Zabarang Kalyan Samity with assistance from Denmark.

Districts, Denmark has been supporting a number of projects on the promotion and strengthening of community based organizations and local governance through 13 local NGOs with Zabarang Kalyan Samity and Toymu as lead organizations in the two respective districts. In Rangamati District, the support is committed to three organizations; Taungya, Codec and Maleya Foundation. The support to Taungya is meant for natural conservation that seeks to promote and regenerate 'community-owned forests', which is a key feature of 'collective natural resources management' of the indigenous peoples in the CHT. With Danish support, Codec is implementing a project promoting bi-lingual education and providing support to capacity building of a number of 'community-based organizations'. The support to

Maleya Foundation is still awaiting approval from the NGO Affairs Bureau and is intended for building the organizational capacity of CHT-based local NGOs.

Besides the HRGG programme, Denmark - through its two sector programmes on Water and Agriculture - has been supporting initiatives in the CHT through the Regional Council. The aim is to assist the GoB in improving the health of the peoples in CHT through improved hygiene, sanitation and safe water practices and provisions. Moreover, an integrated agriculture development initiative in CHT is being undertaken in collaboration with UNDP to contribute to improving the food security situation, increasing the household food production and increase the share of family resources provided by women in the CHT communities. This project is also

expected to facilitate sustainable agricultural production systems for the hill farming, improve the capacity of the CHT agricultural extension and research services, and make NGOs focus on sustainable upland farming.

Indigenous Peoples, despite their marginalized situation, are a vibrant part of Bangladeshi society. Their colourful lifestyles and traditional heritage add much to the rich diversity of the Bangladeshi people. The Government of Denmark welcomes the commitment of the current government to fully implement the CHT Peace Accord and undertake other pertinent measures it has already committed itself to in terms of ensuring the rights and livelihoods of the indigenous peoples. Denmark re-iterates its commitment to support the Government of Bangladesh's initiatives in this regard.



Heartiest Felicitations

to the Government
and the People of Denmark on their

Constitution Day



Cold Play School Products Ltd.

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Sector # 3, EPZ, Chittagong

From snow sledges to foam production

It started with snow sledges

Who should have thought it possible to produce snow sledges in sunny, tropical Bangladesh for export to snow clad Norway? However, this is not just an imaginary vision, but a true fact.

In 2005, DANIDA's Business-2-Business Programme (B2B) supported a partner match between Cold Play ApS of Denmark and Multi Safh Bags Limited of Chittagong. The Danish partner had been in search of a place to outsource some of the production of their kindergarten items. Cold Play is specialising in play items such as trampolines, sack chairs, bouncing castles, air and foam mats, foam pillows a.o. all made in PVC free material. International competition, however, has called for combining high quality products with attractive pricing. Both requirements could be fulfilled in Bangladesh.

A joint venture company between the two partners was established in 2006 and DANIDA's B2B Programme has supported the project and made it possible to transfer know how from Denmark.

And the success continues now with foam production

The partnership between Cold Play and Multi Safh Bags has been a success and early 2009 the two companies agreed on expanding their business down the supply line starting to produce foam.

Foam is a very important ingredient in most of the products produced. And high quality foam is difficult to get in Bangladesh and has to be imported at very high prices from Europe.

A test production of high quality foam is expected to take place in Chittagong within the next few months and around 30 people will be employed within the first two years.



From the left: Snow sledge produced by Cold Play. Hon'ble Minister for Industries Mr. Dilip Barua looking at a sledge made at the Chittagong factory. Danish Ambassador H.E. Einar H. Jensen is also seen in the picture.

Best Wishes to the Friendly
People of Denmark
on the Occasion of Constitution Day

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