



Kingdom of the Netherlands

King's Day of the Netherlands

Wednesday, April 27, 2016

The Netherlands in Bangladesh: From Traditional Aid to Responsible Trade

THE relation between the Netherlands and Bangladesh has undergone a considerable transition during the last couple of years. For the Netherlands, Bangladesh is increasingly becoming not only a priority country in terms of development cooperation, but has also become a dynamic economic partner. Our strong engagement is reflected over the last few years as the Netherlands has consistently been in the top five largest foreign investors in Bangladesh and there are currently more than 70 Dutch companies investing in the country. We are also honoured that our embassy has won the Fenedex Award. This prize is awarded every two years by the Dutch private sector for the best economic services provided by a Dutch Embassy.

Our existing relation can be highlighted through the high level visits undertaken in 2015. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited the Netherlands in November 2015 while the Dutch Minister for Trade and Development Cooperation, Lillianne Ploumen, and Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment Melanie Schultz van Haegen visited Bangladesh in mid-June. These visits have not only strengthened our relations but also added a new dimension to our strategic partnership. Minister Ploumen is personally very engaged with Bangladesh, also with regard to improving working conditions in the Ready Made Garments sector. The Minister visited Bangladesh thrice in the last three years with another visit expected in September 2016. The Netherlands also seeks to involve the private sector in its development cooperation programs. The strength of these programs is that they can function as a gateway for entrepreneurs. The Netherlands has expertise in different sectors that are leading the way in terms of innovation and sustainability.

Water: Through the years our relationship, especially with regard to water, has only become closer. The recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between

Bangladesh and The Netherlands on the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 is a clear example of this. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her visit to the Netherlands had observed our Delta Works and committed to establishing a Bangladesh Delta Fund and Commission with a dedicated budget of 2% of GDP. Bangladesh and the Netherlands also have a long history of participatory water management in coastal and river management as well as rural drinking water and sanitation. Through our Water Sanitation and Hygiene programs, more than 26 million



people have gained access to hygienic latrines and 1.5 million people gained access to safe water across 175 sub-districts. In recent times we have started to collaborate on clean water technologies in the textile sector as well as urban drinking water and dredging. We look forward to continue our collaboration on these and many other water related opportunities.

Food Security: Since the Netherlands and Bangladesh are both fertile deltas with high agricultural potential, the Dutch government is very committed to share the Dutch

knowledge and expertise that make us the second largest agricultural exporter in the world, after the United States. We aim to contribute to improved food security by increasing agricultural productivity, developing value chains as well as reducing malnutrition and stunting. In order to be successful, we work with partners from the private sector, NGOs, and the Government of Bangladesh. In our work, we are careful to maintain an integral view and incorporate all factors that contribute to food security and equal food distribution within households and communities as a whole. For instance, through our Char Development and Settlement Project we have seen that farmers have managed to triple their productivity in four years, which has contributed in doubling their income.

Economic cooperation: As Bangladesh is on its way to achieve middle-income status, the economic relations between our countries undergo significant change. We gradually move from a relationship based on development cooperation to an economic partnership on equal terms. Against this background, our economic objective is to assist Bangladesh to achieve sustainable and pro-poor economic growth through trade, investment and cooperation. Our embassy here in Dhaka stimulates these developments by providing information about business opportunities to interested companies and by serving as a match-maker to facilitate exchanges between companies, knowledge institutes and other organizations. At the same time, we believe economic development should go hand in hand with improving labor and environmental standards. Efforts are being made to stimulate CSR awareness and behavior throughout all the embassy activities, with special attention for the Ready Made Garments sector. Through a co-funding arrangement with DFID and Canada, the Embassy supports the major ILO program for improving labor conditions in this area.

Message from the Ambassador



Ms. Leoni Cuelenaere
Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh

ON the occasion of Kings Day, I have the pleasure and honour to congratulate to all Dutch citizens residing in Bangladesh and to convey my best wishes to the wonderful Bangladeshi people. First and foremost I would like to congratulate King Willem-Alexander on his 49th birthday and on the completion of the third year of his reign.

We consider Bangladesh an important partner and are deeply committed to supporting the people of Bangladesh. The visit of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the Netherlands in November last year added a new dimension to our existing bilateral relations. During the visit, four documents were signed aimed at strengthening our strategic partnership in diplomacy and education. The Memorandum of Understanding on Foreign Office Consultations between the two foreign ministries provides a useful framework for high-level exchanges and regular dialogue between Netherlands and Bangladesh on political, economic and social issues.

Since the collapse of the Rana Plaza, our Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Lillianne Ploumen, has been personally engaged in improving working conditions in Bangladesh. She visited the country thrice in the last three years, with a fourth visit expected in September 2016. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her visit appraised the Netherlands' effort and measures to transform the readymade garments (RMG) sector into a model of sustainable industrialization. The Netherlands will continue its support to the RMG sector of Bangladesh.

The Netherlands and Bangladesh share many features. Our countries are relatively small in geographic terms, have a high population density and are situated in low-lying deltas. These conditions make us natural partners in many areas. We work, for example, closely on the implementation of the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, with the aim to make the delta safe and productive for the people who live there while at the same time boosting bilateral trade and investment. Beside water management, our friendship over the last 44 years is also reflected in our programs on Food Security.

As Bangladesh is on its way to become a middle-income country, our focus shifts from development cooperation to responsible trade and investment. The vibrant growth of the Bangladeshi economy has stimulated cooperation between Dutch and Bangladeshi companies, making the Netherlands a leading export destination for Bangladeshi goods and one of the top FDI sources for Bangladesh.

The Netherlands is a candidate for the United Nations Security Council for the 2017-18 period. We believe the world needs a stronger UN that can overcome the many challenges to peace, justice and development. In this respect, we recognize the important role of Bangladesh as a top contributor of peacekeeping troops to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. We appreciate our cooperation at various international fora and aim to forge even closer cooperation in the United Nations.

On this gracious occasion, I wish to thank all for their commitment in promoting the cooperation between the Netherlands and Bangladesh. I conclude by expressing my strong confidence that the Dutch Bangla relations will continue to flourish and contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond. And on this note I would like to wish peace and prosperity to the people of Bangladesh.



KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
CANDIDATE 2017 - 2018

Kingdom of The Netherlands United Nations Security Council Candidate 2017-2018

WE are ready to serve on the UN Security Council and join in working for peace, justice and development, in partnership with you."

- Bert Koenders, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of four autonomous countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten. Together, we are one UN Member State. We are deeply committed to promoting peace, justice and development in the world, and ready to serve as your partner on the UN Security Council.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a founding member of the UN and an active participant in UN institutions. It has a longstanding commitment to the UN. We believe strongly in our partnership for peace, justice and development with the UN and its Member States. By seeking election to the UN Security Council for the 2017-2018

period, we aim to make an even bigger contribution to building a more secure, just and prosperous world. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is, and will remain, an effective partner in support of a reformed, modern and fit-for-purpose UN.

PEACE: Enhancing Security and Stability

All people deserve to live in peace and security. There are no quick fixes to today's crises. A long-term international cooperation is a necessity to tackle existing flashpoints and prevent new ones from emerging. We support a strong focus on prevention, early warning and the underlying causes of conflict.

Since 1947, we have contributed over 125,000 forces to more than 60 UN and UN-mandated peacekeeping operations throughout the world. Bangladesh and the Netherlands have participated in 24 UN peacekeeping

missions together, in 20 different countries worldwide. We contribute to UN peace operations because we want to help bring about peace and protect civilians.

We believe that joining hands with local and regional partners is crucial to building lasting peace.

Together, we can make the world a safer place.

JUSTICE: Strengthening the International Legal Order

All people deserve to live in a fair and just world.

We believe an international legal order is in the interest of all countries. It forms the best guarantee for a level playing field, with clear and predictable rules for all. Developing and safeguarding the international legal order is so important to us that we have enshrined it in our Constitution.

The Hague has developed into the 'legal capital of the world'. As the home

of the International Court of Justice (the UN's principal judicial organ) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Peace Palace is a powerful symbol of justice in the world.

The Hague also hosts the International Criminal Court and several ad hoc tribunals which report to the UN Security Council, like the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

We support these important international organizations, so they can carry out their mandates effectively and independently. As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the international celebration of the Peace Palace centennial in 2013, 'In The Hague ... you bring the rule of law to life.'

DEVELOPMENT: Advancing Inclusive Sustainable Growth

All people deserve to live in dignity and to enjoy a decent standard of living.

Today's global challenges require global solutions. Extreme poverty and hunger, climate change and food and water security are issues that concern us all.

Our Kingdom has long been a partner for inclusive, sustainable growth. Bangladesh is one of the Netherlands' 15 development cooperation priority partner countries. Our development cooperation with Bangladesh helps to improve living conditions of the poor, particularly in the areas: water and food security. The embassy is also active in the field of ready-made garments. We actively contribute to international efforts to eliminate extreme poverty within a single generation. And we are confident that we can reach this goal, together.

In September 2015 we have agreed on ambitious and well-thought-out sustainable development goals. Poverty reduction and sustainable development are at the heart of this post-2015 development agenda.

Singled approaches are no longer acceptable: the efforts of international partners must be integrated. Let's work together towards a robust development agenda.

Fun and interesting facts about the Netherlands

ORANGE is the official colour of the Netherlands because of the House of Orange, who led the Dutch revolt against Spain (1556-1648) and later became the Dutch Royal family.

The Netherlands and Holland are not synonymous. Holland is largely the western coastal region of the Netherlands, comprising of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Haarlem, Leiden and The Hague.

The Dutch are the tallest people in the world with an average height of 184 cm for men and 170 cm for women. Some believe it is the combined result of DNA and dairy.

About 2/3 of Netherlands is vulnerable to flooding with 25 percent below sea level and 50 percent less than 1m above sea level. This is why the Dutch are the world experts on keeping back water from the sea and rivers turning Netherlands into an Atlantis. The Schiphol Airport is

actually 4.5 m below sea level.

The Netherlands has the highest population density in Europe with 487 inhabitants per square kilometer.

While Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands, the seat of government is in The Hague.

Historical

The Dutch presence in Bangladesh can be traced back to the 17th century when Dutch traders arrived in these lands to establish trading posts and factories. The first Dutchmen settled in 1663 at Tejgaon and later at the Mitford area on the bank of the Buriganga, at a site known as "Kuti Ollandaz".

In 1666 Nawab Shaista Khan sought material assistance from the Dutch in his war against the Arakanese. The Dutch governor of Batavia in the East Indies offered ships of war to Bengal to facilitate the transport of the Moghul's troops to Chittagong.

In Dhaka a few eighteenth century graves of Dutchmen can still be found at the Christian cemetery and in Wari in Old Dhaka.

The Netherlands and Bangladesh have enjoyed good diplomatic relations since 1972, the year in which



the Netherlands opened an embassy in Dhaka. In 1996 Bangladesh opened an embassy in The Hague.

Netherlands-Bangladesh Cooperation Peace

In December 2015, Bangladesh was elected member of the Executive Council (EC) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for the 2016-2018 term. The OPCW, which won a Nobel Prize for Peace in 2013, is a globally acclaimed international organization located in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Did you know that together, Bangladesh and the Netherlands have contributed nearly 250,000 forces to UN peacekeeping missions worldwide?

Justice

The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), located in The Hague settled the longstanding India-Bangladesh maritime boundary dispute and awarded Bangladesh 19,467 square kilometers out of 25,602 square kilometers disputed area in the Bay of Bengal.

Development

Water

Professor Willem Johan van Blommestein, a well-known Dutch water engineer, was one of the members of the UN mission (Krug Mission) that took place in 1956-1957, right after the large scale flooding of 1954 and 1955. Based on the recommendation of the mission, a Department of Waterways was created which was called East Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority. After independence in 1971 it was renamed as Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

In the 1990s, the Dutch-Bangladesh relationship played an important role in setting up the organization EGIS which is now called Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS). CEGIS is a Public Trust and center of excellence under the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR)

Food Security

Did you know that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has a key role in food safety in Bangladesh on account of the investments in capacity building made by the Netherlands Embassy, European Union and FAO over the last 6 years?

Improving Food Safety in Bangladesh project supported by the Netherlands Embassy and FAO in 2015, has established web-based food-borne illness surveillance system, as a result of which 421 Upazilla Health Complexes are posting food-borne illness surveillance data. Additionally, the project trained & supported 700 street food cart vendors with Good Hygiene Practices & hygienic street food carts and reached nearly 3 million students with education materials & messaging on food safety issues.