



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
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**WRITTEN REPLIES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH TO
THE LIST OF ISSUES (CRC/C/BGD/Q/4) PREPARED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN CONNECTION WITH
THE CONSIDERATION OF THE THIRD AND FOURTH PERIODIC
REPORTS OF BANGLADESH (CRC/C/BGD/4)***

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* In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

PART I

1. Please provide information on the consideration of removal of the reservation to the Convention following the State party's study of relevant experiences of other countries, as indicated in the State party report.

The Government of Bangladesh has yet to take a final decision on the withdrawal of its reservations to articles 14, paragraph 1, and 21, which is under active consideration of the State Party. The decision will be made after carefully examining the experiences of other countries in similar situations. The Government will take into account the recommendation(s) of NGOs while considering the withdrawal of reservation regarding adoption. The Committee is requested to help the State party in these regards by sharing experiences of other countries.

2. Please indicate whether any measures have been taken to harmonize the Children's Act and the National Children's Policy with the CRC.

The 1974 Children Act. The Government formed an inter-ministerial Committee - including NGOs working on child rights - chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare to review and amend the 1974 Children Act. The Committee instituted a multi-disciplinary subcommittee to carry out the assignment, with the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare in the Chair. As the draft has been prepared in English, it is now being translated into Bangla and a consultation process will be undertaken with wider community, including children, for feedback before finalizing and processing the draft for enactment.

The 1994 Children Policy. An inter-ministerial committee headed by the Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has been formed to update the 1994 National Children Policy. An inter-ministerial technical working group has been set up to work on the revised policy. The working group is chalking out a plan for getting inputs from cross-sections of people, including in-depth consultation with children. Based on the consultation and a review of various policies on children and other overall development policies, a draft policy will be developed by the sub-committee instituted for this purpose. The policy will include, among other issues, a chapter on adolescents. UNICEF is providing support to the process.

3. As the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR) has a section on children's rights, please provide information on budgetary allocations made in the NSAPR to meet those rights.

The vision and long-term goal of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP) for children's advancement and protection of their rights is encapsulated in the slogan "A world fit for children". The vision is to attain pro-poor growth and economic development that is child-sensitive and ensures both the basic rights and livelihood needs of children. A total of Taka 460 million has so far been allocated for children's advancement and rights. The PRSP adopted the following key objectives to be achieved by 2011 in relation to children:

- **Children's Health and Nutrition.** The objectives are: to reduce infant mortality rate from 45 per 1000 in 2006 to 37 per 1000 by 2011; to reduce the under-five mortality rate from 62 per 1000 in 2006 to 48 per 1000 by 2011; and to maintain immunization coverage at 90 per cent and reduce Hep-A, Hep-B in children by 80 per cent.

- **Children's Education.** In order to increase enrolment rate and decrease the drop-out rate, the major targets are: to increase the net enrolment rate in primary school from 75 per cent in 2000 to 92 per cent by 2011; to decrease the primary school drop-out rate from 35 per cent in 2000 to 20 per cent by 2011; to increase the children under grade 5 level from 68 per cent in 2000 to 75 per cent by 2011; to train all primary teachers, and increase attendance rate by 20-25 per cent in 2011; to increase contact hours by 20 per cent and, make the maximum class size 46; to maintain gender parity in access and achievement. Non-formal education (NFE) will be provided to diverse groups of children, including non-enrolled, drop outs, adults and hard-to-reach children to enhance their employability and productivity through skill training.

- **Children's water and sanitation.** Bangladesh is committed to achieving universal access to 100 per cent safe drinking water and 100 per cent sanitation coverage by 2011. The specific objectives are to: mitigate arsenic problem in drinking water by providing alternative arrangements; and increase rural access to sanitary latrines from 53 per cent in 2003 to 100 per cent by 2011; increase urban slum access to sanitary latrines to 100 per cent by 2009; expand water and sanitation services to cover 80 per cent of currently underserved municipal areas by 2011; provide improved water supply to 50 per cent of the underserved, un-served and difficult areas by 2011.

- **Children's protection.** All children, particularly those who are vulnerable, will have the right to protection from abuse, exploitation and violence. The National Plan of Action (NPA) covers the main aspects of child protection. Enabling environment and preventive steps will be undertaken to protect children from abuse and violence. To protect the best interest of the children, laws affecting children will be harmonized and enforced. The major targets for protection of children are to increase programme coverage for vulnerable children; increase under-5 birth registration from 8 per cent in 2000 to 100 per cent by 2011; and reduce early marriage by 60 per cent within 2011.

4. Please indicate the progress made and the resources available for the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children (2005-2010).

The 3rd National Plan of Action for Children (2005-2010) was adopted in 2005. The NPA addresses almost all rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments. A number of programmes and projects have been undertaken by the Government Ministries and Departments in line with the NPA, such as Protection of Children at Risk by the Ministry of Social Welfare; Empowerment of Children and Adolescents by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; Time Bound Programme for the Elimination of Worst Forms Child Labour by the Ministry of Labour and Employment; 2nd Primary Education Development Programme by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

The Government is working to establish a full-fledged monitoring system for the implementation of the NPA or for that matter, implementation of the Convention. Very recently (February, 2009), Government has constituted the "National Council for Women and Child Development (NCWCD)", chaired by the Honourable Prime Minister for monitoring and

evaluation of the NPA for women and child development. This new body combines together the former “National Council for Women Development” (chaired by the Honourable Prime Minister) and “National Children’s Council” (chaired by the Minister for Women and Children Affairs). The NCWCD will also formulate (if required) new laws, rules for the protection of child’s interests, rights and welfare and recommend amendments to existing laws and rules. The Inter-Ministerial CRC Committee, chaired by the Secretary of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, coordinates the implementation of CRC and ensures that NPA implementation remains a top agenda on both national and district level CRC committees. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, with support from UNICEF, has started a project (project cost Taka 46.77 million) focusing on monitoring child rights in the country. There are district-level CRC Committees to monitor various aspects of child rights. The Government is planning a mid-term evaluation of the NPA soon.

5. Please briefly inform the Committee on the composition, human and financial resources of the newly established National Human Rights Commission and indicate whether it has a mandate to address children’s rights.

The NHRC is composed of a Chairperson and two Members, of whom one has to be a retired or sitting judge of the Supreme Court. The Chair and the Members are appointed for a three-year term and for no more than two consecutive terms. The President upon recommendation by a selection committee appoints them. The selection committee is composed of an Appellate Division judge as Chair and includes the Attorney General, Comptroller and Auditor General, Chairman of the Public Service Commission, the Cabinet Secretary and Law Secretary as members. Currently, a retired judge of the Supreme Court is serving as the Chair of NHRC, while two other members have also been appointed. The Commission submits an annual report to the President every year by 30 March.

Apart from the Chairperson and the Members, there is a Secretary at the Commission. The Commission may appoint other officials to perform the duties and responsibilities given by the law.

The Commission can undertake investigation following allegation of human rights violation by any individual or by any other sources. The Commission itself can initiate investigation into any incident of rights violation. The commission is empowered to investigate particular human rights violation allegations brought forward by citizens or discovered through their own monitoring. If a human rights violation has been proved, the NHRC can either settle the matter through mediation or pass it on to the Court or other relevant authorities for resolving the issue in question. **It is not barred to take actions in the area of children rights violation under the overall human rights framework.**

The Government allocates fund on annual basis to the Commission. The Commission does not require prior approval for expenditure from the approved budget. The Commission will maintain detailed accounts of expenditure and prepare an annual financial report which will be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

6. Please inform the Committee on the progress made in establishing the institution of the Children’s Commissioner (Ombudsman).

The Government of Bangladesh initiated the process for establishing the Office of the Ombudsman for Children in 2004. In 2006, a draft law was prepared under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA). The draft was placed before the Cabinet in the same year for approval. The Cabinet, after reviewing the draft, made few observations and sent it back to the Ministry for further review and revision accordingly. The matter remains under process.

7. Please indicate what kind of human rights training for professionals dealing with children has been organised in the last 3 years. Which professional groups were targeted and what has been the assessment of this training?

Trainings for judges on juvenile justice were organized at the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) with the support of UNICEF and other partners. Police officers have also been trained on child rights and justice for children in particular. Lawyers have been provided training on justice for children, and the training is being expanded through the Bangladesh Bar Association with the support of UNICEF. Teachers from public universities are also being trained on child rights.

Almost all the Training Institutes, including Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center, are providing training to the entry-level as well as mid-level and senior Government officials on child rights and justice for children issues. Officials of various institutions under the Department of Social Services were also provided training on child-friendly behaviour. Currently, training on Basic Social Services and Professional Social Services are being organized for social workers.

The Government is also working to systematically incorporate child rights and justice for children issues in the training curriculum of the training institutes for different professionals.

8. Please briefly indicate the concrete measures taken to improve birth registration coverage, indicating how children whose fathers or both parents are unknown, children in remote areas, and children belonging to minority groups are covered.

The Government engaged local NGOs in 2008 to register the children of sex-workers living in all the 12 brothels in Bangladesh. The completed BR application forms have been submitted to the local registrars for all the children (882) living in the brothels. And by the end of 2008, 82 per cent of them (721) received their birth certificates.

A plan has been drawn up to register children in remote areas, and children belonging to minority groups in 2009. The government and NGOs are working together for this purpose. The Government will hire additional human resources to make sure that the services are in place while the NGOs will work to address the demand side in terms of community mobilization and searching for un-registered children in the most remote areas and vulnerable situations.

In addition, the Birth Registration project of the Government with support from UNICEF has plans to expedite birth registration for the following children:

- Children in specific geographical locations:

- Children in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)
- 11 most high-risk districts

- Children clustered according to nature and type of vulnerability:

- Urban Slum Children
- Urban Street Children (registration is being done under the Protection of Children at Risk project of the Ministry of Social Welfare)
- Urban Working Children (registration is being done by the Project under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education)
- Children in Chars (island) and Haors¹
- Children of Gypsies
- Refugee Children
- Children with disability
- Children in Institutional Care (child development centres and orphanages etc).

9. Please provide additional information on adolescent health services and policies for adolescents with regard to education, leisure, and cultural activities, showing the gender dimension.

As part of the initiative to revise the Children Policy, the Committee for revision of the Policy has decided to include a part on adolescents instead of formulating a separate policy for adolescents. The policy is expected to be finalized by 2009.

10. With regard to education, please provide additional information on the specific measures taken to address, in a sustainable manner:

- (a) The high drop-out rates,
- (b) Gender, rural/urban, ethnic, and income disparities, and
- (c) The low quality of education.

Please also provide information on the state of non-formal education and vocational training.

The Government of Bangladesh has undertaken various activities to improve access and quality of education. Some of the major initiatives include Primary Education Development Program (PEDP), Stipend Programme, School Construction Projects, and School Feeding

¹ Haor: bowl-shaped large tectonic depression. It receives surface runoff water by rivers and canals, and consequently, a haor becomes very extensive water body in the monsoon and dries up mostly in the post-monsoon period. In Bangladesh haors are found mainly in greater Sylhet and greater Mymensingh regions. During monsoon a Haor is a vast stretch of turbulent water.

programme in extreme poverty-prone areas. Some remarkable achievements have already been made in this regard. The School Survey Report 2007 reveals that the Gross Enrolment rate has reached to 98.8%, with 93.4% for boys and 104.6% for girls. The net enrolment rate has reached 91.1%. The Completion rate to Grade 5 was 49.5 % in 2007.

Primary School Stipend Program. Currently, stipend is being provided to 40 per cent of poor students, amounting to a total of 4.8 million primary schools students in rural areas of the country. The Government has plans to extend the stipend programme to difficult-to-reach areas and the areas most hit by poverty. The percentage of coverage will be determined on the basis of prevalence of poverty and enrolment rate.

School Feeding Program. Currently, the Government is providing fortified biscuits to 1 million students in the food insecure areas and cyclone-Sidr affected areas with the assistance of WFP and 0.2 million students of selected 6 Upazillas (sub-districts) under EC assistance. The enrolment and retention rate in primary schools is very low in the char/haor/hill and poverty-hit areas due to extreme poverty and hunger. Therefore, the Government is planning to cover these areas and gradually expand the programme across the whole country.

Training of Teachers and Officials. So far, 73,079 teachers have received the Certificate in Education Training from the targeted 90,000 teachers under Primary Education Development Programme-II. In addition, various types of in-service trainings are being provided to the teachers, School Management Committee members and primary education officials.

Construction of additional classrooms and recruitment of additional teachers in the existing primary schools. Current average teacher-student ratio is 1:49 in the primary schools. A total of additional 23,480 classrooms have so far been constructed against the target of 40,000 additional classrooms. Some 19,910 more teachers have been recruited from the target 45,000 teachers in the government primary schools under the PEDP-II to reduce the class size. The Government is gradually transforming double shift schools to single shift schools to increase teacher-student contact hours.

Inclusive Education. Three different strategies and Action Plans have been approved and are being implemented to mainstream children belonging to ethnic communities, children with special needs and children from vulnerable groups. Currently 53,303 children with special needs are enrolled in primary schools. A screening tool to identify children with special needs has been introduced in one district on pilot basis. A handbook has been developed for teachers so as to enable them to easily take care of children with special needs. Ten residential schools will be constructed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Pre-primary education. Currently 26,000 primary schools are running pre-primary classes. But the availability of teaching-learning materials is still inadequate. A standard curriculum will be developed, teachers' training will be provided and teaching-learning materials will be supplied to these schools to enhance the effectiveness of these classes. Pre-primary classes will be introduced throughout the country in a phased manner.

Reaching out-of-school children. In order to support and attain the education for all goals, a project titled Reaching Out-of-School Children was launched in 2004. The project facilitates access to primary education for currently out-of-school disadvantaged children and

ensures their retention. This project also takes care of the quality of primary education of these children. The project has provisions for education allowances for out-of-school children that range from Tk 800 for Grade 1 to 3 and Tk. 970 for Grade 4 to 5. The project covers 60 Upazillas (sub-districts). At present, 11,000 learning centres have been established on need basis through out the country. About 500,000 children will receive education during the project period of 2004-10.

Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children. The project is being implemented in 6 divisional cities to provide basic education to 0.2 million urban working children of 10-14 year old age group. About 15,000 among them will be provided with trade-based skills training.

11. Please indicate the mechanisms and measures used to make information on the Convention and children's rights widely available to the general public and, in particular, to children. Please mention the progress achieved in ensuring knowledge and understanding of the Convention and children's rights.

The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs translated the Convention on the Rights of the Child into Bangla and widely distributed it among various professionals involved in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. The Ministry also translated other international instruments including the concluding observation of the Committee and distributed it among the stakeholders.

The level of understanding among government officials, policy makers and the public in general has visibly increased on the various issues of child rights. The Prime Minister has recently declared that the Children's Act would be amended to ensure the rights of the children without any discrimination. The Prime Minister has reiterated that special attention would be given to children in vulnerable situations, especially street children.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, through its project "Capacity Building for Monitoring Child Rights", with UNICEF support, has widely circulated the National Plan of Action for Children and the Booklet on the Key Findings of Children Opinion Poll-2005 to all key Government officials at all district and sub-district levels for creating awareness about the CRC and national strategy & plans.

The Bangla-language version of the Convention will be reprinted for wide circulation among different stakeholders, child rights agencies and children in 2009. Formal training will be provided to the members of the child rights committees at the sub-district level under the aforementioned project.

12. Please briefly explain how children benefit from social safety net programmes and how recipients are selected. What monitoring and reporting mechanisms exist?

The Constitution of Bangladesh provides appropriate social protection measures for the people in need. The Constitution states: "It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people, with a view to securing to its citizens: (a) The provision of the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care; and (b) The right to work, that is the right to guaranteed

employment at a reasonable wage having regard to the quantity and quality of work” (**Art. 15 of the Constitution**). In line with the Constitutional provisions and the PRSP targets, the Government has been implementing a number of social protection programmes. The budgetary allocation for social safety net programme in the year 2007-2008 was Tk. 1,146,700 million, which is 13.32 % of total budget and 2.14 per cent of the GDP. There are 66 different types of programme / projects in the form of cash transfer, food aid, and micro credit implemented under social safety net initiatives.

- **Cash Transfer Programme.** Among the social safety net programmes old age allowance programme for the poor comes at the top in terms of budgetary allocation, beneficiary coverage and benefits received by the target group. In the year 2007-08, the total financial allocation was Tk. 3,840 million which was disbursed among a total of 1.7 million beneficiaries. The number of beneficiaries is increasing over time.

For poor and vulnerable women, the Government has launched another programme under the title “Allowance Programme for Widows, Deserted and Destitute Women”. It covered a total number of 0.65 million vulnerable women with a total budget of Tk. 1,980 million in the year 2007-08. Recently, a maternity allowance programme has been undertaken covering 45 thousand poor mothers with an allocation of Tk. 170 million.

There are two programmes with relatively low budgetary allocation for persons with disability. For acid-burnt and physically handicapped people, Tk. 100 million was allocated in the year 2007-08 where targeted beneficiaries received a one-off payment of Tk. 10,000. The allowance programme for fully retarded people covers a target population of 200,000 with a total budget of Tk. 314 million. Food for Works programme (cash) is one of the largest safety net programmes in terms of budgetary allocation with Tk. 3,000 million disbursed for the year 2005-06.

Food Transfer Programme. Existing social safety net programme also includes food transfer programme with a view to fulfilling nutritional requirement and food security as well. In the year 2007-08, 100 thousand metric tons of food grains were allocated under the Food for Works (FFW) programme.

Vulnerable group development (VGD). Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) is one of the largest safety net programs assisted by the World Food Programme (WFP). It is specifically targeted at the poor women of Bangladesh. The programme’s ultimate goal is to bring sustainable improvement to the lives of members of ultra-poor households. Since the VGD programme was started to assist war, famine and flood victims in the early 1970’s, it has evolved to become one of WFP’s key programme strategies to assist poor women rise above poverty line (measured in terms of less than 1,805 kcal intake per day) and enable them to participate in Government and NGO supported development activities.

VGD aims to reach ultra-poor rural women with complementary inputs that will improve their nutrition and enhance their livelihoods and self-reliance. Over 24 months, the VGD assistance package includes:

- fortified wheat flour or rice to offset the opportunity costs of participating in training programmes and to improve nutrition;

- training in health and nutrition, civil and legal rights, literacy and numeracy, HIV awareness and prevention measures, child trafficking, budget management, and income-generating activities;

- enrolment in personal savings programmes;

- micro-credit aimed at securing small business to enhance livelihood security; and

- NGO membership for women who repay loans.

About 750,000 ultra-poor rural women (each representing a household) across 64 districts, 480 upazilas and about 4,500 unions with high rates of chronic malnutrition are targeted as potential beneficiaries of the programme. The VGD programme strategy is holistic, combining food aid with a development package. Each participant receives either 25 kg of micronutrient-fortified *atta* (whole wheat flour) or 30 kg wheat grain for a VGD cycle of two years. From the commencement of the current CP all recipients receive 25 kg of fortified *atta*/30 kg wheat without any cash grant. Fortified *atta* is being produced in 22 milling and fortification units (MFUs). It is fortified with seven micronutrients (i.e. vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, niacin, folic acid, iron and zinc) in appropriate quality and composition. In addition to the provision of *atta* or wheat grain, the programme arranges (i) training on social awareness and income generating activities (IGAs), (ii) savings management, (iii) access to credit to start IGAs, and (iv) graduation to mainstream development programmes of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Vulnerable group feeding (VGF) is another food transfer programme, which has been implemented as post disaster intervention. The total allocation was 229,000 metric ton of food grain in the year 2007-08, covering 7.68 million beneficiaries. Test relief and gratuitous relief are also being implemented.

Besides cash transfer and food transfer programme, employment generation is an important and promising initiative taken by the Government. In the PRSP, employment generation has been considered to be a crucial social safety net programme, which eventually helps reduce poverty. A 100 days' employment generation programme was undertaken by the Government in the financial year 2008-09 with a huge budget of Tk. 20,000 million. The programme is expected to benefit at least 2 million households through directly employing one member from each. Each of the direct beneficiaries will get Tk. 100 per day for a total of 100 days in a year.

Micro-credit programmes for self-employment. The Government has taken up a few special credit programmes under both revenue and development budgets for creation of employment for the poor. Up to December 2006, micro credit amounting to Tk. 16,0724.5 million was distributed through different ministries/divisions/departments. To expand the micro credit programme, the government allocated Tk. 1,480 million in favour of the Rural Development and Cooperative Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Liberation War Affairs and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in FY2006-07. Besides, Tk. 2,170 million was allocated for *Palli Karma Shahayak* Foundation (PKSF) to implement microcredit programme through NGOs in FY 2006-07. To accelerate the pace of development of rural social sector, Tk. 250 million was allocated in FY 2006-07 for Bangladesh NGO Foundation. Further, Tk. 1,000 million was allocated in FY2006-07 to the Special Fund for Employment Generation of the Hardcore Poor

implemented by PKSF and an amount of Tk. 1,000 million was allocated for development of micro-enterprises in the rural areas.

Cash for education. The Primary education stipend program, female secondary school assistance program are the most extensive social protection programme directly addressing children. (This has been elaborated in response to question 10.)

Table 1

Major social safety net programmes in Bangladesh										
Programme Type	Name of Programmes	Budgetary Allocation (Million TK)			Beneficiaries (in million)			Amount of Benefit (TK/month)		
		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Cash Transfer Programmes	Old Age Allowance Programme for the Poor	3,240	3,840	3,840	1.5	1.6	1.7	180	200	220
	Allowance Programme for Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women	1,365	1,560	1,980	0.625	0.65	0.75	180	200	220
	Honorarium Programmes for Insolvent Freedom Fighters	420	600	600	0.07	0.10	0.10		416	600
	Fund for Rehabilitation for the Acid-burnt and the Physically Handicapped	200	100	100	0.02			10,000 (once only)	10,000 (once only)	10,000 (once only)
	Allowance for Fully Retarded	250		314	0.104	0.167	0.200	200	200	220
	Maternity Allowance for the Poor Mothers			170			0.045			
	Food for Works Programme (Cash)	3,000								
Food Transfer Programmes	Food for Works Programme		0.10	0.10						
	VGD Programme		0.20	0.126		0.75	0.636			
	VGF Programme		0.25	0.229		7.68	7.68			
	Test Relief (TR)	1.032	0.15	0.075						
	Gratituous Relief			0.025						
Seasonal Unemployment Reduction Fund	500	500								
100 Days Employment Generation Programme (2008-09)		20,000			2				100 TK/beneficiary/day for a total of 100 days/year	

Test Relief (TR)	1.032	0.15	0.075						
Gratituous Relief (GR)			0.025						
Seasonal Unemployment Reduction Fund	500	500							
100 Days Employment Generation programme (2008-09)	20,000				2				100 Tk/ beneficiary / day for a total of 100 days/year

Source: Compiled by the Child Poverty Study based on Bangladesh Economic Review 2006, 2007, 2008, and Ministry of Food and Disaster Management

13. Please indicate the issues affecting children that the State Party considers to be priorities, requiring the most urgent attention with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

Legislative Reform and administrative issues. Although a number of pieces of legislation have been passed after the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there are still major gaps between the international standards and national laws in relation to children. The Government of Bangladesh has taken legislative reform issues very seriously and the newly elected Prime Minister has made public commitment to amend the existing laws or enacting new laws as necessary. The Government is in the process of amending the main *laws* on children, including the Children Act 1974 on a priority basis. Other laws will also be reviewed and reformed. The National Policy on Children, which was formulated in 1994, will be revised by 2009, including a chapter on adolescents.

The effective implementation of the CRC requires multi-sectoral actions and, therefore, coordination among the key government stakeholders is very crucial. Establishing a Department or Cell for Children under the auspices of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Convention is, therefore, a top priority for the Government at the moment.

The issue-based priorities of the Government are as follow:

- Education:

- Increase primary school access, reduce drop-out rate and improve retention rate;
- Improve the quality of education of student learning and performance outcomes;
- Reduce class size and increase teacher-student contact hours;
- Increase the coverage of education for non-enrolled children of urban, char and haor areas and other remote areas and the children who are in difficult situations;
- Increase enrolment in early childhood development programs.

- Health and Nutrition:

- Reduce infant mortality rate to 37 per 1000 child population by 2011;
- Maintain the high level of immunization coverage;
- Increase emergency obstetric care services and increase skilled attendants at birth;
- Reduce death by accident including drowning;
- Reduce the prevalence of low birth weight;
- Reduce the prevalence of micro-nutrient deficiencies;
- Reduce the prevalence of malnutrition amongst children under five, with particular attention to those under two, and pregnant and lactating women.

- Child Protection:

- Extend services at the decentralized level for children, with special attention for children in immediate need such as street children;
- Take measures to eradicate begging within five years;
- Achieve 100% birth registration for children below 18 years of age by the end of 2011;
- Take immediate measures to reduce exploitation of children for various reasons and undertake programmes for their reintegration within the family and community;

- Take immediate steps for the formalization of bilateral agreements with India to facilitate the rescue, recovery, rehabilitation and integration of the victims of trafficking;
- Protection of children from corporal punishment at home, schools and institutions;
- Taking effective measures for the elimination of worst forms of child labour as per the ILO Convention 182;
- Eliminating the practice of early marriage;
- Protecting children affected by natural disasters.

PART II

New bills or legislation enacted . The cabinet has approved the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2009 in February giving equal rights to both Bangladeshi men and women in determining citizenship of their offspring in case of their marriage with foreigners. Earlier, only the offspring of male Bangladeshis were eligible for citizenship but amendment was brought to clause 5 of that law for giving the same right to the female citizens of the country.

The National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, 2008 was passed to establish an independent institution to monitor the promotion and protection of human rights, fulfilling the long-awaited demand of the human rights activists, members of the civil society and international community.

New institutions. The National Human Rights Commission was set up on September 01, 2008 to investigate and take necessary actions within its mandate for human rights violations and advise government on the enforcement of international human rights covenants. This was also elaborated under question # 5

Newly implemented policies. The National Policy for the Advancement of Women was approved by the then Council of Advisers of the Caretaker Government in February 2008. The main goals set in the Policy are to eradicate gender disparities from society and to provide better options for women to ensure their participation *in* private and public life.

Newly implemented plans of action, programmes and projects and their scope:

- 100 per cent net enrolment in primary schools by 2011 and eradication of illiteracy by 2013;
- Elimination of child labour from all sectors;
- Undertaking effective measures for developing children's physical and mental capacity and nutrition status in line with the CRC;
- Re-commissioning of 18,000 community health clinics for better child and mother health;
- Revision of the Women's Advancement Policy;
- Revision of the current PRSP in line with the commitments of the new Government.

PART III

Data and statistics, if available

1. Please provide disaggregated statistical data (by sex, age groups, ethnic and indigenous groups, urban and rural areas) covering the years 2006-2008 on the number and percentage of children under 18 living in Bangladesh.

Population under 18 years by age groups, 2006 (in million)

Age group	Total	Boys	Girls	Urban	Rural
00-04 yrs	18.4	9.56	8.86	3.83	14.49
05-09 yrs	19.21	10.09	9.13	3.99	15.10
10-14 yrs	18.15	9.63	8.53	4.51	13.62
15-17 yrs	8.08	4.51	3.56	2.31	5.59
	63.87	33.78	30.07	14.65	49.00

Population under 18 years by age groups, 2007 (in millions)

Age group	Total	Boys	Girls	Urban	Rural
00-04 yrs	18.69	9.70	9.54	3.99	14.57
05-09 yrs	19.50	10.23	9.83	4.16	15.18
10-14 yrs	18.42	9.77	9.19	4.70	13.70
15-17 yrs	8.20	4.58	3.84	2.42	5.82
	64.82	34.27	32.40	15.27	49.27

Population under 18 years by age groups, 2008 (in million)

Age group	Total	Boys	Girls	Urban	Rural
00-04 yrs	18.69	9.83	9.12	4.16	15.18
05-09 yrs	19.77	10.37	9.40	4.34	15.25
10-14 yrs	18.68	9.90	8.78	4.90	13.75
15-17 yrs	8.32	4.64	3.67	2.52	5.85
	65.73	34.75	30.97	15.92	49.48

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

2. In the light of article 4 of the Convention, please provide updated data on budget allocations (in absolute figures and percentages of the national and regional budgets) and analysis of trends for the years 2006, 2007, and 2008 regarding the implementation of the Convention in the areas of education, health, social services and child protection.

Sector-Wise Budget allocation as percentage of GDP (in core BDT ²)

Budget Year	Education	% of GDP	Health and Family Welfare	% of GDP	Social Welfare, and women Affairs	% of the GDP	Child Protection	% of the GDP
2005-06	9102	2.19%	4111	0.08%	607	0.11	71.74	0.01
2006-07	10711	2.57	4957	1.05	706	0.13	72.89	0.01
2007-08	11434	2.75	5261	1.13	802	0.15	111.67	0.02

Sector-Wise Budget allocation as percentage of total budget (in crore BDT)

Areas	2006 July 06- June 07		2007 July 07-June 08		2008 July 08-June 09	
	Amount	% of total budget	Amount	% of total budget	Amount	% of total budget
Education (including technology)	38.79	14.6	37.09	13.8	34.95	12.8
Health and Family welfare	23.75	9.0	26.06	9.7	24.39	8.9
Social services (includes women and children affairs)	9.14	3.5	8.19	3.0	22.02	8.0
Total Development Budget	264.81		269.64		273.78	

Source: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance

Budget allocation in Bangladesh is made among the relevant ministries, who in turn reallocate the available funds to division/district levels. Apparently, a steady incremental trend is not found in terms of the year-wise budget allocation among the areas. However, education and health have remained within the high priority areas and got fourth and fifth-highest allocation after energy, transport and local government. Social service that includes allocation for women and children has become as the seventh of the nine priority sectors after agriculture in 2008.

² BDT = Bangladesh Taka, US\$ 1 = BDT 69.05

Allocation in social sectors under Annual Development Programme (in crore BDT)

Sector	2005/6	% of total ADP	2006/7	% of total ADP	2007/8	% of total ADP
1. Education and Religions Affairs	2864.73	13.32	2020.42	13.55	3020.57	13.46
2. Health and Family Welfare	2110.35	9.82	2343	10.85	2442.03	10.85
3. Social Welfare, Women Affairs & Youth Development	195.76	0.91	156.37	0.72	140.3	0.62
4. Youth Sports and Culture	186.99	0.79	95.97	0.44	97.25	0.43
5. Labour and Manpower	88.31	0.41	70.3	0.33	104.97	0.49
Sub-total	5426.03	25.24	5592.91	25.89	5014.02	25.79
As percent of ADP expenditure	25.24	0.12	25.89	0.12	25.84	0.11
Total ADP allocation	21500		21600		22500	

Source: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission

Allocation under Revenue Budget for Social Sectors (in crore BDT)

Sector	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
1. Education and Religions Affairs	6396	7972	8607
2. Health and Family Welfare	2065	2682	2898
3. Youth, Sports & Culture	184	205	185
4. Labour and Manpower	16	23	23
5. Social Welfare & Women Affair	1067	1250	1773
Sub-total	9726	12132	13406
As percent of total revenue expenditure	25.55	26.72	23.46
Total (Dev+Rev)	60329	67288	80789
As percent of total public expenditure	16.12	18.03	16.69
As % of GDP	2.94	2.60	2.52

Source: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance. Figures are from revised budget

3. With reference to children deprived of a family environment and separated from their parents, please provide disaggregated data (by sex, age groups, ethnic and indigenous groups, urban and rural areas) for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 on the number of children:

- (a) Separated from their parents;
- (b) Placed in institutions (give the number of institutions in the country);
- (c) Placed with foster families;

	Separated from parents	Placed in Institutions	Placed with foster families	Boys	Girls	Urban	Rural
2006	178	178	N/A	71	107	178	Nil
2007	191	191	N/A	80	111	191	Nil
2008	193	193	N/A	85	108	193	Nil

According to the size of the street children population and their projection for major urban areas of Bangladesh 2005, conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies under the Protection of Children at Risk Project of the Ministry of Social Welfare, the number of street children is 679,728. The projected figures for the 2014 and 2024 are 1,144,754 and 1,615,330 respectively. The ratio of boys and girls among the street children is 78.6: 21.4.

4. Please provide disaggregated data (by sex, age groups, ethnic and indigenous groups, urban and rural areas), for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 on the number of children with disabilities:

- (a) Living with their families;
- (b) Living in institutions;
- (c) Placed in foster care;
- (d) Attending regular schools;
- (e) Attending special schools;
- (f) Not attending any school.

There is no updated information on the prevalence of disability. The Monthly Statistical Bulletin of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics published in June 2008 gives the figure of the year 2000 according to which the prevalence of disability is 6.04 (male 7.38 and female 4.66) per 1,000 population in Bangladesh.

According to the School Survey Report 2007, in 2006 a total of 47,570 children with disability attended regular schools, among them 26,778 boys and 20,792 girls. In 2007, the figure was 53,303, with 30,142 boys and 23,161 girls. The number of children attending special schools stood at 664, 698 and 695 in 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively. According to the information collected by the Department of Social Services, 812, 813 and 812 children were living in special institutions in 2006, 2007 and 2008 respectively.

	Living in institutions	Attending regular schools	Attending special schools
2006	812	47,570 26,778 (b) 20,792 (g)	664
2007	813	53,303 30,142 (b) 23,161 (g)	698
2008	812	-	695

Source: Children with disability attending regular schools (School Survey Report 2007), Department of Social Services

5. Please provide disaggregated statistical data (by sex, age groups, ethnic and indigenous groups, urban and rural areas) covering the years 2006, 2007 and 2008:

- a) **Number of child deaths by accidents** (including, by drowning):

Data of 2006, 2007 and 2008 are not available. The survey on injury was done in 2003.

- b) **Children living in poverty:** 30.2 million or 46% of children are living in poverty (based on HDRC Child Poverty Study)

Status of poverty of children (0-17 years, percentage)

Poverty Status	Percentage
Children below national upper poverty line	45.8
Children below national lower poverty line	22.6
Children below USD 1.08 per day	59.4

Source: HIES (household Income and Expenditure Survey) 2005, as quoted in Child Poverty and Disparities in Bangladesh (draft December 2008)

Deprivation status of children (0-17 years, %)

Nature of Deprivation	Percentage
Health Deprived	16
Education	7.7
Nutrition	56.7
Information	59.4
Water	3.1
Sanitation	63.8
Shelter	41.4

Source: MICS 2006, CMNS (child and mother nutrition survey) 2005

- c) **Working children (by sex, age, and place of work):**

The latest national level survey was done in 2003 and the updated data on this is not available. Based on 2006 MICS, number of working children between 5-14 years of age was 3.1 million (2.2 million boys and 0.9 million girls).

- d) **Children infected with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS**

There is no national-level estimate of children infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS. But there are currently three self-help groups of people living with HIV/AIDS. According to the information available from the self-help groups, there were 38 infected children and 1200 affected by HIV/AIDS in 2007.
