

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Economic Relations Division
Ministry of Finance
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***Government of Bangladesh and 18 Development Partners sign the
Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS) to enhance aid effectiveness***

Dhaka, June 02, 2010:

Today, on 2 June 2010, the Government of Bangladesh and 18 Development Partners signed a Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS) for the period 2010-2015. Mr. M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, Secretary, ERD on behalf of Government of Bangladesh and the Heads of concerned Missions and Agencies, on behalf of their respective countries and agencies signed the document. The Hon'ble Minister for Finance, Mr. Abul Maal A. Muhith, MP and the Hon'ble Minister for Planning, Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) A K Khandker, BU, MP were present in the ceremony and witnessed the signing. The signatories among the Development Partners were the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Germany, the Islamic Development Bank, Japan, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, the United States, and the World Bank.

The agreed strategy presents a shared intention of the Government of Bangladesh and the Development Partners to find a more effective way of working together in the spirit of Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. The salient features of JCS are national ownership; DP's alignment to GoB policies, priorities, strategies, systems and procedures; harmonisation of development assistance, management for results; and mutual accountability. The aim of JCS is to transform the international commitments into real actions for an improved aid delivery and a positive change in Bangladesh. The JCS, which was endorsed by GoB and DPs at the high level Bangladesh Development Forum in February 2010, has been aligned to the revised National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (Steps Towards Change) and the upcoming 6th Five-Year Plan.

Sd./-

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Salient features of the Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS)

Bangladesh signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and has moved forward on this issue through active participation in various international events, such as the 3rd High Level Forum held in Accra in 2008, aiming to improving aid effectiveness and harmonisation of international development assistance. The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) revitalised Bangladesh's commitment to the Paris Declaration. Development Partners (DPs) based in Dhaka have also demonstrated a strong commitment to implement the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

The JCS is a major step forward towards strengthening the partnership between the Government and its development actors. It will intensify mutual collaboration to improve aid delivery and thereby enhance the prospects for sustained growth and poverty reduction. The JCS sets standards for the effective management and dialogue of development assistance through joint programming, use of Government's administrative and financial systems, joint appraisal and analytical work for co-financed programmes and joint review of progress in implementing programmes.

GoB and DPs agree to improve the national and sectoral dialogue and coordination. The high level Bangladesh Development Forum held in February 2010 resulted in 25 agreed action statements, including the aim to formulate a GoB – DP "Development Results Framework" for the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR) and the upcoming Five Year Plan. GoB and DPs will revitalise the Local Consultative Group (LCG) with regard to planning and implementation of GoB-led and DP-supported programmes. The GoB-DP LCG dialogue at sectoral and national levels will report the outcome to the annual Bangladesh Development Forum meetings.

The JCS has a detailed annual action plan. It includes joint activities to strengthen GoB's aid management capacity, improved public financial management, new

programme-based approaches (e.g. next phase of Health and Primary Education national programmes) and joint monitoring and evaluation activities. Other issues of mutual interest are DPs' alignment to Government policies, priorities, systems and procedures and further work on aid harmonisation, based on improved management for results.

A major characteristic of the development of JCS has been its emphasis on DPs' partnership with the Government, the non-state actors and among the Development Partners themselves. The Government has consulted widely with different key stakeholders, including development partners, public sector personnel, civil society, private sector and members of Parliament in preparing the strategy paper. The process of preparing the JCS has already begun to have a positive impact on the aid delivery and coordination in Bangladesh. The high level Bangladesh Development Forum in February 2010, with the agreed BDF Action Points, is an example of improved national and sectoral dialogue around GoB priorities and real actions.

However, more needs to be done. The challenge now is to move further on implementation of the national strategies as well as JCS to ensure that the use of all available resources are maximized to help Bangladesh achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and GoB's Vision 2021.