

Virtual Consultation on 'Bangladesh at 50: Health & Sanitation and the role of NGOs'

July 17, 2021: 11:00-13:00 hours

CSO Alliance has been trying to promote and highlight the contributions of the civil society organizations (CSOs) in the development sector with particular focus on reaching the disadvantaged and excluded groups of populations. Keeping this in view, the Alliance has already initiated a process of consultation with stakeholders and organized a number of divisional meetings with CSOs in different parts of Bangladesh. The Alliance has initiated a '50 years Celebration Plan' through which four focused meetings will be organized on the issues like Health & Sanitation, Budget, Women's empowerment and Education. The meeting on July 17 is the first in this series.

Objectives of the Event

- Highlight the gains and challenges for the health and sanitation sector in the past 50 years
- Create unified voice on pressing issues and concerns in health and sanitation, particularly the enraging pandemic;
- Reach a consensus on issues of common interest for effective coordination between the Government and CSOs.

Prof. Dr. Md. Habibe Millat MP member, Parliamentary Standing Committee on science and technology, was present as *Chief Guest*. **Ms. Aroma Datta** MP, member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Social Welfare, presented her speech as the *Guest of Honor*. **Dr. AMR Chowdhury** Convener, BHW gave the *Keynote Speech*. **Dr. Shahaduz Zaman**, Reader in Medical Anthropology and Global Health of Sussex Medical School UK, **Ms. Hasin Jahan**, Country Director of Water Aid Bangladesh, **Dr. Morseda Chowdhury**, Director Health Nutrition and Population Program (HNPP) of BRAC and **Mr. Harun or Rashid Lal**, Executive Director of SOLIDARITY, Kurigram joined the session as *Designated Discussants*.

Dr AMR Chowdhury, the key note presenter of the thematic consultation, brought the facts forward amidst all the turmoil Bangladesh is doing significantly better than its neighboring countries in different health indicators. However, there are lots to do ahead and we may only take it to next level if we beat the indicators of Srilanka at least. Rasheda K. Choudhury, Convener, CSO Alliance reiterate her determination to turn every house a 'fort' against covid19 reminiscent of the call of 'father of nation' in his historic speech. Morseda Chowdhury, Director, BRAC HNPP, portrays how BRAC with all its partners reaching

household for raising awareness, for vaccination and for telemedicine supports. Hasin Jahan, Country Director, WaterAid Bangladesh, insists on ensuring 100 percent subsidy provision for the poor and marginalized as per pro-poor strategy in her speech and she insists on emphasizing on 'respiratory hygiene' in the context of pandemic. Shahaduzzaman, Reader in Medical Anthropology and Global Health of Sussex Medical School UK, has urged the CSOs to create a wider spectrum for creating better impact in health and other relevant sectors. Harun Or Rashid Lal, ED, Solidarity, expressed his good wishes for living the dream of freedom fighters through collective effort of government and CSOs.

Chief guest Professor Dr. Habibe Millat acknowledged the contribution of NGOs in social and economic development of the nation but he also expressed that NGOs might have been more visible in Covid situation as they have long experience of working against disaster. KAM Morshed, Senior Director, BRAC added in this context that more CSOs will be engaged in covid19 fight as the coverage is widening across the country soon. In her final speech, Aroma Dutta, MP emphasized on being on same pace and making resilient effort through spirit of togetherness and spirit of patriotism.