

Intervention for the Hon'ble Foreign Minister during the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the 'Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking', 26 September 2011, New York at the sideline of the 66th UNGA

Hon'ble Foreign Minister may:

Thank H.E. Mr. Sergei Martynov, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign affairs of Belarus for arranging the luncheon once again.

Thank the delegation of Belarus for all the measures taken throughout the year to discuss the issue of human trafficking within the UN (not only in New York, but also in Geneva and Vienna)

Welcome the delegation of Singapore who joined the 'Group of Friends' recently.

Recall last year's Ministerial Luncheon that took place on 22 September 2010 where the 'Declaration on the Global Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons' was adopted.

Mention that Bangladesh has ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) with a view to finally becoming a party to the Trafficking Protocol.

Share the measures undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh during the last one year to follow-up on the Declaration and the 'Global Plan of Action' and in this regard, **mention** that the Cabinet approved in principle a draft law to combat trafficking in persons in July 2011. The draft law entitled 'The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2011', details a comprehensive approach to human trafficking in Bangladesh and addresses labour trafficking for the first time in a direct manner under national law of Bangladesh. It marks a step forward in defining trafficking to cover all people, not just women and children. It has provisions for stringent punishment to the extent of death penalty as well as life imprisonment.

State that the present Government has also formed a joint taskforce with India for rescue, recovery, repatriation and integration (RRRI) of women and children victims of trafficking in these two countries. Relevant ministries as well as NGOs and international development partners are working together for finalization of RRRI process. Counter Trafficking Committees (CEC) at different tiers of local government regularly follow-up activities relating to trafficking of women and children and report on implementation. Under the SAARC initiative, two regional Toll-free help lines, dedicated for women and

children, have already been commissioned. The present government has also launched a website to receive information on women and children trafficking.

Reiterate the Government's resolve to combat the heinous crime of trafficking in persons.

Welcome the participation of UN agencies and other stakeholders in the Luncheon and mention that their assistance to Member States is crucial to implement the 'Global Plan of Action'.

Express satisfaction at the establishment and functioning of the 'UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Girls' and Express gratitude to the Member States/private entities that already contributed more than \$1 million to the Trust Fund. (*Might mention that Bangladesh will soon make a token contribution to the Fund*).

Emphasize the important role of media in addressing the issue of human trafficking and in this regard propose to include a few prominent media personalities in such high-level gathering of 'Group of Friends' (as today's one) in future.

Thank the delegation of Belarus once again for the wonderful Luncheon.