

# MARCH 2016

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## MARCH ACTIVITIES REPORT 2016

WDDF participated & organized a number of events/programs in March'16. These are as follows:

- International Women day: A discussion meeting and a cultural program was held on 8<sup>th</sup> March'2016, International Women day, organized by Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) Vaban. Honorable Prime Minister Shiekh Hasina of Bangladesh was present as the Chief Guest; the State Minister, Secretary along with other relevant officers of MOWCA, a number of Ministers and MPs were present in this program. Besides, representatives from UN Women as well as the representatives of DPOs, GOs, NGOs and CSOs were present. WDDF Chairperson Shirin Akhter and Project officer Tahseen Showkat were participated in the abovementioned program.
- Award Program: An award distribution ceremony on the occasion of International Women Day, to bestow a number of courageous, determined and qualified women, was held on 8<sup>th</sup> March'16, organized by Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF), at La Meridian Hotel, Nikunjo2, Dhaka. A number of enlightened and self determined women from diverse background and perspective have been selected by Bangladesh Brand Forum for their respective enterprise along with success for award in Sixteen categories. These categories include Diplomat, Winner of the Mount Everest, Journalist, Artist, Founder and owner of business associations and Human rights activists.


As a human and Women With Disabilities (WWDs)rights activist, Ashrafunnahar, Executive Director, WDDF has achieved award for her human and women rights based activities through establishing an organization of and by WWDs after having been faced multifaceted challenges in her own life. WDDF Chairperson Shirin Akhter and Executive Director Ashrafunnahar were participated in this Award distribution ceremony.

- Roundtable Discussion: A roundtable discussion on "Political Rights and Participation of Women With Disabilities" for the celebration of International Women Day is being organized with the initiative of seven organizations Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF), Access Bangladesh Foundation, Bangladesh Visually Impaired Peoples Society (BVIPS), Disabled Child Foundation (DCF), Disabled Welfare Society (DWS), National Council of Disabled Women (NCDW), Turning Point Foundation, from 10 AM to 1 PM, on Saturday 12th March 2016, at Azimur Rahman conference hall, the Daily Star Bhaban, on the issue of the Women With Disabilities are excluded from, their equal rights including political rights and participation" We Urge for an inclusive, antidiscriminatory and Women With Disabilities friendly society for all". These Seven Organizations led by Women with Disabilities having united 1<sup>st</sup> time with the initiative of WDDF and working as collective force for their participation in mainstream of the society. The keynote paper was jointly being presented by Nazma Ara Begum Popy, General Secretary, Bangladesh Visually Impaired Peoples Society (BVIPS) and Nasima Akter, President, National Council of Disabled Women (NCDW). WWDs are deprived from practicing and

enjoyment of political rights and participation though UNCRPD Article-29 'Participation in political and public life' noted that, states parties shall guarantee to PWDs political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others. In the consequence of our continuous advocacy and voice raising, 'National Action Plan' on 'Women Advancement Policy 2011' has been mentioned Two reserve seats for WWDs in National Parliament but no initiative has been adopted to implement or actualize this decision.

In the light of realizing this situation, the Seven women led organizations have organized this roundtable discussion due to advancing forward with this issue. The participants of the open discussion have clearly been stated that, Without having been enjoyed political rights and participation, all types of Women With Disabilities haven't been included in the mainstream of development and in this consequence, national development will extremely be interrupted. Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru, Member of Parliament, Convener Parliamentarian Caucus on Disability, was attended as Chief Guest in the program. Besides, Mr. Tariq Ul Islam, Secretary, Planning Ministry Bangladesh Secretariat, Kazi Reazul Hoque, Member, National Humanrights Commission (NHRC), Christine Hunter, Country Representative, UN Women and Ayesha Khanam, President, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) were present in this roundtable discussion. This Roundtable Discussion is moderated by Ashrafun Nahar Misti, Executive Director, Women With Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF). Welcome Speech is being delivered by Nasreen Jahan, Executive Director, Disabled Child Foundation (DCF). Closing speech and vote of thanks is delivered by Mohua Pal, Chairperson of Roundtable Discussion and Vice Chairperson Access Bangladesh Foundation.

 Roundtable-Discussion1

- Discussion Meeting with the representative of Department For International Development (DFID): A discussion meeting of DRF Guarantees with the Mr. Naved Chowdhury, Poverty and Protection Adviser of DFID was held in the Conference Hall of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) Banani, Dhaka, on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016. This discussion meeting is being organized by DFID in collaboration with Access Bangladesh Foundation. A presentation on DFID Bangladesh Operational Plan is being present by the representative of DFID. It is elaborately discussed in the meeting that, as an international donor organization, through adopting more disability inclusive and accessible programs, policy, plan and fund distribution strategy, DFID might be played a vital role to make DPOs and PWDs more responsive and contributive. WDDF Chairperson Shirin Akhter and Accounts Coordinator Md. Hasanuzzaman were participated in the abovementioned discussion meeting.
- Discussion meeting with the Grassroot Committee of WWDs:
  - I) A discussion meeting with the Grassroot Committee of WWDs of Doudkandi, Comilla as well as Upazila Women Officer was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March'2016, organized by WDDF, at Mukul Niketan in Kanora Union. This meeting is presided over WDDF Chairperson Shirin Akhter, WDDF Vice Chairperson  Roundtable-Discussion2

Masuma Akter and Project Officer Erona Khandakar were present in this discussion meeting. Shamima Sultana, the Upazila Women Officer exchanged Greetings and shared her views about the activities of WDDF with the members of Grassroot Committee; she also discussed about the financial support along with assistive device provided by WDDF to the WWDs for starting IGA and continuing education as well as how to utilize this support properly. Furthermore, the women officer talked with the parents of WWDs and suggested them not to be frustrated for their daughters with disabilities but to become more positive and cooperative to them for making them active along with contributive. II) The regular discussion meeting with the Grassroot WWDs Committee of Manikganj was held on 22nd March'2016, organized by WDDF, at Manikganj Disable People's Organization to Development (MDPOD) Rouhadaha, Manikgonj Sadar. The discussed issue of this meeting was celebration of International Women Day and its statement, WWDs rights on property and how to save the property from their neighbours as well as the initiatives of WWDs political participation. This meeting is led by Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, WDDF. March'2016, in Conference room of Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) Bhaban, Mirpur, Dhaka.

- Workshop: A workshop on 'Linking DPOs with the Ready Made Garments (RMG) industry was held on 23rd March'2016. About the strategies of how to include PWDs in RMG industry was discussed elaborately in this workshop. WDDF Executive Director Ashrafunnahar And Accounts Coordinator Md. Hasanuzzaman were present in the abovementioned workshop.
- International program:
  - I) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)60 Program: CSW60 session was held from 14 to 24 March, organized by United Nations in New York. With the representatives of Government and CSOs, on behalf of WWDs of Bangladesh, Ashrafunnahar, Executive Director, WDDF was participated in this session.
  - CSW 60 Program Participation.

In 14<sup>th</sup> March of 2016 Executive Director went to the place where she collect pass for enter in the United Nations General Building. There was large no of gathering to hear the state party report of different countries.

WDDF Executive director participated in the program as following :

1. **Have meeting with Donor representative from Urgent Action fund from Women.**
2. **Protect Violence against women**
3. **APWLD Side Event: Achieving Decent Work for Women: The SDGs and Beyond with ITUC**
4. **INEQUALITY RISING: WHY IT'S TIME TO MAKE GENDER & WOMEN'S RIGHTS CENTRAL TO THE INEQUALITY DEBATE**
5. **Importance of CSO participation for SDG implementations**
6. **Development Justice and Government Accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals**
7. **Meetings with Global leaders of Women with Disabilities.**
8. **Sustainable Development Goals or Sidelineing Disabled Girls? Making SDGs Stand for All Women and Girls**
9. **Promoting Safety and Security of Women Human Rights Defenders through Community Leadership and Governance**

**Observation:** Very few representatives from different country and only one side event "on violence against women had discussion about the women with disabilities issue. Tuinisia clearly mentioned Women with Disabilities are most vulnerable in different situations. Very few countries have initiatives for the development of women with disabilities. There are two countries accommodate delegates from Women with disabilities group i.e UK and Zimbabwe. I participate in the different side event and raise voice on women with disabilities empowerment. Australian delegates accept our voice to incorporate women with disabilities issues in there CSW statement. Zimbabwe, Canada and Tunisia state party report clearly mentioned about the intuitive for women with disabilities. Italy, Korea and Ghana representative agreed to increase women with disabilities participation. Only one side event held on Women with disabilities issues. Very few Women with Disabilities participated in the program.

New York city is not really accessible for some time in some area. Feel so much difficulties to participate different program in outside of UN Building and also need power wheelchair to move around in UN Building which have not.

**Opinion:**



It is very important to increase women with disabilities participation and there could be different side event on women with disabilities issues. Personal Assistance also need for different types of Women with disabilities participants. Need more strong voice and

initiative for Women with Disabilities.

It is really a wonderful gathering and strong demonstration on women empowerment.

1. II) Regional Meeting of South Asian Women Fund (SAWF):

A SAWF Regional Meeting with the partners of South Asia Region and donors was held from 25 to 27 March'16, at Radisson hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal.

A number of presentations on the challenging issues and success of women in different parts of South Asia were present in the different sessions of three days regional meeting. The agenda of this meeting are as follows:

1. Feminist movements in South Asia: Lessons learnt, challenges, future and opportunities.
2. Global and Regional Funding Scenario for Women's Rights Groups:
3. Introduction and a regional perspective
4. Global Trends and perspective
5. Recommendations and Way Forward.
6. Strengthening Feminist Voices
7. Community and Grassroots mobilizing: I) Are we investing enough time, resources and energy in bringing the voices forward?
8. Importance of capacity building, research and strategic spaces in strengthening women's activism.
9. Access to justice, right to mobility and livelihood as well as young women's leadership.
10. Women rights and ICT, environment and gender justice.

WDDF Chairperson Shirin Akhter, on behalf of Bangladeshi WWDs participated in this regional meeting and discussed the situation of WWDs in the light of abovementioned agenda.

She also expressed her appreciation and gratitude to the organizers of this meeting including SAWF in concluding remarks for creating the space of sharing momentous and encouraging experience with the partners of South Asia Region and international donor organizations.

## ABOUT WDDF

The estimated number of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) in Bangladesh, is around 24 million people, which constitutes 15 % of total population. 15% of Population have a disability.

Half of these are female. This is 12 Million girls and women with disabilities (WWDs).

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