

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Ministry of Finance  
Economic Relations Division (ERD)  
UN-1 Section (UNDP)  
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka  
www.erd.gov.bd

Subject: Minutes of the inter-ministerial meeting on the project titled, "Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New opportunities (SWAPNO) phase II".

Chairperson: Mr AKM Sohel, Wing Chief (UN Wing), Economic Relations Division

Date and Time: 21 March 2023, 11:30 am

List of the officials in the meeting shown in Annexure: A (not in order of seniority)

An inter-ministerial meeting was held on 21 March 2023, to discuss the modalities and implementation procedure of the project, "Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New opportunities (SWAPNO) phase II" The wing Chief (UN wing), Economic Relations Division, Mr A K M Sohel chaired the meeting.

- 2.0 At the very outset, the Chair welcomed all the participants and thanked them for their participation. He, then, gave a brief background of the project. The aim of the project was to lift ultra poor rural women out of poverty through productive employment. The total budget of the project was 15,507,615 million USD. The share of Bangladesh government in the project was 8,330,920 million USD while UNDP would provide 1,793,170 million USD, Marico and SE would provide 312,150 and 5,071,375 respectively as grant. The duration of the project was three years (1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025). The Chair, then, invited comments of the participants.
- 3.0 Ms Najnin, the representative of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, suggested that the ministry should be included in the implementation of the project, as women would be the beneficiaries. Mr. Kajol, the representative of UNDP, replied that the representative of the ministry of Women and Children Affairs were included in the first phase of the project which will continue in the second phase.
- 4.0 The Implementation, monitoring and Evaluation department (IMED) opined that project financing from the government of Bangladesh was more than that of development partners. In response, UNDP representative Mr kajol conveyed that during the



preparation of project document the ratio of development partners were more than the government but because of the fluctuations of the currency exchange rate Bangladesh government ratio had gone up compared to the development partners. Moreover, there was a prospect of more funding during the project operations which will raise the share of development partners compared to the governments. Besides, MED observed that one of the activities of the project was to raise income generating activities of the groups between 18-35. However, there is no mention about the inclusion of women beyond. Therefore, a logical explanation should be included in the project document.

- 5.0 During the meeting, Mr. S.M. Mahbub Alam, the Joint Secretary of the UN wing, inquired about the certification of the proposed training course by NSDA. Responding to the question, Mr. Kajol informed the attendees that the previous phase of the project's training was NSDA certified, but trainees typically do not meet the minimum grade 8 qualification required for certification. UNDP will attempt to obtain NSDA certification for the current course if the education requirement is lifted.
  
- 6.0 During the meeting, Mr. Khaled Hasan, the Cabinet Division representative, shared that the Bangladesh government had adopted the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in 2015, which specifically mentioned the SWAPNO project and advised to scale up the project in 200 Upazilas. SWAPNO project is aligned with the NSSS's vision of inclusive social protection. To implement NSSS's vision, an action plan was developed for 2016-2021, which included the SWAPNO project. However, only for 28 out of the 200 Upazilas in Bangladesh would get coverage in the phase-II which should increase. Additionally, the Cabinet Division could contribute, if included as the member of the PSC and PIC committees of the SWAPNO project. Mr. Kajol said that the representative of the Cabinet division would be included in the PSC and PIC and the project will gradually cover all 200 Upazilas if additional funds are provided.
  
- 7.0 Finally, the attendees discussed the project activities, and the Chair scrutinized the rationale behind those activities in relation to their expected outcomes, outputs, and associated costs.
  
- 8.0 After reviewing the proposed project titled 'Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) Phase-II', the following decisions were made:





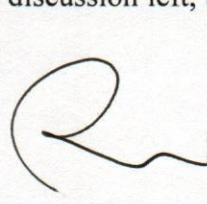
8.1 The Chair approved the project, taking into account the opinions expressed by the representatives of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, IMED, and the Cabinet Division.

8.2 A logical explanation will be included in the project document to address the concern raised by the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Department (IMED) regarding the non-inclusion of women beyond the age group of 18-35 as beneficiaries; and

8.3 The representation of the Cabinet Division will be ensured in the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) and Project Steering Committee (PSC).

8.4 The minutes of the meeting will be sent to the implementing ministry with a request to prepare and submit the TAPP to the Planning Commission based on the rectified position reached in the meeting.

9.0 In his concluding remarks, the Chair invited the discussants to come up with further observations or inputs, if any. As there were no points of discussion left, the Chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone present in the meeting.



21.03.23

A K M Sohel  
Wing Chief (UN wing)  
Economic Relations Division



Attendance (Annexure-A)

S.L	Name and Designation	Ministry/Division/Agency
01.	Mr. A K M Sohel Joint Secretary	Economic Relations Division
02.	Mr. S.M. Mahbub Alam Joint Secretary	Economic Relations Division
03.	Mr. Khaled Hassan Joint Secretary	Cabinet Division
04.	AHM Kamruzzaman Joint Secretary	Local Government Division
05.	Mr. Md. Mohsin Joint Secretary	Ministry of Food
06.	Ms. Jobaida Begum Joint Secretary	Ministry of Social Welfare
07.	Mr. Shahadat Hossain Director	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED)
08.	Mr. Mohammad Jalal Uddin Deputy Chief	Socio Economic Infrastructure Division (SEID)
09.	Ms. Farida Yeasmin Deputy Secretary	Financial Institution Division
10.	Mr. Md. Anwar Hossain Senior Assistant Secretary	Economic Relations Division
11.	Ms. Tasmin Farhana Senior Assistant Secretary	Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
12.	Kajal Chatterjee	NPM, SWOPNO Phase-II project, UNDP