

# Report on two-day Regional Media Meeting on HIV/AIDS & Human Rights in Dhaka:

A Human Right Journalist NGO known as Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum (BMSF) organized a two-day meeting Regional Media Meeting on HIV/AIDS & Human Rights in Dhaka on 27-28 July 2002. The meeting held in the Conference Hall of the YWCA and was participated by 24 journalists and representatives of NGOs working on HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh. Besides, participants from India and Nepal also attended the meeting. Mr. Afsan Chowdhury, Senior Assistant Editor of the Daily Star, Dhaka chaired the opening session while Mr. Saleem Samad conducted the two-day sessions. 48 people representing various media institutions and NGOs attended the closing session. Dr. Najmus Sahar Sadiq, Senior Program Officer of UNDP, Mr. Abu Jamil Faisal, Chairperson of the National STD/AIDS Network, Bangladesh and Mr. Imam, Assistant Editor of Daily Star were the special guests on this occasion.

The objective of the meeting was to explore the possibilities of cooperation, collaboration and co-ordination among the regional NGOs that work on HIV/AIDS with the various media institutions and recommend the future action plan to achieve the objective.

Ms. Sumita Thapar from Center for Advocacy and Research (CFAR), India, Ms. Anushree Mishra from PANOS, South Asia, Nepal and Mr. Ahmed Ilias from Bangladesh presented their country situation in the context of HIV/AIDS, Human Rights and role of Media. Mr. Shouket Ali, Secretary General Pakistan AIDS Prevention Society (PAPS) could not attend due to hospitalization of his wife. The presentations were followed by question-answer sessions.

Four NGO, the Bondhu Social Welfare Organization, SHISUK, PSKP and Al-Falah presented their activities on HIV/AIDS in respect of their target community the MSM, migrant workers, sex workers and urban slum dwellers.

During the two-day session some crucial issues emerged that generated lively discussions among the participants. The media and the NGOs shared their own perceptions whether HIV/AIDS is a development issue for the journalists. The discussion originally ignited by the Chair of the opening session who personally thought that Media would not have any role to play in the development issue if is not involved in the planning process. Media can only play the role of watchdog and inform. The participants shared on the different roles of media and the NGOs in response to HIV/AIDS and Human Rights issues. Media said NGOs must trust them, make information available to them in a timely manner. NGO said media must be sensitive, respect confidentiality, and not sensationalize specially while dealing with sensitive groups such as MSM and sex workers. However, the Media and the NGOs both identified the migration of workforce, trafficking in women and children and drug trading as the three crucial common issues in the south Asia region.

Several recommendations that include, organizing workshops, seminars, establishment of regional information cell, exchange of ideas/information through email communication, establishment of a common platform, formation of a joint committee etc. came up from the participants to achieve the objectives of the regional media meeting.

Finally, the "**Regional Forum of Media and NGO on HIV/AIDS**" formed with a 4-Member Steering Committee to develop the Terms of Reference for the Regional Forum. The committee shall also identify and include the fifth member in the Committee from Sri Lanka and revert to the participants by 15 August 2002 with the TOR and progress towards inclusion of Sri Lanka in the Forum. While drafting the TOR, the committee shall take into considerations the various appropriate recommendations, comments and suggestions that were made by the participants

during the two days regional media meeting. The names of the committee members are as under:

Mr. Khairuzzaman Kamal (Bangladesh)  
 Ms. Anushree Mishra (Nepal)  
 Ms. Sumita Thapar (India)  
 Mr. Shouket Ali (Pakistan)

The participants selected Mr. Saleem Samad and Mr. Ahmed Ilias as Consultants of the Regional Forum.

**List of Participants of the Regional Meeting:**

<b><u>S.No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name of the participants</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>	<b><u>Organization</u></b>
1	Ms. Ishrat Sheoli	Journalist	Daily Bhorer Kagoj
2.	Mr. A.R.Aires	NGO	Bondhu
3.	Ms. Salma Begum Mukta	Journalist	Daily Ittefaque
4.	Mr. M.M.Alam	NGO	SHISUK
5.	Mr. S. Masoodur Rahman	NGO	CCDB
6.	Ms. Evelina Chakma	NGO	CCDB
7.	Mr. Saiful Islam Shamim	Journalist	BSS
8.	Mr. Md. Nsirul Huq	Journalist	Daily Karnafuli, Chittagong
9.	Mr. Kallan Saha	Journalist	Daily Sangbad
10.	Mr. Afsan Chowdhury	Journalists	Daily Star
11.	Ms. Sumita Thapar	NGO	CFAR, India
12.	Mr. Ahmed Ilias	NGO	BMFS
13.	Mr. Iqbal Siddiqui	Journalist	Daily Sylhater Daak, Sylhet
14.	Ms. Anushree Mishra	NGO	PANOS, Nepal
15.	Mr. Alamgir Swapon	Journalist	Daily Jonokontho
16.	Mr. Ataur Rahman	NGO	BMSF
17.	Ms. Afroja Nazneen	Journalist	Daily Manobjomin
18.	Ms. Shaila Parvin Luna	NGO	IDHRB
19.	Mr. M.H.Zaman	NGO	IDHRB
20.	Ms. Mahmuda Chowdhury	Journalist	Daily Deen Kaal
21.	Ms. Nasimun Ara Huq Minu	Journalist	Daily Jonokontho
22.	Mr. M.Mahafuzul Huque	NGO	ACLAB
23.	Ms. Rita Nahar	Journalist	Daily Ajker Kagoj
24.	Mr. Enamul Kabir Rupom	Journalist	Daily Janata
25.	Mr. Mushtafique Shafi	Journalist	Daily Prothom Alo
26.	Mr. Khalid Saifullah Manik	Journalist	UNB

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