

**PRS Implementation Forum Meeting (PIFM)**  
**Session IV: Promoting Good Governance**  
**November 17, 2005**  
**DP Discussant: Gene V. George, USAID**

**Honorable Chair, Ministers, Cabinet Secretary, distinguished representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, invited guests from civil society, fellow development partners, ladies and gentlemen, Assalam-U-Alaikum and good morning.**

**On behalf of the LCG, it is my distinct pleasure to make remarks on promoting good governance. As we have heard from the speeches at the inaugural session and during yesterday's dialogue, promoting good governance is at the core for successful implementation of the PRS.**

**The LCG has chosen five priorities to discuss at today's session. However, once this forum is concluded and we all return to our daily activities, your donor partners will continue to collaborate closely with the Government and other local stakeholders to fulfill the commitments made on these activities and discuss a wide variety of others that will assist in promoting good governance throughout the country. The five points are;**

- 1. Tackling corruption, including increasing functional oversight mechanisms and measures-- to be taken up by Norway;**
- 2. Separation of the lower courts from the Executive Branch and judicial reform; by Netherlands;**
- 3. Decentralization and improving democratic local governance by Switzerland;**
- 4. Improving the Government's implementation capacity through stronger, more transparent public administration by UK; and**
- 5. Deepening respect for Human Rights and enhancing the rule of law, to be discussed, time permitting.**

**In the area of combating corruption, much has been talked about in earlier sessions and we would like to provide specifics in consolidating the important actions that have been taken to create the Anti-Corruption Commission. There is also a felt need to develop reasonable, independent measures of good governance and to establish baselines that we are all comfortable with. These measures will be of utmost importance in monitoring progress towards improved governance in the coming years.**

**The separation of the judiciary from the executive branch is a fundamental step towards strengthening democratic governance, again touched upon earlier. It is clear to all that this cannot happen overnight. Developing a concrete action plan that delineates the functions, roles and responsibilities and initiating training that supports these new responsibilities is a good starting point that you will hear more about later.**

**This Government has taken some important strides already in promoting local governance. Yesterday's dialogue on the first-ever block grants to the Union Parishads last year for locally managed development projects and the GOB's commitment to continue was**

especially appreciated. This morning you will hear about formulating a long-term strategy to promote greater decentralization and reviewing policies for consistency that would assist in a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities. Increasing fiscal authorities of sub-national governments is also seen as a key process to allow them to provide better and more services to their communities.

We have a common view that implementation is critical to achieving the objectives of the PRS and this involves improving capacity of the government through stronger and more transparent public administration. As outlined in the PRSP, if implementation problems are not adequately addressed then the vision of the poverty reduction strategy will not be fully realized. As we heard yesterday, a good place to begin this task is by reforming the way the ADP is carried out. We would like to table ideas on categorizing projects according to their approval, funding and performance status; a screening process of projects supported by the development partners that are not approved or sufficiently funded; and finally establishment of sector specific targets to allow the Government to remedy problems with poor performing projects.

Issues surrounding human rights and a stronger rule of law are not new but remain important. Establishing a human rights commission, in accordance with U.N. standards and international protocols, is a concrete action that demonstrates the seriousness of this country to deal with issues of human rights abuses. We acknowledge and understand the points made by the Honorable chair on the difficulties the government has had in identifying and selecting acceptable commission members. Your LCG partners would like table the idea of a broad participatory task force not to specifically identify candidates, but to review efforts to date, consider approaches used by other countries, identify obstacles they encountered and how these were addressed, then develop a methodology for you to use in identifying potential candidates.

I am sure we will experience what we have in other sessions in that time does not allow us to cover all the suggested targets to the degree we would like. However, we hope this provides a framework to you which outlines in greater specificity the targets that we believe are achievable within the next 12-month timeframe, leading up to next year's forum.

At this point, I would like to propose the chair identify those development partners I indicated earlier to further discuss the points raised.