

## Celebrating International Women's Day 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

**Introduction:** 2018 UN theme for IWD is "Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives". BGP have celebrated International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at Dhaka, Khulna and Patuakhali with Rally, Wall of honour for women, discussion sessions and Commitment for future planning on gender issues at Dhaka, Patuakhali – Polder 47/4, Kolapara –Upaziala, Union- Dulashor and Khulna –Polder 25, Dumuria - Upazila and Dhamalia –Union following UN theme. Near about 1500 participants were participated in the rally with different slogan like 'Be Bold for change', 'Process for progress', 'We have the possibility, Give us opportunity to prove it'. Attended participants are WMG, WMA, WMO members, (Male & female) UP Chairman and UP members (Male female both) staff of BWDB and DAE, local government representatives, School and college teachers local religious leaders and students of nearby schools and colleges all participated in the rally. More than a thousand people joined the marches in the coastal districts Patuakhali, Khulna and Dhaka to raise their voice for women's rights Justice and gender equity and anti-sexual harassment.



**Objective Of the International Women's Day :** The objective of Women's Day is to express love and gratitude towards women's contribution to our lives and society. It honors the power and struggles of women who have broken all barriers and reached the pinnacle of success in every sphere of life.

### Description:

**Rallies :** The slogan of this year "Process for Progress", "Be Bold for Change", "We have the possibility, give us opportunity to prove it" was printed in bold letters on the festoons those were hold by the men and women. Moreover they raised their voice for women rights, gender equity, justice and sexual harassment. Most of the UP members and WMG members at new polder level were not familiar with this day, so they participated for the first time in their life in such kind of rallies with great interest. One of the objectives of the rally was to give support to take up leadership roles within the society', some of the reactions from villagers along the route of the rally showed that women's empowerment is an important issue in Bangladesh. Initially many people laughed as the women were walking and giving slogan by raising their hands because 'They are not used to see women raising their voice to ask for change and for rights.'



**Wall of Honour:** This wall is something to cherish the women in the women's day which contains the name, photographs and open letter of the important women in our life those who has always inspired us and for whom we are here to. Maximum participants mention their mothers as a cherish women.



Discussion session: As part of the IWD celebrations, BGP also organised discussion sessions in the same locations as the rallies. In Dhaka , Patuakhali, and Khulna and WMG ,WMA members ,BWDB and DAE staff,Local Government Representative (UP Chairman),Community leader, religious leader and BGP Ta team members discussed the background and importance of IWD why do we still celebrate it? And it might be the best practice of Blue Gold gender activities. The participants gave their opinion that they were not familiar with IWD .So they are grateful towards Blue gold . Like Dhamalia UP members and chairmen didn't know about this day and when they came to know they participated in the celebration and thanked Blue gold for this.



Commitments for future planning on women rights /gender issues:

- 1) Steps should be taken to ensure women's respect, their rights and equity issues.
- 2) Wherever there will be injustice towards women I will protest.
- 3) All will help at least one woman among their respective family or in the working place to progress.

Everyone committed to take 3 initiatives, so they signed the commitment paper .

Media Coverage: Few journalists about 5 were present at Patuakhali and Khulna during the celebration and they have covered the program which will be published in the newspaper tomorrow.

Conclusion: Now a days the situation has improved to a great extent compared to the past and it has only been possible for the continuous movements and initiatives by the women from different stages. But it needs to be improved more as the security of women is still not ensured, they are still being sexually harassed and opportunities are still narrow for them. As a result ,if the continuation of movement can be ensured then someday women can find equality in the society , can enjoy all the rights , will not be a victim of sexual harassment anymore, and they don't have to lack behind due to religious or social barriers and all the discrimination will be eliminated from the society.