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**15 November 2011
Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Good Evening Ladies & Gentlemen,
Honorable Finance Minister Mr. Abul Mal Abdul Muhith,
His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General, United Nations,
Madam Ban Ki-moon,
And Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the UNGC I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you all.

Tonight we are gathered here to celebrate the theme of “Every Woman Every Child” – an important agenda, globally as well as for Bangladesh.

In this effort the role of the private sector is most critical for all development objectives of a nation and complements the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UNGC is a global platform for issues of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Today in Bangladesh we have 41 members of the UNGC which comprises a diverse mix of national and multinational companies, NGOs, civil society organizations, business associations and academia.

The Compact supports the MDGs. By being a part of this network, members can support the national agenda for sustainable development.

The private sector can through integrated CSR approaches on such issues of environment, human rights, enhancing good governance structures and promoting the fight against corruption which are the basic principles of the UNGC act as a catalyst for development.

Corporate social responsibility for all entities is incorporated in its core business strategy and needs to benefit all relevant stakeholders in order to create a “Win-Win” situation for all – including the work force and the communities. It is based on shared value – value for both business and society.

CSR goes beyond philanthropy. CSR supports the long term goals and vision of a company to develop itself for maximizing its longer term profits and develops a branding image for quality and standardization.

By doing business in a responsible manner companies can gain greater profits in the long term.

Today companies are keen on CSR approaches in order to gain access to a greater customer base and to tap into international market opportunities, as well as to assist in societal development initiatives to alleviate poverty.

It is through the “Every Woman Every Child” initiative that the private sector can engage in the country’s efforts to improve the basic health care facilities for women and children in rural and urban communities. It is through such initiatives all stakeholders can develop strong and effective partnerships to bring forth a positive change in the health sector of Bangladesh – especially as “the private sector is the engine for growth”.

The business community can make tremendous contributions in promoting good health and well being especially if innovative CSR initiatives are undertaken in partnership with the government and civil society. Public-private partnership (PPP) is the way forward.

The corporate [sector] can simulate the development process by employment generation, providing basic education, engaging in infrastructure development and addressing environmental issues.

This global effort gives the opportunity to commit to the health MDGs, 4 (reduce child mortality) and 5 (improve maternal health).

“So a healthy community needs a healthy business. A healthy business needs a healthy community. “

I would like to end by saying, “There are two primary choices in life – to accept conditions as they are, or accept the responsibility for changing them.”

Thank you.

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