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European Union, Government and Private Sector join hands to contribute to the skill development of disadvantaged groups through the TVET Reform Project

Mr. William Hanna, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh and Mr. André Bogui, Country Director of International Labour Organisation (ILO), visited today two skills development pilot initiatives at the Vocational Training Institute, Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) in Ganakbari, and the Centre of Excellence for Leather (COEL) in Savar. Mr. Shahjahan Mian, Director-General, Directorate of Technical Education, also participated in the visits.

Both Centres are an example of a larger portfolio of trials tested through the **Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform project (TVET Reform Project)**, which is Tk. 160 Crore (EUR 16 million) initiative of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) funded by the European Union and is being implemented by the ILO in partnership with government agencies.

During the pilot phase, the CRP/Interfab demonstrated that disadvantaged women, including people with disabilities, can successfully complete a new training programme in sewing machine operations and be placed in industry. The leather sector pilot showed the value of an apprenticeship which combines off-job training with on the job work during which the apprentices earn while they learn. Only within the last year, more than 1000 individuals completed this apprenticeship programme and earned their certificates.

During the visit, Ambassador William Hanna said: 'In Bangladesh, giving skills to people is the key to reducing poverty. Skills lead people to jobs and better income. Skilled workers help increase the quality and competitiveness of products and then propel the growth of enterprises and the economy as a whole. That is why skills development has been put on the front pages of the development agendas of both the EU and Bangladesh.'

Mr. André Bogui appreciated the excellent partnerships with the industry and training providers and called upon more employers and their organizations like BGMEA and BKMEA to join the efforts in promoting skills training programmes to disadvantaged groups, including Persons with Disabilities. He thanked the EU for their support in spearheading this effort.

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For more information, please contact

Anjum Aziz
EU Delegation to Bangladesh
Plot 7, Road 84, Gulshan 2
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
Tel: +880 2 8824730; Fax +880 2 8833118
anjum.aziz@ec.europa.eu

Arthur Shears
Chief Technical Advisor
ILO TVET Reform Project
Email: ashears@ilo.org
Phone. 01730310401
