14 October 2010

**Hands up for healthy hand washing!**

ICDDR,B observed Global Handwashing Day on 14 October 2010 at the Sasakawa Auditorium at ICDDR,B. The Honourable Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Mr M Humayun Kabir, was present as the Chief Guest, with Dr ABM Jahangir Alam, Line Director of Primary Health and Family Welfare, as Special Guest, and Mr Rakesh Mohan, Chairman and Managing Director of Unilever Bangladesh as the Guest of Honour.

Dr Stephen P. Luby, Head of the Infectious Disease and Vaccine Sciences Programme of ICDDR,B, gave a presentation on the importance of handwashing. A short video on this subject was also presented to reinforce the message on the importance of this intervention.

Dr. Alejandro Cravioto, Executive Director of ICDDR,B, delivered the vote of thanks. The programme concluded with a practical demonstration on hand washing in the Dhaka Hospital of ICDDR,B.

Global Handwashing Day was established by the United Nations in 2008 to echo and reinforce its call for improved hygiene practices and backed by the Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap, of which Unilever is a founding partner. Since then, Global Handwashing Day has mobilized millions of people across the five continents encouraging them to wash their hands with soap. According to figures from the World Health Organisation every year around 3.5 million children under five worldwide die of diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections that could have been prevented by this simple procedure.

‘We know that hand washing with soap is one of the most effective and inexpensive ways to prevent disease’, said Dr. Alejandro Cravioto, Executive Director, ICDDR,B. ‘Here at the Dhaka Hospital, we run a successful hand washing awareness outreach programme educating both parents and children.’
The Clinical Governance Unit at ICDDR,B is playing a major role in educating the staff as well as the caregivers of children admitted to the Dhaka Hospital to foster and support a global and local culture of hand washing with soap. Staff and caregivers alike are provided with practical demonstrations on the procedures of hand washing with soap.

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