



Press Release

10 May, 2016

**Inauguration Ceremony of University of Dhaka Law Clinic**

“Law students must play a central role in creating a society without discrimination” intoned the Honorable Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, in her speech delivered on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at the inauguration ceremony of the University of Dhaka Law Clinic. She also added that “to really learn the law, education in classrooms is not enough, practical experience is necessary.”

The inauguration ceremony of University of Dhaka Law Clinic was held at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban, University of Dhaka at 11:00am. This ceremony launched the clinical education programme implemented by Department of Law, University of Dhaka, in partnership with Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and with the support of Community Legal Services (CLS). This law clinic will be operated by academics of the Department of Law, University of Dhaka.

In his speech, special guest, the Honorable Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Dr. A A M S Arefin Siddique explained that “through clinical legal education, the country’s common people will receive the legal help they need.” He added that “seeking the truth should be the vow of all professionals, it should be the vow particularly of the legal profession.”

In partnership with BLAST, the Dhaka University Faculty of Law has established this law clinic programme with the financial assistance of DFID, UK Government and it is with their help that this program has been realized. The Clinic will engage law students to provide targeted free legal services (through referrals) and legal education to marginalized and socially excluded communities through school awareness sessions and courtyard meetings. Various programme activities will also be undertaken through the law clinic to increase practical knowledge among law students in public interest lawyering through practical courses, exposure visits of courts, police stations, victim support centers, BLAST unit offices, and mock trials. Students also typically provide assistance with socio-legal research and client meetings through referrals. Additionally, the program seeks to foster a unity amongst the law students working at the clinic to help common people with their legal problems and teach students practical skills needed to become a lawyer.

Under BLAST’s initiative, other law departments in Rajshahi University, Chittagong University and Jahangirnagar University already have established their own law clinics. In Bangladesh’s legal education system, law clinics are an innovative and new initiative and students are most familiar with classroom learning. University law clinics are usually attached to the university’s respected law departments and students are supervised by professors. Additionally, the students perform pro bono legal work for those on the university’s campus and surrounding areas. At these law clinic the rights of marginalized communities are researched and marginalized communities are provided with information.

Community Legal Services Team leader Jerome Sayre, said that “under the CLS program, there are legal services in 40 Districts. Almost 30 million have received legal aid services of which 74% are women. CLS programs usually operate in poor, city slums, and rural areas.”

The Honorable Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP presented a speech as chief guest. The Honorable Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Dr. A A M S Arefin Siddique was the special guest on the programme. Among others, the Honorary Executive Director, BLAST, Ms. Sara Hossain; the Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Dhaka, Professor Dr. Taslima Monsoor; and the Chairman of the Department of Law, Professor Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan; and the Law Clinic Advisors, Professor Dr. Rahmatullah also presented valuable speeches.



# বাংলাদেশ লিগ্যাল এইড এন্ড সার্ভিসেস ট্রাস্ট (ব্লাস্ট) Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)

Approximately 400 students from the Department of Law of the University of Dhaka attended the inauguration programme. Academics of the Department of Law and donors also attended as participants.

For further information:

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