

## National policy soon Educate women to combat population boom : PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday declared that a sound national population policy would be enunciated soon keeping in view the socio-economic condition of the country, reports BSS.

She said that no policy or programmes would enable us to combat population boom unless we could make our women folk educated and self-sufficient in all spheres of life, particularly in economic field. She also underscored the need for imparting 'reproductive education' to the male counterpart to make the population control drive meaningful and success.

The Prime Minister was presiding over the first meeting of the reconstituted National Population Council at the International Conference Centre (ICC) in Dhaka here. Ministers, MP, secretaries, representatives of various professional groups and trade bodies who are members of the 65-member National Council attended the meeting.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf, Education Minister ASHK Sadeque, Home Minister Rafiqul Islam, Bir Uttam, Food Minister Begum Motia

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## Combat population boom

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Chowdhury, Minister of State for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Finance Secretary Akbar Ali Khan, Member of the Planning Commission Kazi Shamsul Alam, eminent educationist

Prof Dr Neelima Ibrahim, Secretary of the Social Welfare Ministry Abdul Hakim, Chairman of the Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad Principal Abdul Ahed Chowdhury, President of the Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association Abul Kalam Azad and a number of other members took part in the discussion.

Parishad's Member-Secretary and Secretary of the

Health Ministry Mohammad Ali presented a working paper in the meeting wherein he outlined the nine-point policy issues to be incorporated to the proposed national policy. The Prime Minister however, included two more issues that is family planning is neither barred by religion and nor in ascertaining the inheritance of property.

At the beginning of the meeting a half-an hour video presentation on "Bangladesh family planning programmes: its achievements and challenges", prepared jointly by Bangladesh Government and the USAID was screened highlighting the entire gamut of works done so far from 1972 to 1994 in the

sector of family planning.

The main features of the proposed national policy indicated in the working paper included making the national population policy up to date taking integrated action programmes by the relevant ministries, strengthening participation of political leaders and public representatives, making the ward, union, thana and district level committees more effective, identifying the major hindrances in the way of implementation of the family planning programme and finding out its possible solutions, expansion of clinical devices, making proper coordination among the GOs, NGOs and private sector organisations, transfer of the family planning employees from development sector to revenue sector and construction of a central population bhaban.

The Prime Minister speaking at the meeting which was held after a long lapse of four and a half years stressed the need for launching motivational campaign giving thrust on religious explanation of the issue. She suggested that renowned Islamic thinkers from Muslim countries who attained grand success in population control should be invited to train the ulema in the country about the religious aspects of the issue. Besides, ulema should be sent abroad for taking training on modern outlook in this subject.

Highlighting the prime importance of launching massive drive to combat population boom the Prime Minister said that within the geographical boundary of the country we have limited cultivable lands and other resources while our people are also ignorant. In

such a situation there is no other alternative to control population growth to attain success in all other fields of national development thrust.

The Prime Minister said that we had to create a sense of social security so that the people,

particularly the poor might not depend on their offsprings for their survival. They would not go for many children if they could be assured of their livelihood, she added.

The Prime Minister said that for achieving economic emancipation of the women we had to ascertain the rights of the women under the charter of the United Nations including their right to inheritance of property.

The Prime Minister said that fortunately in her party manifesto the population control and family welfare were given top priority. She pointed out that realising the situation the government of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the war-ravaged country had taken a number of realistic measures for population control. After his tragic assassination those programmes were not implemented, she said adding that her government's vow was to carry forward the unfinished task of Bangabandhu.

Sheikh Hasina called upon all professional leaders and public representatives to make their collective and individual efforts from their respective posts and positions to make this vital national population programme a total success. She also solicited a national consensus of all irrespective of opinions and believes to curb the population growth which is the number one problem before the nation.