



**PERMANENT MISSION OF BANGLADESH
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Press Release

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Bangladesh calls for closing the digital divide

Ambassador Ismat Jahan, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations has called for greater cooperation of the world community in closing the digital divide through the spread of IT based education in the developing countries.

She was speaking at a special event organized by the United Nations on the "One Laptop Per Child" program of MIT Media Laboratory on Monday. The event was organized to introduce the OLPC initiative and discuss ways through which the laptops can be made available to children in the most vulnerable countries at a substantially lower price than those available at the market.

In his keynote paper, Chairman and founder of the program Professor Nicholas Negroponte of MIT elaborated on the salient features of this special laptop which will be more durable than the traditional ones, particularly suitable for children. These can be operated without electricity and will have provisions for wireless internet connection.

In her remarks as the Chair of Least Developed Countries, Ambassador Jahan welcomed the OLPC for pioneering the project to make available one laptop per child in the developing countries. Such an initiative will greatly reduce the disparities in the learning opportunities of the children in the developing countries vis-à-vis the children in the developed countries. It will also give these children access to the modern forms of education, knowledge and technology, she noted.

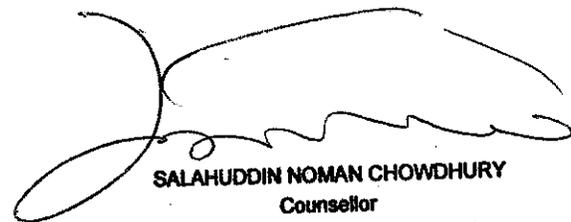
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It may be mentioned the OLPC initiative seeks to provide all school going children in developing countries with one personal laptop as a learning tool. Under a new initiative "Give 1 Get 1" to be launched soon consumers in North America can purchase two OLPC laptops for US \$ 399. The buyer will keep one, while the other will be sent to a child in a developing country.

At the special event, representatives of Uruguay and Peru shared experiences in implementing pilot projects in their countries. It may be mentioned that many Latin American and South East Asian countries have already shown their interest for introducing such programs in their countries.

Ambassador Jahan requested for giving priorities to the Least Developed Countries in the program. She also suggested having keyboards of the laptop in Bangla with a view to extending the outreach of the OLPC program to Bangladeshi children.

With a request to kindly arrange for appropriate coverage in press and media.



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Kind Attention

- 1. Director General (EP), MOFA, Dhaka*
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