

## BRAC makes \$271m commitment to education

Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of BRAC, announced on Wednesday a commitment of \$271 million to provide education opportunities to 7.5 million children and youth in Asia and Africa over the next five years, reports UNB.

The commitment was made on the first day of the three-day Clinton Global Initiative annual meeting in New York, which brings together global leaders from different fields to address the world's most pressing problems, said a press release.

BRAC has partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the NoVo Foundation and BRAC USA to mobilize resources and provide a continuum of innovative educational opportunities for poor children, especially girls, in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Tanzania, Uganda and Southern Sudan.

The programme is expected to reach 7.5 million beneficiaries through pre-primary, non-formal primary and secondary schooling as well as skills training and undergraduate and advanced degrees relevant to the needs of developing countries.

BRAC will spend \$51.8 million in 2008 and build up to \$271 million by 2012, of which \$221m will be spent in Bangladesh, \$21 million in Afghanistan, \$12 million in Uganda, \$11 million in Southern Sudan and \$6 million in Tanzania.

"We feel that it is vitally important that children experience meaningful learning and enjoy education for their well-being and the future of their countries", Abed said.

"We need to focus on the next generation and invest in them to create sustainable foundations for growth, poverty alleviation and peace."

In Bangladesh, over 1.5 million children are currently enrolled in BRAC's over 20,000 pre-primary and 32,000 primary schools, and nearly 4 million children have already graduated. BRAC also runs over 8,000 adolescent development centres and more than 1,400 community libraries.

Abed will be presented with the first Clinton Global Citizen Award today (Thursday), the second day of the annual meet, by former US president Bill Clinton.