British Parliament lauds Dr. Atiur Rahman for women empowerment

On the eve of International Women's Day 2015 on March 8, the Rt Hon Caroline Spelman, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Meriden Constituency in the West Midlands, United Kingdom, mentioned the success of mobile banking for garment workers in Bangladesh during a debate in the British Parliament on March 5, 2015.

As a testament to celebrate International Women’s Day, with a theme for this year ‘Make It Happen’, Rt Hon Spelman said, “It is good to mention men who have advocated on behalf of women, so let me mention the well-deserved accolade that the central banker for Bangladesh, Dr Atiur Rahman, received for his initiative to enable mobile phone banking for garment workers in Bangladeshi factories. Such practical initiatives make a big difference.”

It is to mention that, mobile banking has gained much popularity and trust in remitting hard-earned money to home villages by the working women in the apparel and clothing sector.

To expedite mobile financial services, the BB has permitted 28 commercial banks and already 25.18 million mobile bank accounts have been opened creating employment of more than half a million agents across country.

Average daily transaction through mobile banking services has increased by more than 8.0 per cent to BDT 3.78 billion in January 2015 from BDT 3.49 billion in December 2014.

Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI) has already awarded BB for its policy contribution towards reaching out to mass people's doorstep with mobile financial services.

Besides, the central bank of Bangladesh has taken special policy moves and opened refinance windows to facilitate development of women empowerment in various sectors.

The BB has not only created separate unit managed by women officials for women entrepreneurship development but also has directed all banks and financial institutions to have similar units. As a result thousands of women entrepreneurs are having access to finance in different clusters.

The central bank also has provided a gender policy encouraging safety and security of women employees for both the BB and other banks.
It has helped implement six months maternity leave for all eligible women employees as well as establishing day care centers in the BB premises and for the commercial banks through locality based clusters.

Meanwhile, The Banker, a subsidiary monthly of the Financial Times of London, published captioned news with highlighting BB Governor Dr. Atiur Rahman in People Column of its March 2015 issue under the title “Movers and Shakers”.

The report says Bangladesh Bank’s Atiur Rahman presented with The Banker’s award for Central Banker of the Year for the Asia-Pacific region at an event held in London, in recognition of the institution’s pioneering programmes in environmentally and socially responsible financing.

On the other hand, The Worldfolio, a London-based news organization, has already published a report terming the BB Governor as the poor man’s economist.

The Worldfolio provides intelligence about the economies with the highest growth potential in the world, with a focus on understanding them from within, has reported the BB governor’s contribution towards promoting socially and environmentally responsible financing in Bangladesh without compromising macroeconomic stability.

Sincerely

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