Co-Chairpersons:
Sultana Kamal, Lord Eric Avebury, Elsa Stamatopoulou
Members:
Shapan Adnan, Sara Hossain, Iftekharuzzaman
Khushi Kabir, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Tone Bleie
Lars-Anders Baer, Michael C. van Walt van Praag
Hurst Hannum, Yasmeen Haque
Myrna Cunningham Kain, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission

March 27, 2014

To
The Honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
Tejgaon, Dhaka.

Subject: A call to nationalise schools in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Honourable Prime Minister,

Greetings from the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC).

We learn from media reports that 228 primary schools in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are in danger of being closed down because they have been failed to be brought under the nationalisation scheme in the face of technical difficulties with land registration. This will mean that 16,000 students, mostly from very remote areas in the three hill districts, will be left without any schooling.

Media reports point out that a decision was taken in an inter-ministerial meeting in February 2013 to nationalise these schools by considering them as 'special' cases. This is a very practical and constructive way to ensure the continuation of these children's education. It is not clear why this consideration can no longer be made.

It is not acceptable that students should have to suffer disruption in their education because of a glitch in the land ownership issue. Many of these students will have to travel long distances to enroll themselves into a school, many will have to leave their families, and many will drop out. The economic condition of most of the families of these students is very bad. We call upon the Government to immediately take steps to nationalise the 228 schools in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) which face closure otherwise.

Article 17 of the Constitution ensures 'establishing uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children' in order to 'remove illiteracy' by a timeframe as determined by law. We sincerely hope that the Ministry of Education and the Directorate of Primary Education will take the necessary steps to ensure the continuation of education at these schools without any interruption and the schools will be nationalised at the earliest.

On behalf of the CHT Commission,

Yours sincerely
Eric Avebury

Sincerely yours

Eric Avebury Co-chair of the CHT Commission	Sultana Kamal Co-chair of the CHT Commission	Elsa Stamatopoulou Co-chair of the CHT Commission

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CC to: (Not in order of precedence)

1. Mr. Mostafizur Rahman, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
2. Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmud Ali, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
3. Mr. Shamsur Rahman Sherif, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Land, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
4. Mr. Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, Honourable Chairman, CHT Regional Council, Rangamati.
5. Mr. Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing MP, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
6. Mr. Mohammad Shah Alam MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
7. Mr. Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, Chairman, CHT Development Board, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Rangamati.
8. Ushatan Talukdar, Rangamati MP.
9. Kujendra Lal Tripura, Khagrachari MP.
10. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

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