

## REPORT

### "Jute instead of Plastic"

#### Cologne 23 June 2018

Cologne, June 23 2018: In order to promote jute products in the German market and among the consumers a daylong BASUG workshop was held on Saturday in Ehrenfeld Citizen Centre in Cologne. Bangladesh Ambassador in Germany Imtiaz Ahmed inaugurated the workshop as chief guest. Member of NRW State Assembly Berivan Aymaz and Mayor of the Cologne City Dr. Ralf Heinen addressed the occasion as special guests, while BASUG Chairman Bikash Chowdhury Barua chaired the opening session. Project Coordinator of BASUG Germany Hossain Abdul Hai conducted the opening session.



Speakers in the workshop stressed on the avoiding plastic products and introducing of jute products as alternative to plastic not only for the sake of Germany, but also to save the

soil, air, water and above all the environment in the whole earth. They also called upon the people of all corners to avoid plastic and to adopt not only jute, but also other alternatives like paper, clothes, steel, iron products instead of harmful plastic items.

In his speech, chief guest Bangladesh ambassador Imtiaz Ahmed said, Environment is now very important issue not only for the human beings, rather for all creatures including animals and plants in the whole world and plastic is affecting the environment so much, that the initiative of promoting jute as an alternative is very timely effort. Moreover, Bangladeshi scientists have recently invented the bio-plastic products from jute and if it is worldwide introduced, we will get rid of the curse of plastic to a large extent, he added.

Special Guest Mayor of Cologne City Dr. Ralf Heinen said, the increased use of products made from natural fibres such as jute can help reduce the spread of plastic products. Bangladesh is a leading producer of raw jute. Even the city of Cologne is fully aware of plastic's impact on the earth, he added. As such, the city has recently launched an initiative that aims at cutting the amount of single-use cups for on-the-go coffee buyers. Only together the two countries, linked to each other by fair trade relationships, can be able to ensure worldwide sustainable development.



Special Guest Member of NRW State Assembly Berivan Aymaz said, plastic is a threat to our planet. The use of plastic bags leads to dangers for both human health and environment. For these reasons, finding a substitute for plastic is increasingly important. Eco-friendly materials like jute can easily substitute plastic

and making the world more sustainable. Finally, Bangladesh, one of the largest raw-jute producers, can represent a respectable example to follow by the other countries.

BASUG Member and former Scientific Researcher of the Applied University of Bonn-Rhein-Sieg, Khurshid Hassan said in his Research Report on “Jute instead of plastic in NRW”, people are not fully aware and have no knowledge of the harmful effect of plastic products. Jute and other materials should be therefore made available in the market in a competitive price and quality in order to encourage people to choose non-plastic items. Moreover, there is a big gap of information and a lacking of non-plastic campaign and awareness raising activities in NRW.



The workshop was organized under the project “Jute instead of plastic” with the support from Foundation Environment and Development SUE NRW. German-based online media outlet Our Voice was the media partner of the event. The research report on the trend and orientation of the people living in NRW about jute and plastic was presented by Khurshid Hassan. The

keynote paper introduced by Prof Dr Dr Enamul Hoque emphasizes the urgency to ban or restrict plastic productions. Effective preventive measures and substitutes like jute are necessary.

The panel discussion moderated by the General Secretary of BASUG Germany Dr M M Islam, was addressed by Prof Dr Dr Enamul Hoque from Helmholtz Research Centre, Munich, Dr Syed Masum Ahmed Chowdhury, Commercial Counselor of Bangladesh Embassy in Berlin and Director Overseas of Jutetex Bangladesh M K Ibrahim. Among others Professor Dr Sirajul Islam, President of German Awami League A K M Bashirul Alam Chowdhury Sabu, President of Bangabandhu Foundation Germany Younus Ali Khan, Vice President of House of Integration Nurul Islam, Former Acting Head of Bengali Department of Deutsche Welle Abdus Sattar, popular singer Abdul Munim, Official of Bengali Department of DW Nurunnahar Sattar, Artist Maruf Ahmed, Dr M. Rabiul Hosen, Postdoctoral Researcher in the University Hospital Bonn, Jute Importer Riyadh Tanveer, Social and Climate Activist Snigdha Bulbul and Project Officer of ASG Munima Sultana took part in the discussion.



Edda Africa, Seraji Foundation, For the Kids Sake, Vamos teams and artist Mir Zabeda Yeasmin exhibited their jute products, no-plastic posters and paintings on the issue in the side-line of the event.