

## General background information on Bangladesh

	Bangladesh	UK
Population (millions):	150	60.8
Poverty (% of population below national poverty line):	45%	17%
Age structure:	0-14 years (33%), 15-64 years (63%), 65 years + (4%)	0-14 years (17.2%), 15-64 years (67%), 65 years + (15.8%)
Life expectancy:	63 years	78.7 years
Population growth rate:	2.1%	0.28%
HIV/AIDS (% of adult population infected) :	less than 0.1%.	0.2%
Religions:	Muslim (83%), Hindu (16%), other (1%)	Christian (71.6%), Muslim (2.7%), Hindu (1%), other (1.6%), unspecified or none (23.1%)
Literacy:	43%	99%
Gross Domestic Product <sup>1</sup>	\$60 billion	\$2.346 trillion
Gross National Income per capita <sup>2</sup> :	\$470	\$33,630
Labour force by occupation:	Agriculture (63%), Industry (11%), Services (28%)	Agriculture (1%), Industry (25.6%), Services (73.4%)
Unemployment rate:	2.5%	2.9%
Household income consumption <sup>3</sup> :	Lowest 10% (3.9%), Highest 10% (28.6%)	Lowest 10% (2.1%), Highest 10% (28.5%)

Bangladesh has seen good economic growth over the last 20 years. This growth has been accompanied by a decline in population growth which has led to a doubling of per capita GDP.

However, despite good economic growth, the poor are not benefiting. Bangladesh is still one of the worlds least developed countries. About 45% of the population live below the national poverty line; about two-thirds of them in extreme poverty.

Poverty is also increasingly geographically concentrated. Poverty at the national level does not reflect the significantly different poverty levels between rural and urban areas and across districts. 80% of the poor live in rural areas and most of them live in extreme poverty.

Poverty reduction remains the major focus of Bangladeshi economic planning. The economy is vulnerable as 70% of its export earnings (and the livelihoods of much of its population) are dependent on one product: ready-made garments.

Agriculture employs 60% of the workforce but contributes only 20% to the economy. Thus, poor agricultural workers do not earn enough for a decent livelihood. Other income generating opportunities need to be developed to supplement their income.

Trade can play an important role in alleviating poverty. The challenge is to empower the poor and disadvantaged rural population to engage in trade and exploit the opportunities available.

Traidcraft Exchange's work in Bangladesh is focused in the North in some of the poorest areas of Bangladesh.

### Notes

1: GDP is the value of goods and services that a country's citizens produce. GNP is one measure of the economic condition of a country.

2: GNI is a country's gross national income. GNI divided by total population gives GNI per capita. This indicator

represents the well being of the population. However, it is an average that does not take into account inequalities of income within a country.

3: The percentage of total national household income held by the bottom 10% of households compared to the top 10% of households.