Greenpeace International hands over the Rainbow Warrior II to Friendship (NGO)

On 16th August 2011, Friendship’s third floating hospital Rongdhonu was inaugurated in Singapore. The hospital will provide valuable primary, secondary and emergency healthcare to the vulnerable and marginalized population living in the coastal areas of Bangladesh.

On 16th August, 2011, the inauguration ceremony of ‘Rongdhonu’ took place in Singapore. Rongdhonu, formerly known as Rainbow Warrior II, is a Greenpeace International vessel that has contributed greatly to history, especially to the Greenpeace movement and campaigns against nuclear testing. It was handed over to Friendship (NGO), to be converted into a floating hospital. The Rongdhonu will enable Friendship to bring health care to one of the most vulnerable and marginalized population of the country who are experiencing the effects of climate change along the coastal belt. The floating hospital will provide primary, secondary and emergency health care to these populations that have little or no access to basic health care facilities.

Friendship has been working in Bangladesh for a decade, specializing in working with community at risk in various parts of Bangladesh including the isolated chars of the Jamuna and Brahmaputra River in Gaibandha and Kurigram districts situated in the northern part of Bangladesh and cyclone affected areas of Bagerhat, Patuakhali and Barguna districts in the south of the country. Friendship’s journey started with the Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital (LFH), the country’s first floating hospital. In 2008 the Emirates Friendship Hospital (EFH), a second floating hospital was commissioned to serve the health care needs of these areas. With cooperation of Friendship Luxembourg and Friendship Holland, Rongdhonu will be the third: its proud history campaigning for the environment will be turned towards health and human dignity.

Spoke at the handover ceremony, Mike Fincken, Captain of the Rainbow Warrior II, quoted the Cree Indian prophecy from which the ship got its name: “There will come a time when the Earth grows sick and when it does a tribewill gather from all the cultures of the world who believe in deeds and notwords. They will work to heal it...they will be known as the "Warriors of the Rainbow.” Adding, “This ship has carried people from around the world and has stood as an icon of hope over pessimism and as an emblem of action over complacency, it is time to pass that task on.”

Runa Khan of Friendship said, “The Rongdhonu’s primary goal would be to take up the baton and “Heal”. After decades of work in bringing global awareness to mankind’s consciousness, the Rainbow Warrior as Bangladesh’s Rongdhonu will bring relief during natural disaster and help ease the physical suffering and pain amongst communities which have no access to dependable healthcare. Friendship deeply believes ‘that no development intervention is possible when one is suffering’ and it is to ease such suffering, that the Warrior will strive to work towards, for its new life as the Rongdhonu.”
Following the inauguration of *Rongdhonu*, the ship will set sail to Bangladesh from Singapore and is expected to reach the Chittagong port during September 2011.

Friendship is working to provide a holistic way of uplifting the quality of life of the ultra poor and disaster prone communities by providing integrated support in health care, education, sustainable economic development, disaster risk management and cultural preservation.

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