



EUROPEAN UNION



Girls takeover traffic signals to mark International Day of the Girl

European Union Ambassador to India Tomasz Kozlowski inaugurates the takeover

New Delhi, October 10, 2016 - To commemorate International Day of the Girl on October 11, a UN-declared international observance day to support greater opportunities for girls and end gender discrimination, teenage girls from marginalised communities stepped into the roles of traffic policemen and manned traffic in New Delhi.

The celebration of the International Day of Girl Child is part of a 3 year collaboration between the European Union (EU) and PLAN India for promoting gender equality and combating discrimination against the girl child, which began in May 2015 in selected districts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. The EU currently funds 3 large initiatives on the rights of the girl child in India, with a specific focus on eliminating sex-selective abortions.

European Union Ambassador to India, H.E. Tomasz Kozlowski inaugurated the initiative and distributed badges to 120 girls belonging to marginalised communities.

120 girls manned traffic for two hours at multiple locations in Delhi, namely Rajpath C Hexagon, Mandi House, Baba Khark Singh Marg and Windsor Circle. They were assisted by traffic police personnel, most of who were women. Dressed in pink t-shirts, the young girls displayed signage and posters on gender equality as well as girls' rights. Passerby were also handed stickers with the message 'Be the Driver of Change'.

Inaugurating the initiative, Mr. Kozlowski said "Ensuring that girls feel respected and valued in society is the first step to breaking down the barriers of discrimination. Today, on International Day of the Girl Child, we remember that empowering girls and women is not just our moral duty, it is also the solution to many of the greatest challenges we face in the quest for development and peace: **Investing in girls is investing in peace and prosperity**"

On the occasion, Ms. Bhagyashri Dingle, Executive Director, Plan India said, "Despite significant progress over the last several decades toward girls' and women's equal participation, gaps still remain. By occupying such spaces and places where they are rarely seen or heard, it is a step towards promoting gender inequality and claiming their rights."

The Delhi Traffic Police conducted a rehearsal session with the girls before the takeover.

Besides manning traffic, girls also took over important roles even in corporate houses, media publications and radio stations for a day, last week to commemorate International day of the Girl. Going forward, 10 metro stations in Delhi will also have signage and people will be requested to pledge their support for a safer Delhi, from October 11-20. The metro stations

include Rajiv Chowk, Chawri Bazar, Chandni Chowk, Kashmere Gate, Uttam Nagar East, Janak Puri West, Anand Vihar, Vishwavidyalaya and Shahdara.

The International Day of the Girl was celebrated in more than 50 countries of the world where girls were undertaking historic “takeovers” becoming presidents, mayors, senior directors and TV presenters for a day to raise their voice for justice and equality.

Editor’s Note:

- Plan India, a member of Plan International Federation, is a nationally registered independent child development organisation committed to creating a lasting impact in the lives of vulnerable and excluded children, their families and communities. For over 35 years, Plan India and its partners have improved the lives of millions of children by providing them access to protection, basic education, proper healthcare, a healthy environment, livelihood opportunities and participation in decisions which affect their lives.
- International Day of the Girl, October 11, is a UN-declared international observance day to support greater opportunities for girls and awareness of gender discrimination they endure worldwide. Plan International celebrates this day to support the movement for girls’ rights and development so that girls everywhere can learn, lead, decide and thrive.
