Emirates Airline Foundation signs contract with NGO to manage new floating hospital in Bangladesh



Tim Clark, President, Emirates Airline and Chairman, Emirates Airline foundation; shakes hands with Runa Khan, Executive Director, Friendship after signing a management agreement for the new Emirates Friendship Hospital.

The Emirates Airline Foundation and Friendship, a registered NGO have signed a contract for the management of the new Emirates Friendship Hospital ship in Bangladesh. The steel-hulled catamaran, due for completion in Dhaka by mid-2007 will be fitted with wards, an operating theatre, delivery room, dental unit, eye care unit, laboratory, pharmacy and x-ray room. The ship will be used as a floating hospital in northern Bangladesh for communities isolated by the annual monsoon flooding of the Brahmaputra River.

The low-draught vessel is specially designed to navigate the shallow waters of over 200 km, one of the most medically neglected and inaccessible areas of Bangladesh. The riverine population is an estimated two million people, 40% of whom are below 15 years of age. The Emirates Airline Foundation will also fund the salaries of a full-time team of doctors, nurses and support staff, along with the facility’s day-to-day running costs, which will amount to US$150,000 annually when it goes into service. Emirates passengers, who donate spare cash or unwanted foreign currency using envelopes supplied on board flights, support the foundation. “

We are thankful to our passengers who have generously funded the foundation over the past two years and without whom we could not have facilitated this initiative;’Tim Clark, President, Emirates Airline and Chairman, Emirates Airline Foundation said. Clark also said that the communities in northern Bangladesh are in dire need of basic medical facilities to deal with the unforgiving conditions in which they live. He added that the Emirates Airline Foundation was pleased to be able to support the work of Friendship in serving the medical needs of the people in the affected areas. Friendship has previously helped in the work of the Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital, a river barge that currently serves the medical needs of the isolated northern Bangladesh communities. “Their suffering is unbearable for them and unacceptable for us. Our mission is to give our best to ease their situation. The work of Friendship is to bring to their doors, thanks to our hospital ships, the most efficient medical facilities. Our program has reached over 200,000 people and our target is to multiply these figures;’ said Runa Khan, Executive Director, Friendship.