

**Press Release                                                                           14 March 2022**

**Press Meet: BRAC Turns 50**

**Igniting hope from Bangladesh to the world**

BRAC was born to serve the people of the newly independent Bangladesh, assisting them in the struggle of their self-development. For the last 50 years the organisation has stood by the people, the marginal communities in particular, and will continue to do so in the future. It will continue designing and implementing programmes and solutions following the development philosophy of the organisation’s founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed that we have to reach them first who need it the most.

This was expressed by the members of the senior management of BRAC as they briefed on the organisation’s future path at a press meet organised on the occasion of its 50th founding anniversary.

The press event was organised today on Monday (14 March 2022) at the BRAC Centre at Mohakhali in the capital. Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, chairperson, BRAC Bangladesh Governing Body, Irene Khan, chair, BRAC International Supervisory Board, Asif Saleh, executive director, BRAC Bangladesh, Tamara Hasan Abed, managing director, Enterprises, BRAC, and Shameran Abed, executive director, BRAC International, were present at the programme. Moutushi Kabir, director, Communications, Learning and Leadership Development, BRAC, moderated the media event.

At the first session of the programme, the senior management members briefed on the organisation’s activities and programmes, and shared experiences and future planning, while at the second session they answered questions from the press.

Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, chairperson, BRAC Bangladesh Governing Body, said, “Our founder is no more with us physically, but his ideology and philosophy are guiding us in all that we do. We believe as he himself believed that development is strengthened through empowerment covering all the aspects of financial, social, knowledge and skills. In the coming years, we aspire to play an effectively catalytic role at an even greater level, in the international periphery, aimed at building stronger relations between the state and social entities.”

Having described BRAC as “an entity combining ideas and risks,” Irene Khan, chair, BRAC International Supervisory Board, said, “The world is facing a number of crises in the last several years. A hundred million people slipped down to extreme poverty during the pandemic of Covid-19. The Ukraine war will create a food crisis. Furthermore, there’s the wide impact of climate change. This is a situation where BRAC will have to continue its work in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world by combining ideas and risk factors.”

Asif Saleh, executive director, BRAC Bangladesh, said, “BRAC and Bangladesh are almost synonymous. BRAC wouldn’t have been born in the first place if the nation of Bangladesh wouldn’t have emerged. At the same time, the progress and development of Bangladesh might have been more unequal if BRAC was not there with its massive interventions. And, BRAC could never do such volumes of work if the government was not with us. We sincerely thank the Government of Bangladesh and the entire nation for standing by us.”

Tamara Hasan Abed, managing director, Enterprises, BRAC, said, “It’s not financial profits, but the empowerment of the poor is what BRAC’s business enterprises aim to achieve. Our social enterprises create direct employment opportunities for the poor communities on one hand, while on the other we channel the surplus from these businesses to our social development programmes. We didn’t retreat when we were faced with constraints while attempting to solve a problem. Rather we had built yet new initiatives as solutions to those new problems. We worked with the deprived communities to create solutions.”

Shameran Abed, executive director, BRAC International, said, “BRAC International (BI) started its operation in 2002 through its interventions in Afghanistan. In the last 20 years, BI ran programmes in 13 countries altogether, and currently has direct operations in nine countries. We are making effective use of our experiences in Bangladesh in finding solutions in those countries, while at the same time we are bringing back lessons from those countries to create solutions in this country. BI currently engages over 15 thousand employees and volunteers covering all its programmes including health, education and microfinance.”

In recent times BRAC has assisted the government as one of its large development partners to tackle the Rohingya refugee crisis and Covid-19 pandemic through mobilising all its resources within the least possible time. The organisation has established a unique example of reaching services and assistance to the affected people having mobilised its human, financial and other resources within an extremely constrained time period.

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed founded BRAC in 1972 in Sulla, a remote upazila of Sunamganj, to assist the repatriating refugees in rebuilding their life. BRAC has since been expanding its programmes, services and ventures to form a unique brand ecosystem. Apart from the world’s largest development organisation, the brand in Bangladesh now includes among others, a bank, a university and social enterprises. BRAC now operates in 10 countries altogether in Asia and Africa.

At present, BRAC engages with over 100 million people across the world, steering their empowerment and development to realise their potentials. It also continues achieving the status of the world’s Number One NGO for the last seven years in a row.

With Regards

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BRAC

Link to the video footage of the press meet:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19QZR5_Rf2Qyany2MIPQ7NZbba9Xk9eM4/view?usp=sharing>