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PRESS RELEASE

Bangladesh Reaffirms Support for Global Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism

Washington DC, 19 February 2015: "Terrorists are terrorists irrespective of beliefs, creeds or castes. There must be a 'zero tolerance' approach to all forms of terrorism and violent extremism," asserted the Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP at the 'White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE)' here today.

Minister Ali pointed out that it is the youth that remained particularly vulnerable to the extremist messaging, and in need for positive alternatives. In this context, he talked about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's vision to build a 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 to engage the youth in creative enterprises through knowledge and ICT.

The Bangladesh Foreign Minister stressed that women's social mobility in Bangladesh has helped weaken the religious extremist agenda at its core. He underscored the use of media to shatter the myths around the extremist narratives.

Minister Ali lamented the extremist agenda being pursued by the BNP-Jamaat alliance to undermine the democratic, non-communal and non-confrontational narratives being propagated by the Government.

The Minister expressed the Government's conviction to face these emerging challenges through enhanced community mobilization. He wished to see effective CVE models emerging from Bangladesh's association with the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF).

The White House Summit, first of its kind, gathered Government and civil society representatives, including faith leaders, from more than 60 countries to discuss a forward-looking strategy to counter the generational challenge of violent extremism.

Speaking at the Summit, US President Barack Obama said, "We come from different countries and different cultures and different faiths, but... We are all in the same boat. We have to help each other."

The participants at the meeting shared insights on the drivers of violent extremism, on effective community-based initiatives to build counter-narratives to violent extremism, and on the various proven means of de-radicalizing and reintegrating former terrorists and extremists.

The Summit adopted a Statement highlighting eight work streams to take forward the CVE agenda through concerted global action, including developing a multi-dimensional CVE action plan under the aegis of the UN.

