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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **US Companies form alliance to work together on factory safety.**

Leading North American retailers today formally launched a forum called “The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety”. The Alliance aims to implement a safety initiative to improve safety standards in our garments.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Akramul Qader, former US Senators George Mitchell and Olympia J. Snow and senior representatives from 17 leading retailers and clothing brands attended the Alliance launching ceremony hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Center, a public policy think-tank based in the USA. In his short remarks at the event, Ambassador Akramul Qader thanked the US companies for their timely move and emphasised that a coherent approach from all garment retailers would complement Bangladesh government’s efforts to implement concrete and time bound measures. Ambassador Qader urged the US companies to ensure respect to ILO core labour standard as well as national law across their value chains. The company representatives observed that due to complexities in the US law, the US corporations cannot come up with an accord similar to the one signed by their European counterparts. There are, nevertheless, similarities between the US and EU action plans in terms of oversight, accountability, public reporting, factory inspection, safety training and worker empowerment.

Later in the day, Ambassador Qader presented a keynote paper entitled “Moving Bangladesh toward a better future” at a seminar organized by The Heritage Foundation, a prominent think-tank of the USA. In his paper Ambassador Qader highlighted Bangladesh’s development journey since independence, key achievements in the trade and investment sectors, present government’s commitment to uphold rule of law, trying the war criminals, and the successful holding of recent city corporation elections. The seminar was attended by both US and Bangladeshi scholars, senior US officials, journalists, members of Bangladesh diaspora. Ms. Lisa Curtis and Mr. Walter Lohman, respectively Senior Research Fellow and Director of The Heritage Foundation moderated the panel discussions. The seminar was also telecast live.

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