

## EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SECOND BANGLADESH-U.S. PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE

Dhaka, May 27, 2013

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque and U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy R. Sherman co-chaired the Second Bangladesh-U.S. Partnership Dialogue in Dhaka on May 26-27, 2013. The two leaders highlighted the robust and growing bilateral ties between Bangladesh and the United States and affirmed that the relationship is based on shared values and common goals of the two countries and their people. The two leaders recognized the significant progress that has been made in the bilateral relationship since the signing of the Declaration on the Joint Partnership Dialogue agreement in Dhaka on May 5, 2012, noted the productive discussions at the inaugural Partnership Dialogue meetings held in Washington on September 19-20, 2012, and reaffirmed their commitment to further broaden and deepen the partnership.

Under Secretary Sherman offered deep condolences on the Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashions tragedies, noting that the thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the families of the victims. Foreign Secretary Haque and Under Secretary Sherman committed to intensifying the ongoing efforts to work together to enhance workers' rights and safety standards to prevent such tragedies from occurring again.

Under Secretary Sherman praised Bangladesh as a secular and pluralist democracy that has achieved remarkable social and economic progress while addressing transnational challenges, including terrorism, trafficking and climate change. Secretary Kerry asked Under Secretary Sherman to convey his regards to the Bangladeshi people and reiterated his strong support for this important partnership. The two leaders surveyed the wide array of ongoing cooperative activities, declared that the Bangladesh-U.S. relationship has never been better, and pledged to improve it further. The wide-ranging discussions on bilateral and regional issues included the following:

**Development and Governance:** The co-chairs underscored the Bangladesh-U.S. partnership on President Obama's signature global initiatives on health care, food security and climate change as well as cooperation on women's empowerment. They recognized Bangladesh's leading role for countries that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. They acknowledged Bangladesh's vibrant and varied civil society and agreed to consider the possibilities of organizing a joint civil

society event in the next Partnership Dialogue. The two delegations also discussed other issues relating to governance, human rights, the Rohingya, and the Millennium Challenge Account.

**Regional Integration:** The co-chairs acknowledged Bangladesh’s leadership role in promoting greater connectivity in the region. They discussed the security landscape in the region, including Afghanistan and Burma. In the context of regional security, they recognized that the free movement of ideas, goods, and people enhances regional peace and prosperity.

**Trade and Investment:** The co-chairs discussed the status of labor law reform, registration of unions in the garment sector, fire and structural safety standards, and the prospects for a Better Work program in Bangladesh. The two delegations discussed market access, including Bangladesh’s request for duty free quota free garment exports to the United States and the ongoing U.S. review of a petition concerning Bangladesh’s eligibility for trade privileges under the Generalized System of Preferences. The co-chairs highlighted the start of a bilateral energy dialogue and underscored U.S.-Bangladesh leadership in organizing the first Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) program to explore avenues for expanding electricity access, promoting renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency.

**Security Cooperation:** The co-chairs recognized the vital and active role Bangladesh plays in ensuring security and stability, regionally and globally. They noted the productive meetings of the Second U.S.-Bangladesh Dialogue on Security Issues in Washington in April 2013. They reviewed the continued collaboration in countering extremism, counterterrorism, security assistance, United Nations peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian assistance.

**Private Sector Forum:** The co-chairs highlighted the success of the Private Sector Forum, which underscores the value business and people-to-people contacts could add to the overall bilateral relationship. The Private Sector Forum brought together U.S. and Bangladesh business representatives to focus on deepening links between their respective private sectors, to discuss impediments to enhanced two-way trade and investment, and to identify opportunities for moving forward.

The second Partnership Dialogue was held in a warm and cordial environment. The co-chairs agreed to hold the third Partnership Dialogue in Washington in 2014.

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