**Press Release**

**“Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leads us from the front in this battle against the pandemic” -Ambassador Rabab Fatima**

New York, 24 March 2021:

“Overcoming the disruptions caused by the pandemic, particularly in women’s economic empowerment, would require strong and visionary leadership, and a whole of society approach towards inclusive and resilient recovery. We are fortunate to have Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lead us from the front in this battle against the pandemic” said Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York while speaking at a side event on “Women's Economic Empowerment: Good Practices in COVID-19 Response and Recovery” organized as part of the 65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The event was jointly organized by the Permanent Missions of Bangladesh, El Salvador and Rwanda to the UN and the International Trade Centre. It gathered women entrepreneurs from three cross regional countries who shared their experience of resilient recovery from COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from Bangladesh Ambassador, the Permanent Representative of El Salvador Ambassador Egriselda López and the Permanent Representative of Rwanda Ambassador Valentine Rugwabiza presented various recovery initiatives and stimulus measure announced by their respective governments targeting the women. ITC’s New York representative moderated the panel discussion.

Referring to the compounded economic impacts of the pandemic on women globally, Ambassador Fatima underscored that pandemic response and recovery efforts must take women’s particular vulnerability into account. She also stressed that women must be able to play an equal and effective role in the efforts to help societies build back better.

Ambassador Rabab Fatima stated that, recognizing the disproportionate impact of COVID on women, including those employed in the informal and service sectors, RMG workers and returnee women migrant workers Bangladesh government has announced stimulus packages and targeted support measures.

“We have also announced interest and mortgage free loan for women entrepreneurs, and providing skill development projects in all districts in an effort to support women recover from job and income loss, including through re-skilling trainings, alternative livelihood opportunities, and facilitating their access to digital economy” she added. Ambassador Rabab Fatima acknowledged the role and contribution of our private sector, civil society and media in this regard.

Ms. Kohinoor Yeasmin, CEO of Tarango, participated in the event as a panelist and shared how her organization sustained its business despite COVID19 pandemic and lock down through home-based production and digital marketing. She also recognized how the government funded financial packages helped her pay the salaries to the workers during the lock-down.

The virtual event was attended by a large number of participants from all three regions.

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