**Press Release**

**Foreign Minister calls upon the UN to ensure affordable access to COVID 19 vaccine for all.**

**New York, 17 June 2021:**

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen, MP thanked the Secretary General Antonio Guterres for declaring the COVID 19 vaccine a public good and requested for UN’s initiatives to ensure that the vaccine becomes accessible to all. He said while he was having a bilateral meeting held with the Secretary General at the UN Headquarters today.

The Secretary Generalin response informed about his efforts during the recent G-7 summit where he particularly mentioned about Bangladesh’s capacity to produce vaccines. “The UN has a special relation with Bangladesh”, said the Secretary General. He praised Bangladesh’s strong leadership role in all areas of the UN’s activities, especially in peacekeeping, climate change and women empowerment.

Foreign Minister Momen congratulated Secretary General on his re-appointment for second term and commended his leadership of the UN in his first term as Secretary General. The Foreign Minister also thanked him for his continued attention to the Rohingya issue. He said that SG’s personal intervention is now needed more than ever as the political situation in Myanmar had deteriorated. The Foreign Minister also stated that it is frustrating that many influential countries have enhanced their economic and business relations with Myanmar while publicly decrying the human rights violations there.

Referring to the humanitarian gesture of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in providing shelter to the Rohingya, the Secretary General thanked Bangladesh for hosting the displaced Rohingya minorities from Myanmar. “The world will not forget Bangladesh’s generosity in hosting the largest refugee camps of the world”, the Secretary General added. The Foreign Minister also briefed the SG about the facilities in Bhashan Char and stressed the importance of UN’s operations there.

The Foreign Minister said that, although Bangladesh is on track towards SDG implementation, there are concerns about the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, especially in securing financing for the SDGs. The Foreign Minister also called for continued support measures for graduating countries.

The Foreign Minister requested SG for Bangladesh’s enhanced representation in the United Nations particularly at senior management level.

Later in the afternoon the Foreign Minister held a meeting with Rosemary DiCarlo, Under Secretary General for Department for Peace building and Political Affairs. During the meeting they discussed the current political situation in Myanmar and its impacts on the repatriation of the Rohingya Muslims from Bangladesh to Myanmar.

Ambassador Rabab Fatima accompanied the Foreign Minister in both the meetings.

\*\*\*