

BRAC Founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed KCMG passes away**An international development icon and a pivotal figure in Bangladesh's socio-economic progress**

With profound sadness, BRAC, one of the world's leading development organisations, announced the passing of its Founder, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed KCMG. He was 83 years old.

Sir Fazle breathed his last yesterday on Friday (20.12.2019) at 8.28pm (BST), while undergoing treatment at the Apollo Hospitals in Dhaka city, Bangladesh. He was battling a malignant tumour of the brain.

He will be laid to rest at the graveyard in Banani in the capital tomorrow on Sunday (22.12.2019).

The honourable President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh expressed deep shock and sent condolences to the grieving members of Sir Fazle's family.

President Md. Abdul Hamid said in a statement, "Through founding BRAC, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed made immense contributions to the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh. The whole nation will remember him with respect for the work that he accomplished."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in a statement, "In 1971, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed travelled from England to different European countries in order to gain support, collect funds and form public opinion for our great War of Liberation. He worked for the rebuilding of the war-torn and newly independent Bangladesh. The demise of such a great humanitarian soul is an irreparable loss to our nation."

Ms Ameerah Haq, Chair, BRAC Global Board said in a statement, "Unflinching dedication, focus and work ethic are what we have always experienced in Sir Fazle, or Abed Bhai, as the BRAC family calls him lovingly. He always put others before himself and let his work speak for itself. Even when BRAC attained its global stature, his concern and focus were on the less fortunate in society and those whose potential needed nurturing. He embodied the highest level of integrity, humility and humanity, which continues to be the essential guiding spirit of BRAC."

Dignitaries, social activists and entrepreneurs as well as people who worked with Sir Fazle and were inspired by his work are sending condolence messages from around the world.

Bill Clinton, 42nd President of The USA, said in his condolence message, "Sir Fazle Abed's life was a great gift to humanity. His nearly 50 years of visionary leadership at BRAC transformed millions of lives in Bangladesh and beyond, and changed the way the world thinks about development. Driven by an unwavering belief in the inherent dignity of all people, he empowered those in extreme poverty to build better futures for themselves and their families. His legacy will live on in all the people whose lives are better, healthier and more secure because of his remarkable service."

Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, UNICEF, said, "Over the course of three decades, under Sir Fazle's inspiring leadership, the humanitarian organisation he founded, BRAC, has become one of the world's leading development organisations. From its humble beginnings in Bangladesh - the country he loved so well - to its expansion to 10 countries across Asia and Africa, BRAC has stood as an inspiring example of how we can gather people together in common cause to improve the lives of the most vulnerable. All of us at UNICEF will miss his ideas and advice. We will never forget the example he set."

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Jim Yong Kim, 12th President of The World Bank, said, "The scale and impact of what he has done, and yet the utter humility with which he has done everything, is a lesson for every single one of us."

Professor Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Laureate and Founder, Grameen Bank, said, "Abed has built a self-determined Bangladesh. The story of his unstoppable courage, confidence, and creativity will give strength to the next generation. For many generations to follow, Abed will live on as the spirit of Bangladesh."

Melinda Gates, Co-founder, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said, "In 1972, after Bangladesh's war of liberation had left many homeless, Fazle Abed left his job as a London oil executive and returned to his home country with £16,000 in his pocket - and the ambitious goal of building 10,400 houses. He ended up raising enough money to build 16,000 houses for some of the poorest people in Bangladesh and still had enough left over to start his next project. That's who Sir Fazle was as a humanitarian, and that's what he helped us learn about development work: How to build a big, efficient organization, while never forgetting who you were doing it for. We were saddened to hear of his passing and will forever draw inspiration from his work, as will the rest of the world, which he left so much better than he found."

Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, Nobel Laureates in Economics in 2019, said "How often do we see people like Sir Fazle Hasan Abed? His absence has left a great sense of loss in all of us."

Bill Drayton, Founder and CEO, Ashoka, "When Ashoka and I came to Bangladesh in the 1980s with the then-little-understood idea of building social entrepreneurship, Fazle welcomed us. He guided us in many ways. The global Ashoka community and I also steadily learned from Fazle's flow of new, big ideas - and how he turned them into the new reality, one after another. All of us at Ashoka, indeed all social entrepreneurs everywhere, have lost something entirely unique and deeply precious."

Sir Fazle started BRAC in 1972, at the age of 36, as a small relief and rehabilitation project in north-eastern Bangladesh. Over the past 47 years, BRAC has grown to be one of the most effective non-governmental organisations in the world, touching the lives of over 100 million people worldwide. BRAC currently operates in 11 countries across Asia and Africa, with affiliate offices in the USA, UK and the Netherlands, placing women and children at the heart of its work.

About Sir Fazle Hasan Abed

Sir Fazle was born in 1936 in Bangladesh. He studied accountancy in London, qualifying as a cost management accountant in 1962. While he was working as a senior corporate executive at Pakistan Shell Oil, the 1970 cyclone and 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh dramatically changed the direction of his life. He left his job and moved to London, where he helped initiate Action Bangladesh and HELP Bangladesh in support of the Liberation War.

Early in 1972, after the war was over, he returned to the newly-independent Bangladesh, finding the economy in ruins. The return of 10 million refugees who had sought shelter in India during the war called for urgent relief and rehabilitation efforts. Sir Fazle established BRAC to address the needs of refugees in a remote area of north-eastern Bangladesh, guided by a desire to help people living in poverty develop their own capacity to better manage their lives.

Today BRAC is one of the largest NGOs in the world, operating across 11 countries in Africa and Asia. Its primary objective is to empower people living in poverty and inequality. In 2019, for the fourth year in a row, BRAC was ranked first among the world's top 500 NGOs by Geneva-based NGO Advisor; based on its impact, innovation and sustainability.

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Sir Fazle was honoured with numerous national and international awards for his achievements in leading BRAC, including the Yidan Prize for Education Development (2019), LEGO Prize (2018), World Food Prize (2015), Spanish Order of Civil Merit (2014), Inaugural WISE Prize for Education (2011), David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award (2008), Inaugural Clinton Global Citizen Award (2007), UNDP Mahbubul Haq Award for Outstanding Contribution to Human Development (2004), Olof Palme Prize (2001) and Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership (1980).

He has also been recognised by Ashoka as one of the 'global greats'; and is a founding member of its prestigious Global Academy for Social Entrepreneurship. He was a member of the Commission on Health Research for Development (1987-90), the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (1991-92), and the High-level Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (2005-2008). In 2010, he was appointed Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George by the British Crown in recognition of his services to reducing poverty in Bangladesh and internationally. Sir Fazle was a member of the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by the UN Secretary-General in 2010 to advise on support for the Least Developed Countries. In 2014 and 2017, he was named in Fortune Magazine's List of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders. Sir Fazle was honoured with a Dutch Knighthood in 2019.

With regards,

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