



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE



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## BANGLADESH

# U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PERFORMANCE PUBLICATION Fiscal Year 2009

### **FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS**

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The United States Government (USG) and the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) share the same long-term vision of a stable and prosperous Bangladesh that acts as a responsible productive development partner. USG assistance in FY 2009 enabled the people of Bangladesh to have free, fair, and credible national and local elections; continued supporting victims of devastating natural disasters; and achieved significant long-term development gains in one of the world's poorest countries. Efforts to improve the lives of all Bangladeshis were accomplished by addressing the underlying social, demographic, and economic factors that threaten democratic governance and economic growth, and increase vulnerability to extremism. USG assistance in Bangladesh focused on five broad areas: enhancing health and pre-primary education; creating income opportunities for the rural poor; improving peace and security; developing good governance practices; and improving food security and strengthening disaster preparedness capabilities. Additionally, the USG is always prepared to provide emergency assistance following natural disasters.

### **HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

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#### **Peace and Security**

U.S. assistance on peace and justice helped Bangladesh greatly improve its capacity to address terrorist financing, secure its borders, and interdict terrorist attacks. In FY 2009, USG funds supported ramping up the capability of Bangladesh's Coast Guard and Navy to patrol its marine borders, while eight courses were provided through the USG's Antiterrorism Assistance program. Funds also supported developing procedures with the GOB for mutual law enforcement assistance in international cases.

Bangladesh continues to face increasing challenges in trafficking-in-persons (TIP), due to the large number of migrant workers traveling to destination countries where they face endemic violations of human rights and often become victims of labor trafficking. USG assistance for Bangladesh seeks to reduce TIP by building the capacity of GOB officials and law enforcement officers to enforce anti-trafficking laws and prosecute traffickers and fraudulent labor recruiters. The USG also supports efforts to improve protection and legal support to trafficking survivors and works to

increase community awareness through campaigns to combat TIP. Below are a few of the successes accomplished in FY 2009 with USG assistance.

- Over 600 locally elected officials, students, teachers, and court police, along with 45 journalists, attended USG-supported awareness-raising sessions on protecting vulnerable community members from falling into trafficking traps
- Seven representatives of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies and 64 government officials from the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training were trained on ways to reduce the vulnerabilities of migrant workers
- The capacity of 68 law enforcement officers and public prosecutors was strengthened to improve understanding and cooperation in dealing with TIP cases
- To help TIP victims recuperate from their losses, both physical and emotional, the USG provided assistance to over 300 TIP survivors, of whom 200 were women, in gaining safe reintegration into society, and provided 127 of the survivors (including 56 women) additional support in the form of training on improving self-reliance and confidence in decision making.

The USG's 2009 TIP report ranked Bangladesh as a Tier 2 Watch List country due to a lack of progress in addressing labor migration issues. Continued engagement with the GOB in legal reforms is critical to strengthening its capacity to prosecute labor trafficking offenders. The USG will continue to assist the GOB to improve its capacity in effectively responding to TIP. Finally, USAID programming will expand its outreach and awareness efforts as well as support to trafficking victims to include the topic of labor migration trafficking.

### **Governing Justly and Democratically**

Bangladesh achieved significant progress in its 38-year experiment with democracy by ensuring free, fair, and credible elections in December 2008 and January 2009. The United States provided support, training, and technical assistance throughout this process to ensure that proper procedures were followed and the results were accepted by the Bangladeshi public and international community. In FY 2009, USG democracy and governance assistance reduced corruption by promoting transparency and accountability in public resource management, introduced religious and community leaders to the concept of democracy and development, developed well-governed public institutions, increased the watchdog capabilities of civil society organizations and the media, and empowered persons with disabilities. Specific accomplishments include:

- Two interventions organized to enhance public knowledge of corruption and establish a Budget Analysis and Monitoring Unit at the Parliament Secretariat, allowing Secretariat staff to support Parliamentarians in analyzing the national budget and tracking public expenditures
- The Journalism Training and Research Initiative (JATRI), which is the only investigative journalism center in Bangladesh, was launched by a USAID implementing partner. In its first year, JATRI trained 380 journalists, including 50 women, on freedom of information, public procurement practices, ethics in journalism, and investigative reporting techniques.
- The well-known and highly respected program from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Leaders of Influence (LOI) continued to have a high rate of success.

U.S. assistance trained 5,778 religious and community leaders on modern values and practices of democracy and development, of which 18 percent were women. In conjunction with the messages shared by the LOIs and media outreach activities, at least 5 million Bangladeshi citizens were exposed to modern development techniques and basic democratic practices.

- In FY 2009, USAID used assistance funds to launch a new program to support the over 8 million persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. The program supports local outreach and advocacy efforts, as well as facilitates mutual collaboration and networks of disabled peoples' organizations on national advocacy issues.

## **Investing in People**

Bangladesh is home to 153 million people. Extreme population density and widespread poverty pose serious challenges to development efforts. It is paramount for U.S. assistance to invest in Bangladeshi people by addressing the broad areas of health, early childhood education, and disaster planning, preparedness, and mitigation.

### **Health**

In spite of development successes in the last three decades, with fertility declining from 6.3 to 2.7 children per woman, Bangladesh's population is still projected to reach to 231 million in 2050. In FY 2009, USG assistance addressed Bangladesh's health challenges in five areas: access to quality family planning and reproductive health services, safe motherhood and improved health of children under five, low HIV/AIDS prevalence, control of tuberculosis, and improved access to treatment, clean water, and sanitation.

- In FY 2009, the USG supported Smiling Sun Franchise Program, a network of 30 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with 320 health clinics focused on improving institutional capacity of its partner NGOs, and used earmarked maternal and child health funds to implement activities on water-related hygiene and sanitation, preventing more than 1.5 million cases of diarrhea
- The Safe Motherhood and Newborn Care project (SMNCP) worked to strengthen the institutional capacity of two local NGO partners on planning and implementing core program activities including training, behavior change communication, community mobilization, and local-level advocacy, enabling another 22 NGOs effectively to implement and expand coverage for various health programs. In FY 2009 SMNCP trained 2,300 project staff and community resource persons on counseling skills to promote maternal and newborn infection prevention practices, reaching approximately 60,000 married women.
- With an estimated 70,000 prevalent cases, obstetric fistula is a significant women's health problem in Bangladesh. USAID-funded programs in FY 2009 supported local NGOs in successfully repairing 130 obstetric fistula cases, and trained 163 doctors and nurses on fistula repair, infection prevention, counselling, pre- and post-operative case management, and basic emergency obstetric care. In addition, the SMNCP community mobilization program oriented 2,500 community members on safe motherhood and prevention of fistula and generating community awareness.
- In FY 2009, USAID-supported health programs implemented a variety of activities to increase male participation and support, as they dominate decision-making in family

planning and access to health care. SMNCP formed 305 male groups in rural areas to raise awareness and engage male community members in supporting activities to improve maternal and newborn health.

### **Education**

Although primary school enrollment in Bangladesh is increasing, teacher and student attendance figures continue to be discouraging. Over 50 percent of children who enroll in first grade fail to complete primary school, and the quality of primary education remains extremely poor. Only about two percent of children achieve the prescribed competencies by the end of fifth grade. As a result, the literacy rate in Bangladesh is significantly lower than that of other developing countries, hovering at around 50 percent. USG assistance helps to reduce high dropout rates during the critical first years of primary school and improve the quality of primary education. In FY 2009:

- USAID's Early Learning for Success (SUCCEED) program educated 39,862 preschoolers, a significant increase since 2004. USG assistance also provided training to over 2,500 teachers and supported the mobilization of 600 community school advisory groups to support early childhood education.
- The GOB took steps to incorporate SUCCEED's early childhood education model into its national education policy. Primary Education Development Program II, a \$1.8 billion program (supported by a consortium of eleven donors) now includes early childhood development (ECD) in its program design.
- Sisimpur, the USG-funded Sesame Street Bangladesh, is rated as the most widely viewed children's television show in the country, reaching over 9 million viewers a week
- An assessment of USAID's ECD activities show Sisimpur's content and lessons in literacy, numeracy, and healthy social behaviors have a positive learning impact on young children; the assessment indicated that the retention rate of graduates from USG-supported preschools completing the third grade in FY 2009 is 87 percent, in contrast to the national average of 74 percent.

### **Economic Growth**

Economic growth is paramount to ensuring stability and furthering development in all sectors. U.S. assistance in Bangladesh under the economic growth objective focuses on expanding and stabilizing infrastructure, ensuring food security, and training a labor force in sustainable economic markets.

### **Infrastructure**

Electricity plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. Although blessed with natural gas and some coal deposits, Bangladesh experiences widespread power shortages caused by inadequate investment in power generation and poor distribution. USG assistance focuses on creating a regulatory environment that will attract private sector investment in energy, leading to a boost in supply. In FY 2009, U.S. assistance:

- Improved the technical capacity, independence, and transparency of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, resulting in the issuance of rulings that are conducive to private sector investment
- Established 15 new rural technology centers that trained over 700 women to become renewable energy technicians

## **Agriculture**

Food security is a critical factor in supporting economic growth in Bangladesh. To achieve improved food security, Bangladesh needs an enabling environment that stimulates agricultural productivity. To address this challenge, USAID programs in agriculture focused on technical assistance, training, and outreach at the national and community levels; providing practical skills to farmers and laborers; and ensuring development of government policies supportive of investment. In FY 2009, U.S. assistance:

- Benefited more than 61,000 households through improved agricultural technology training and other advisory and input services
- Supported completion of 15 studies and policy reform analyses under the subject areas of agricultural price stabilization, production diversification, input supply, food safety-net management, and food security among vulnerable areas and people
- Strengthened linkages between food policy and research, which led to informed policy-decision making, including policy advisory services influencing the GOB to account for market structures

## **Enterprise Development**

Bangladesh's progress from a developing to a transforming country will be accomplished, in part, by promoting broad-based economic growth and support to small and medium businesses by increasing revenue, investments, and jobs, with specific focus on the poor. The USG continues its work in partnership with the GOB and the private sector to enhance competitiveness in aquaculture, horticulture, and leather, as well as to improve the quality of production and improve labor practices to meet international standards. USAID programming in FY 2009:

- Provided easier access to quality fish fingerlings, promoted adoption of modern farming technologies, and supported linkages to market and financial institutions. Through these programs, productivity in aquaculture by increased by 15 percent.
- Improved the quality of raw materials by introducing better skinning techniques and trained sewing operators to satisfy the leather industry's growing demand for skilled personnel
- Provided training to 2,000 laborers (25 percent women) in the leather sector, resulting in sales of \$15 million – about 90 percent more than the primary sales target
- Provided assistance to 6,000 entrepreneurs (29 percent women) on improved technologies and to 2,000 entrepreneurs (17 percent women) on improved management practices, across the three sectors

## **Environment**

Almost 90 percent of Bangladesh's forests and 50 percent of its wetlands have been lost or degraded due to heavy population pressure on dwindling arable land. By 2070, global warming could result in 20 percent of the country being submerged under water, leaving more than 20 million people homeless (a direct effect of global climate change). Unfortunately, natural resource management tends to be a lower priority. USAID is addressing this challenge by providing opportunities for viable livelihoods that support the preservation of fast-diminishing natural resources in Bangladesh. In FY 2009, U.S. assistance supported:

- An innovative, co-management model involving community members and the government in ecologically vulnerable areas, resulting in restoration of habitats and conservation of natural resources of 183,000 hectares of forest and wetlands. Of this area, 40,350 hectares showed improved biophysical conditions, as indicated by stable or growing number of indicator bird species, and reduced incidents of illegal logging.
- Training of over 5,000 GOB staff and community members on environmental law enforcement and policies, as well as effective environmental management through shared authority for protected area conservancy
- Technical assistance to communities in and around protected areas on alternative income generating activities, benefiting over 245,000 people (50 percent women). Reducing direct subsistence dependence on the natural resources of protected areas helps preserve natural resources while better preparing communities to adapt to the negative consequences of climate change and natural disasters.

### **Humanitarian Assistance**

Large numbers of landless Bangladeshis live in absolute poverty in the most marginal areas of the country. Their lives are threatened by recurring floods, cyclones, tidal surges, and other natural disasters. They are often unable to access health, education, and agricultural extension services, contributing to a cycle of poor health practices, low agricultural productivity, and food insecurity. In addition, extreme poverty and the frequency of natural disasters can destabilize the population and create favorable conditions for extremism to thrive. U.S. foreign assistance in Bangladesh targeted these challenges in FY 2009, and achieved results through rebuilding the incomes of people, creating awareness about disaster preparedness, and improving the response capabilities of both local government and communities to food insecurity. In FY 2009, USAID humanitarian assistance programs resulted in:

- Creation of short-term employment opportunities for 135,000 households through construction of embankments and other community projects paid for with Cash-for-Work (CFW) or Food for Work. This employment also helped create longer-term employment opportunities in innovative income-generating activities and marketing for over 65,000 women and 69,000 men. As a result, dependence on seasonal migration in the area decreased from 43 percent to 14 percent, and adequate food provisions for 2.5 million people increased on average from 5.2 months to 7.6 months over the life of the program.
- Comprehensive reconstruction assistance to victims of recent cyclonic episodes (Cyclone Sidr and Cyclonic Storm Aila). USG assistance focused on training 75,000 farmers in new fertilizer technology resulting in increased agricultural yields by 40 percent among the targeted beneficiaries, as well as rehabilitating ponds through CFW and renovating market infrastructure to help affected families recover their living and increase income.
- Continued support of an early-warning flood-forecasting model launched in 2008. In FY 2009, this flood-forecasting model was refined, allowing forecasters to generate early warnings 10 days in advance of the danger, rather than the previous three-day warnings for communities in flood prone areas. This system is expected to yield \$40.85 million in protected assets and income over the course of 10 years.

In FY 2009, all activities supported by the USG in Bangladesh were in full compliance with 22 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 216 determinations and contributed successfully to advancing the three critical priorities for Bangladesh: democratization, development, and denial of space to terrorism. The U.S. Mission in Bangladesh works to ensure a whole-of-government approach among all U.S. agencies active in Bangladesh (including Department of State, the USAID, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, and the Department of Agriculture).

Future U.S. assistance in partnership with the Bangladesh Government will build on FY 2009 gains to reduce crippling poverty, mitigate frequent natural disasters, and achieve more effective democratic governance and policies to foster equitable and sustainable growth and address challenges to international peace and security.