



## PRESS RELEASE

### **NEW JOINT UNITED STATES-BANGLADESH INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE NATION'S RESPONSE TO EARTHQUAKES**

**DHAKA, AUGUST 25, 2013** — U.S. Ambassador Dan Mozena launched a new three-year initiative to improve Bangladesh's response to earthquakes and other natural disasters today at the Fire Service and Civil Defense (FSCD) authority training center. The "Strengthening Earthquake Resilience" program will train hospital medical and support staff in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet to treat a high volume of victims in the aftermath of a potential earthquake. The initiative will also provide new equipment and tools to the FSCD and strengthen the capacity of its staff and volunteers to conduct search and rescue operations following disasters. Through this initiative, the United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will provide US \$800,000 to strengthen earthquake response and resilience in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is situated in a seismically active area and Dhaka ranks among the 20 cities most vulnerable to earthquakes globally according to a major disaster index. According to seismologists, the occurrence of minor tremors over recent years indicates the potential of more powerful earthquakes throughout much of the country.

Since 2003, USAID has been working with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the National Society for Earthquake Technology to improve earthquake response training and strengthen coordination among disaster response networks. This new program, implemented by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine, and the FSCD, will build upon the success of previous preparedness efforts and help Bangladeshis respond efficiently to save lives in the face of unforeseen natural disasters.

*The U.S. Government, through USAID, has provided over \$6 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2012 alone, USAID provided more than \$200 million to*

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*improve the lives of people in Bangladesh. USAID supports programs in Bangladesh that: promote democratic institutions and practices, expand food security and economic opportunity, improve health and education services, and increase resiliency to climate change through adaptation and low carbon development.*

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