



PRESS RELEASE

USAID LAUNCHES NEW ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE BANGLADESH'S RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

DHAKA, MARCH 27 – Today, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg and Bangladesh's Minister of Environment and Forests Dr. Hasan Mahmud jointly announced the launch of the new USAID Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) program. The U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, Dan Mozena, and USAID Bangladesh Mission Director, Richard Greene, also attended the launch.

Since 1998, USAID has worked with the Government of Bangladesh and local communities to better manage and conserve Bangladesh's natural resources and biodiversity. This approach of collaborative management, or co-management, between government and communities has proven to be a successful model for managing the resources on which the people of Bangladesh depend. Under this model, communities have a say in the management of vital habitats and likewise benefit by sharing entrance fees and other income arising from increased tourism.

The new CREL project seeks to expand and strengthen USAID's support for co-management in up to 25 of Bangladesh's 35 protected wetlands and forests. One of the primary activities will be the generation of alternate livelihoods such as weaving, handicrafts and backyards ponds for community members living in and around protected areas to ease pressure on dwindling but highly productive forest and wetland resources. This will increase incomes while preserving vital forest and wetland habitats for future generations. More resilient livelihoods and ecosystems will help Bangladesh meet development goals and move along the path to becoming a healthy, prosperous, middle-income country.

USAID Deputy Administrator Donald Steinberg is currently visiting Bangladesh to further the partnership between the U.S. and Bangladesh through U.S. development assistance, of which CREL is an example.

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 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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