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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT SALUTES BANGLADESHI WOMEN FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY

DHAKA, MARCH 15 -- In recognition of International Women's Day, USAID, the U.S. Government's premier development agency, joined with female political leaders, celebrities, academic experts, thought leaders, musicians, mothers, daughters and individuals from every walk of life to celebrate the economic, political and social contributions of women in Bangladesh. The two-day Gender and Development Fair, "Equal Access to Education, Training, and Science & Technology: Pathways to Decent Work for Women," was held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center over two days, March 14-15.

On March 14, U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty inaugurated the event by touring a book fair and attending the screening of a documentary. Over 95 booths showcased the offerings of publishers, NGOs, academic institutions, international organizations and development partners working to raise awareness of various gender issues and highlighting successful approaches in promoting gender equality. In his remarks to attendees, Ambassador Moriarty noted, "This is truly a celebration of the contributions women make in every aspect of life — at home, on the jobs and in their communities, as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters and as learners, workers, citizens and leaders."

On the second day, March 15, USAID Mission Director Denise Rollins hosted an interactive round-table with national print and electronic media to promote equal access of women to education, training, science and technology. The two-hour session, "Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Women in Leadership Roles – How to Get There and Stay There," featured prominent panelists from government, academia, law, business, the media and civil society organizations who spoke of their own paths to success and engaged in an open and frank dialogue with 30-40 students from Dhaka University.

The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka organized the first Gender and Development Book Fair in March, 2009.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, administers programs in five key areas in Bangladesh: improving health and pre-primary education; creating income opportunities for rural poor; supporting good governance; enhancing food security; and strengthening disaster preparedness and providing emergency assistance following natural disasters. Since 1971, the U.S. Government has provided over \$5.8 billion in assistance to Bangladesh.

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GR/ 2011

Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)