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The United States Supports the Government of Bangladesh in Establishing the Agriculture Policy Support Unit

DHAKA, NOVEMBER 4 -- Agricultural productivity and growth depend, to a large extent, upon the ability to make timely and informed policy decisions. These pro-growth agricultural policies, in turn, must be based on solid empirical evidence and analysis. To this end, the United States Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has supported the establishment of an Agriculture Policy Support Unit (APSU) within the Ministry of Agriculture. The APSU will gather and publish the latest information on the agricultural situation in the country. For example, APSU will publish the status and outlook reports for seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, pesticides, and energy (diesel, electricity) prior to planting and outlook reports on agricultural crop production prior to harvest.

The APSU has been established jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture and the USAID-funded Policy Research and Strategy Support Project (PRSSP), implemented by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The APSU will: (i) provide timely policy recommendations in response to short term challenges; (ii) carry out in-depth analysis to be used as a basis for generating policy options that will address medium and long term challenges; and (iii) monitor policy implementation and evaluate policy impact/relevance. In short, the role of the APSU will be to collect and analyze agriculture sector data and to develop policy recommendations based on that analysis. The APSU will also serve as a data resource for other institutions wishing to conduct their own research.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, has provided over \$6 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2012, USAID provided more than \$200 million to improve the lives of people in Bangladesh. USAID supports programs in Bangladesh that: expand food security and economic opportunity, promote democratic institutions and practices, improve health and education services, and increase resiliency to climate change through adaptation and low carbon development.

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