



PRESS RELEASE

THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTS FARMERS TO INCREASE VARIETY AND YIELD IN RICE, FISH, AND VEGETABLES

DHAKA, SEPTEMBER 1-- The U.S. Assistant to the Administrator in the Bureau for Food Security Paul Weisenfeld, , and Denise Rollins, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Asia Bureau of USAID, the U.S. government's premier development agency, continued their tour of U.S. government-funded food security projects in southern Bangladesh. The delegation visited a nutrition project in addition to rice, horticulture and aquaculture projects, funded under President Obama's global Feed the Future initiative.

The delegation visited the Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) program in Shreerampur, Khulna, and met with beneficiaries and observed a counseling session on appropriate feeding of children aged six months to two years. Under this project, households with pregnant and lactating women and children under two to improve nutrition through promotion of home gardening, breastfeeding, appropriate child feeding and hand washing.

The next stop was a rice seed production and delivery systems program in Rupdiah, Jessore. The project works with farmers to promote high yielding and stress tolerant rice varieties in 20 southern districts. The goal is to intensify rice production while adapting to the potential adverse effects of climate change, including flooding, drought and increased salinity levels. The delegation met with farmers and seed growers, visiting pilot plots of improved rice varieties.

Visiting USAID's aquaculture project in Pakdia, Jessore, the delegation met with fish farmers using modern fish farming techniques to raise tilapia. The project aims to increase fish production by providing access to high-quality, disease-free stocks, and fingerlings. The delegation then visited a horticulture project in Churamon Khati, Jessore, touring commercial vegetable gardens that produce bottle gourd, sweet potato and brinjal eggplant among other crops. The U.S. aims to help improve the income and nutritional status of 500,000 people in southern Bangladesh through this project.

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The Feed the Future initiative in Bangladesh focuses on improving agricultural extension services, strengthening food and non-food value chains, promoting productivity-enhancing production practices and inputs, developing rural markets and roads, supporting agricultural research, promoting maternal and child nutrition and improving the policy environment. With projected funding of up to US\$250 million over five years (pending future U.S. Congressional appropriations), the United States aims to help reduce both overall poverty and child stunting by approximately 20% each in the twenty southern districts targeted under the Feed the Future program.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, has provided over \$5.8 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2011 alone, USAID provided more than \$180 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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