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SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR JAMES F. MORIARTY AT AMBAGAN SLUM

CHITTAGONG, MAY 25 -- U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty made the following remarks at Ambagan slum in Chittagong today:

(Begin Text)

Assalamu alaykum, and good morning. I am pleased to be here in Chittagong, the economic epicenter of Bangladesh.

Democracy, development, and denial of space to terrorists, the 3 Ds, are the hallmark of the bilateral cooperation between the United States and Bangladesh. However, the United States Government's development activities are not limited to Dhaka or the rural areas. Here, in the Ambagan slum, the need for the second "D", development, is striking.

The USAID-supported "Shouhardo" Program addresses the issues of development and works to improve the living and social conditions of slum dwellers. We support approximately 20,000 of the poorest families located in 137 slums in 14 districts in Tangail, Rangpur, Kishoreganj and Chittagong. Slum dwellers are severely impacted by climate problems and price hikes. The lives of slum dwellers are challenged by natural calamities, substandard housing conditions, poor infrastructure and fewer economic and social opportunities.

In order to meet the need for basic infrastructure and proper sanitation in slums, the United States funds construction of pathways, waste bins, sanitary toilets and improved drainage systems. We also provide training for vegetable and fish cultivation to provide slum dwellers with alternative ways to generate income. We provide funding for take home rations to ensure that pregnant and lactating mothers receive proper levels of nutrition along with their children. We support early childhood development and focus particularly on the rights of women and children, giving them a platform to address social problems collectively.

Arguably the most immediate assistance to impoverished people is food aid. I was just at the Chittagong Port to receive a food aid shipment of 45,700 metric tons of wheat. A portion of this wheat will be used to produce fortified biscuits to distribute to school age children, enabling them to remain in school as well as improve their attention span and learning capacity.

The United States Government understands that food aid is crucial to development at this point in time...just as development is crucial to both democracy and denial of space to terrorists. No one should go hungry. We are working to help ensure nobody does.

I am pleased to be here today to demonstrate my government's commitment to Bangladesh and the 3 Ds of our bilateral relationship. I see this same commitment in the faces of people living in this area. Clear social progress here gives me great hope for Bangladesh and assures me that Bangladesh is progressing towards a better future for all it citizens.

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** As prepared for delivery*

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