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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES “MODHUMITA” TO STEM HIV/AIDS

DHAKA, SEPTEMBER 17 -- The U.S Embassy announced today a new U.S. Government-sponsored \$13 million health initiative called “Modhumita” (Sweet friend) to stem the transmission of HIV/AIDS. The program will help prevent HIV by providing HIV-prevention services to two million at-risk people in Bangladesh. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in partnership with Family Health International, will implement Modhumita.

Modhumita will target 30% of the Bangladesh’s at-risk population including injecting drug users, male, female and transgender sex workers and their clients, and HIV positive people through a network of 50 health centers. The centers will offer voluntary counseling and HIV testing and provide treatment and preventive services for sexually transmitted infections. In addition to providing medical testing and treatment, the centers will also rehabilitate injecting drug users, offer job skills training to recovering drug users, and deliver HIV awareness messages. Modhumita will also provide care and support programs for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, is working to improve the lives of the people of Bangladesh, especially the very poor. USAID administers programs in Bangladesh in five broad areas: 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. The U.S. Government has provided more than \$5 billion in assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2009, USAID’s planned assistance will total about \$172 million, including specific assistance for people living in the Cyclone Sidr-affected regions.

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GR/2009

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)*