



World Bank Provides \$200 Million Support to Improve Livelihoods of the Poorest Population in Rural Bangladesh

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The Government of Bangladesh today signed a \$200 million financing agreement with the World Bank for the Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project to improve livelihoods for about five million rural poor. The Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project will provide livelihood support and enable access to markets through business partnerships to empower the rural communities. The project will mobilize the extreme poor, who often remain left out from micro credit schemes, by building and strengthening community institutions including Nuton Jibon community societies. In addition, the project will raise nutrition awareness, share agricultural knowledge and focus on enhancing youth skills so that they can take advantage of employment opportunities. The project will also fund small scale rural infrastructure. "While Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in reducing poverty over the past four decades, poverty remains more pervasive in rural areas than in urban areas in Bangladesh," said Christine Kimes, Acting Country Head, World Bank Bangladesh "The Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project will scale-up the activities of predecessor programs to improve economic wellbeing and empower the poorest households, and especially poor women." The Nuton Jibon project builds on earlier projects - Social Investment Program Project (I - II) - which started as a pilot in Jamalpur and Gaibandha district and has now expanded to 16 of the poorest districts in Bangladesh. The monitoring and evaluation data showed significant improvement in the incomes and living standards of project beneficiaries. The Nuton Jibon Livelihood Improvement Project will cover around 2,500 new villages in 12 districts in addition to the 3,200 villages supported under the earlier projects. "The project is a testament to the Governments continued commitment for accelerating pro-poor growth," said Kazi Shofiquel Azam, Additional Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Government of Bangladesh. "Following a community driven approach, the project will increase income and create employment opportunities for the poor and extreme poor population in the rural areas." The agreement was signed by Kazi Shofiquel Azam and Christine Kimes on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and the World Bank respectively, at the Economic Relations Division. The credit from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Banks grant and low-interest credit arm for the worlds poorest countries, has a 38-year term, including a 6-year grace period, and a service charge of 0.75 percent. Media Contacts
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