



Integrated Country Strategy

Bangladesh

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Table of Contents

1. Chief of Mission Priorities 3
2. Mission Strategic Framework 5
3. Mission Goals and Objectives.....7
4. Management Objectives 13

1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Full realization of U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives in Bangladesh and the region depends upon a peaceful, secure, prosperous, healthy, and democratic Bangladesh. As it reaches its 50th anniversary of independence, the country is rightly garnering the increasing attention of the world's great powers as a regional economic driver, political constant, and security anchor. As the third largest Muslim-majority country and the eighth most populous in the world, strategically located at the crossroads between South and Southeast Asia, Bangladesh has a unique role to play as a U.S. global and regional partner, particularly as the world faces the next generation of military, political, and economic competition. Despite increased external pressure, Bangladesh continues to carefully balance its relations, especially among India, China, Russia, and the United States, and is helping enable the success of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy to promote a free, open, and rules-based international system. With historic levels of economic growth for more than the past decade Bangladesh has met the eligibility criteria for graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2024, and, despite the dampening effect of the 2020 global pandemic remains on track to do so. This achievement underscores Bangladesh's extraordinary development success – and the efficacy of USAID's \$8 billion in assistance – since independence in 1971. At the same time, Bangladesh continues to host one of the world's largest refugee populations, more than one million Rohingya from Burma, in what is expected to be a humanitarian crisis requiring notable financial and political support for years to come.

Bangladesh plays a growing and significant role in supporting international peace and security, particularly as one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations. As a traditionally moderate, secular, peaceful, and stable country, Bangladesh also fights (but does not acknowledge) externally sponsored extremism and is an important partner in the United States' global effort to defeat terrorism. Bangladesh remains a target of al-Qaeda and ISIS; consequently our support for the country's battle against extremism remains a top priority and focuses on improving law enforcement's investigation-led operations; increasing judicial system capacity to prosecute terrorism cases; strengthening Bangladesh's border security, including within its territorial waters; and preventing recruitment by violent extremist organizations. We continue to support the Bangladesh military through a growing range of training, exchanges, exercises, and military sales, increasingly under the Indo-Pacific Strategy security pillar.

A December 2018 national election marred by irregularities, violence, and intimidation consolidated the power of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her ruling party, the Awami League. This allowed the government to adopt legislation and policies diminishing space for the political opposition, undermining judicial independence, and threatening freedom of the media and NGOs. Subsequent local elections have only further evidenced these undemocratic trends and concentrated authority. Emboldened by a powerhouse economy and a populace valuing economic stability above all else, only a significant and unexpected event will diminish the Awami League's hold on power.

As the ruling party continues to diminish the country's democratic space, strengthening the nation's fragile democratic institutions and bolstering its secular, tolerant, and pluralistic

traditions is even more essential. Programs to strengthen inter-party dialogue and engagement of youth and women; reduce the drivers of election violence; promote independent oversight of institutions; and support civil society advocates are priorities. Further outreach and leadership development, especially among youth, women, and grassroots community activists, is key to revitalizing Bangladesh's democratic culture and ensuring respect for all human rights and civil liberties. Building on recent progress to counter trafficking in persons and enable access to justice, we will work to increase the public's confidence in governance. We will also continue robust engagement to address the most striking human rights issues, including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and restrictions on core civil liberties.

Bangladesh's ability to feed, educate, and protect itself from illness and natural disasters is also vital to its stability, development, and future success. Bangladesh has made enormous progress over the past three decades in the health sector. With significant U.S. support it reduced mortality of children under five from 146 to 45 deaths per 1,000 births, and the total fertility rate from 4.3 to 2.3 births per woman. However, further efforts to improve health and education services are essential for economic productivity as such lifelong productivity requires good nutrition, sound health, and relevant education. Unfortunately, Bangladesh's malnutrition rate remains high; one in three children under age five suffers from stunting. Major challenges also remain to reduce unacceptably high maternal and child mortality, improve family planning, and increase access to tuberculosis (TB) services. The U.S. government will continue to help strengthen Bangladesh's health systems to improve health outcomes and support Bangladesh's goals to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, in support of the Global Health Security Agenda.

Despite gains in access to education, educational quality in Bangladesh remains sub-standard and vocational opportunities are limited. Our educational focus is on providing early grade reading programs in Bangladesh's primary education system, including literacy for children with disabilities, and building workforce programs for Bangladeshi youth (ages 15-29) to increase their employability. We also provide English language training and exchanges to teachers and students through the Access and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study and Access (YES) programs.

Bangladesh is one of highest-risk countries in the world for natural disasters. Virtually all of Bangladesh is a delta to the highest mountain ranges in the world and only a few meters above sea level. As such, development of the country depends upon its ability to adapt to changing weather patterns and effectively manage its natural resources. Building on our established and effective leadership in this sector, programs will increase Bangladesh's capacity to adapt to and withstand natural disasters, improve management of natural resources, and sustainably develop the energy needed to fuel its economy. Catalytic technical assistance will help ensure Bangladesh's readiness to respond to cyclones, floods, and earthquakes, while other programs safeguard the sustainability of forests and fisheries and prevent wildlife trafficking.

Bangladesh is a critical driver of regional and global economic development as the nexus of the major trade route of the 21st century, the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor. The United

States remains a strong partner in assisting Bangladesh as it graduates from LDC status in 2024 and realizes its full potential as an open and interconnected market. The Bangladeshi ready-made garment manufacturing sector, the second largest in the world, sells more of its products to the U.S. market than any other country. U.S. companies increasingly see Bangladesh as the future market and investment opportunity in South Asia beyond India, despite barriers to entry, Bangladesh's low ranking on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, and the sometimes questionable and non-transparent business practices pursued by some U.S. competitors. To achieve its sustained and widely-shared economic potential, however, Bangladesh must strengthen labor rights and work-place safety as well as address serious infrastructure deficiencies, pervasive corruption, and an absence of diversity in its economy.

For the foreseeable future, Bangladesh will continue to host most of the nearly 700,000 ethnic Rohingya who fled to Bangladesh after August 2017, joining 300,000 to 500,000 from previous refugee outflows from Burma. This presents security, economic, and political challenges for Bangladesh as it continues its upward development trajectory while maintaining domestic security and stability. As the leading international humanitarian donor nation, the United States has a strategic interest, in coordination with the UN and the international community, in helping Bangladesh cope with the refugee burden; ensure the crisis does not destabilize the country or the region; and devise durable solutions to this crisis, including an eventual voluntary and sustainable return of the refugees to Burma.

An enhanced management platform is essential to advance the growing U.S. strategic interests in Bangladesh. To meet security needs Post is undergoing a compound security upgrade in conjunction with a space renovation project to provide adequate office space. This includes renovation of Post's Consular Section, which is the eighth largest immigrant visa processing section in the world, and can provide routine and emergency assistance to an estimated 10,000 U.S. citizen residents and 20,000 U.S. citizen visitors. Guaranteeing Dhaka has adequate staffing remains a top priority; Post will continue to request new positions, including EPEP and EFM supporting roles, to sustain critical work in Consular affairs, as well as a Commercial Officer, Staff Aide, and Deputy Management Counselor.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: A more peaceful and stable Bangladesh, better able to provide for its own security, counter threats to U.S. interests, and serve as a growing security contributor in the Indo-Pacific and globally.

Mission Objective 1.1: Bangladesh is more capable of protecting its sovereignty, population, and borders, and countering violent extremism.

Mission Objective 1.2: Bangladesh demonstrates an increased role in supporting the international rules-based order including international principles of freedom of navigation; respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; and economic connectivity;

and maintains or expands its security partnerships with the United States and like-minded nations.

Mission Goal 2: Bangladesh is committed to democracy, transparency, pluralism, tolerance, good governance, and respect for human rights.

Mission Objective 2.1: Bangladesh holds free, fair, credible, and inclusive elections at all levels, protects vulnerable populations, and ensures civil liberties.

Mission Objective 2.2: Citizen confidence in governance institutions increases. (Incorporates USAID CDCS DO1)

Mission Goal 3: Bangladesh is a healthy, educated, food secure, and climate resilient middle-income country partnering productively with the United States.

Mission Objective 3.1: Bangladesh's food security improves. (Incorporates USAID CDCS DO2)

Mission Objective 3.2: Bangladesh's health status improves. (Incorporates USAID CDCS DO3)

Mission Objective 3.3: Resilience to natural hazards is strengthened. (Incorporates CDCS DO4)

Mission Objective 3.4: The quality of education improves and educational linkages between the United States and Bangladesh expand.

Mission Goal 4: Sustainable and broadly shared economic prosperity increases existing markets and labor standards, promotes regional trade and connectivity, and opens opportunities and new markets for U.S. firms, measurably increasing bilateral trade and investment.

Mission Objective 4.1: Expand inclusive economic growth and increase fair and reciprocal trade and investment.

Mission Objective 4.2: A secure Bangladesh is an open economic market for the Indo-Pacific region with regional links to India and like-minded partners.

Mission Goal 5: Bangladesh is increasingly capable of and is meeting the demands and challenges in addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis and continues to refuse to return refugees to Burma unless the returns are safe, voluntary, and dignified.

Mission Objective 5.1: Bangladesh meets international standards for humanitarian protection of the Rohingya refugees.

Management Objective 1: Enhance Embassy Dhaka’s physical infrastructure to meet Diplomatic Security and Overseas Building Operations (OBO) standards, and Office of the Inspector General (OIG) mandates to ensure the safety and security of Embassy personnel.

Management Objective 2: Ensure appropriate, diverse, and adequate staffing to meet Embassy Dhaka’s growing engagement with the Government of Bangladesh, increased assistance concerning the Rohingya refugee crisis, and execution of the Indo-Pacific Strategy and vision.

Management Objective 3: Improve Embassy and Management efficiency and operational effectiveness.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: A more peaceful and stable Bangladesh, better able to provide for its own security, counter threats to U.S. interests, and serve as a growing security contributor in the Indo-Pacific and globally.

Description and Linkages: This goal helps advance our policy priority of protecting the American people and the homeland, including through our Consular services. We work to put Bangladesh in the position of being a net security provider rather than a security consumer. As emphasized in the National Security Strategy, defeating jihadist terrorists requires denying them the ability to operate or recruit anywhere in the world, including in Bangladesh. Messaging and outreach will be key components in helping Post reach these goals, objectives, and sub-objectives.

Mission Objective 1.1: Bangladesh is more capable of protecting its sovereignty, population, and borders, and countering violent extremism.

Justification: Bangladesh’s security and stability underpin the country’s economic and political success. This objective begins with the ability to mitigate terrorism and other forms of criminal activity within Bangladesh’s borders. Bangladesh particularly requires improved capacity to conduct investigation-led operations and develop a sophisticated understanding of its adversaries to detect and disrupt them before they act. More broadly, Bangladesh must prevent transnational criminal organizations from propagating their ideology, accumulating personnel or resources, or planning and carrying out attacks. U.S. support also aims at buttressing Bangladesh’s ability to manage the forced migration of Rohingya refugees from Burma to help preserve Bangladesh’s stability (see Mission Goal 5). Finally, U.S. assistance and military sales facilitate Bangladesh’s significant contributions to UN peacekeeping efforts. Failure to achieve Mission Objective 1.1 may leave Bangladesh less able to govern or sustain its population, threatening its basic stability, and thereby our relationship and interests in the region.

Mission Objective 1.2: Bangladesh demonstrates an increased role in supporting the international rules-based order including international principles of freedom of navigation; respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; and economic connectivity, and maintains or expands its security partnerships with the United States and like-minded nations.

Justification: With improved capacity, Bangladesh has the potential to be a more significant security partner fostering greater regional stability and helping to sustain global peace. Increased interoperability among all Bangladeshi security forces will further enable the country to provide for its own domestic security. Improved security at Bangladeshi air and seaports will reduce the country's vulnerability to terrorist and criminal activity as well as provide greater stability for international trade. Deepening the U.S.-Bangladesh defense relationship through bilateral enabling defense agreements and increased sales of more advanced U.S. military equipment to Bangladesh will expand U.S. access to and interoperability with Bangladesh. Finally, to support Indo-Pacific Strategy goals Bangladesh must protect its freedom-of-navigation, ensure equitable access to sea lanes, and promote maritime security to help advance regional stability, integration, and trade. Failure to achieve this objective would compromise U.S. relationships and influence in Bangladesh, hamper growth of bilateral trade, and, by extension, impede implementation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Mission Goal 2: Bangladesh is committed to promoting and practicing democracy, transparency, pluralism, tolerance, good governance, and respect for human rights.

Description and Linkages: Supporting democracy, good governance, and human rights is a core component of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. The 2017 National Security Strategy prioritizes supporting the dignity of individuals, noting that a world which supports American interests and reflects our values will in turn make us more secure and prosperous. Bangladesh's strategic location and its historical example as a pluralistic and tolerant Muslim democracy make it a critical partner. Respect for human rights and democratic processes, in concert with citizen confidence in governance, will reduce political distrust – a driver of political violence and radicalization to violent extremism. Messaging and outreach will be key components in helping Post reach these goals and meet objectives and sub-objectives.

Mission Objective 2.1: Bangladesh holds free, fair, credible, and inclusive elections at all levels, protects vulnerable populations, and ensures civil liberties.

Justification: U.S. engagement, including in collaboration with like-minded diplomatic missions, is key to strengthening Bangladesh's respect for civil liberties and tolerance, and the foundation of a peaceful, democratic, stable, and prosperous partner. Bangladesh's embrace of such principles is not only essential to achieving long-term internal and regional security, but also ensures free expression, democratic debate, and free and fair elections can occur without the threat of political and communal violence. These principles are strongly tied to efforts to reduce and eliminate violence against minorities. Lack of progress on achieving this objective in a Bangladesh where democratic space continues to shrink could increase political instability, including by increasing the vulnerability of disenfranchised populations to exploitation by international terror groups, and cause a dramatic slowdown in economic progress if unchecked political patronage further replaces economic freedom.

Mission Objective 2.2: Citizen confidence in governance institutions increases.

Justification: Bangladesh faces five interrelated obstacles to effective governance: (1) the limited capacity of and political obstacles to developing nascent democratic institutions; (2) corruption and ineffective mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in all branches of government; (3) citizen challenges in accessing justice and the justice system; (4) the concentration of authority and resources at the national level; and (5) the increasing authoritarian nature of the central government. For most Bangladeshis, GoB accountability and responsiveness are measured in terms of the delivery of basic services, the level of corruption, the application of the rule of law, and the administration of justice. For the majority of citizens, the most visible forms of governance are local government institutions. Support for increased citizen engagement and effective governance will generate increased demand for better public services, which, in turn, will culminate in improved accountability and responsiveness to citizen needs, thereby increasing citizen confidence in governance institutions. Failure to achieve this objective would result in economic and political instability due to the further decrease in citizen confidence in government institutions as well as diminished respect for the rule of law stemming from adverse public reaction to government corruption.

Mission Goal 3: Bangladesh is a healthy, educated, food secure, and climate resilient middle-income country partnering productively with the United States.

Description and Linkages: Mission Goal 3 focuses on building the capacity of Bangladesh in the core areas necessary to achieve self-reliance. Programs under Goal 3 support Pillar 1 of the 2017 National Security Strategy; the Global Health Security Agenda; State-USAID Joint strategic Goals 1.4, 2.2, and 3.4; the South and Central Asia Bureau's Joint Regional Strategy Goals 4.2 and 6.2.; and the Indo-Pacific Strategy priorities of enhancing human capital development and advancing social safeguards and standards in the region. To become self-reliant Bangladesh must effectively deal with natural disasters and rising seas levels. It must improve its public and private health systems and service delivery and be capable of preventing, detecting, and responding to infectious disease outbreaks that have international implications, including COVID-19. It must continue to improve agricultural productivity and diversify its economy. It must also accelerate improvements in the quality of education to build the skilled workforce necessary to sustain its development trajectory to self-reliance. Messaging and outreach will be key components in helping Post reach these goals and meet these objectives and sub-objectives.

Mission Objective 3.1: Bangladesh's food security improves. (USAID/Bangladesh CDCS DO #2, and USG Global Food Security Strategy)

Justification: Despite the growth in food production, Bangladesh faces three interrelated obstacles to ensuring the availability of, access to, and utilization of food: (1) insufficient agricultural productivity/ability to get agricultural products to markets to keep pace with population growth; (2) the inability of the poor to buy adequate food; and (3) diets overly reliant on rice and lacking diversity. A high rate of productive employment generation is essential for Bangladesh to achieve sustainable, broad-based economic growth and the household income levels required to ensure food security. At the same time, it is critical to increase the nutritional

understanding necessary to promote the diversified, balanced diets essential to combating malnutrition. The country is now self-sufficient in rice production and as such, the focus is on agricultural diversification to include aquaculture, livestock, legumes, fruits, and vegetables, as well as the cold chain necessary to bring these products to market. In addition, the Rohingya refugee crisis in the Cox's Bazar and Bandarban Districts has compounded food insecurity in the region, resulting in expansion of the Feed the Future Zone of Influence to include these districts. Food security and employment have also been impacted by the COVID crisis as restricted movements meant fewer goods made their way to market, small businesses lost their patrons, many already-stretched households lost their incomes, and those quarantined were unable to leave their homes to buy fresh food. Failure to improve food security will increase the risk for political and economic instability, the potential exploitation by nefarious actors and U.S. competitors, and the need for additional U.S. resources to mitigate those risks. Further, addressing constraints on availability, access, and utilization of safe and nutritious food will lead to positive outcomes for health and income security.

Mission Objective 3.2: Bangladesh's health status improves. (USAID/Bangladesh CDCS DO #3)

Justification: Bangladesh has made great progress in reducing child and maternal mortality and fertility rates and improving the nutritional status of children in the past two decades. However, problems remain as the country looks to the next phase of its health sector development in order to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and meet the requirements of International Health regulations. Strengthening and expanding the country's comprehensive approach to reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health; and detection and treatment of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis remain high priorities for the GoB. Resources and capacity are often stretched thin with the increase in demand for complex health services due to ongoing demographic and epidemiological changes; this has been exacerbated by the strain COVID-19 has put on the healthcare system. At the same time the pandemic has hampered health service provision, however, it has opened opportunities for utilizing alternate technologies, innovation, and greater engagement with the private sector. USAID and CDC will continue to advocate for increased domestic resources as Bangladesh aims for self-reliance while strengthening the Government's capacity to improve efficiencies in the health sector, enhance the quality of services, and expand equitable access. Failure to improve Bangladesh's health status increases the risk of global pandemics and their impacts, including COVID-19, poor health outcomes, and reduced economic performance that would negatively affect U.S. interests in the region and may result in the need for additional U.S. resources to mitigate those risks.

Mission Objective 3.3: Resilience to natural hazards is strengthened. (USAID/Bangladesh CDCS DO #4)

Justification: The U.S. will continue to be a leader in assisting Bangladesh to reduce emissions; improve air quality; protect natural resources such as forests; increase resilience; and respond to natural disasters. By promoting affordable, reliable, and clean energy, as well as energy efficiency, we are creating domestic jobs and supporting overseas market opportunities for U.S. companies. At the same time, Bangladesh is among the world's countries most vulnerable to climate change, the most vulnerable to tropical cyclones, and the sixth most vulnerable to

flooding. Population growth and economic development have led to extreme deforestation (Bangladesh has one of the lowest per capita rates of forested land combined with one of the smallest protected areas in the world), and an acute demand for electric power generation. Improved management of natural resources, livelihood diversification, climate risk management, low emissions development, and greater use of clean energy resources will improve Bangladesh's ability to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of global climate change, conserve biodiversity, and provide sustainable economic benefits. According to the 2019 Global Risk Index, Bangladesh ranks 22nd of 191 countries with a high risk of humanitarian crises and disasters which would overwhelm national response capacity. Failure to strengthen resilience to natural hazards increases the risk of political and economic instability by threatening Bangladesh's food and health security, increases Bangladeshi susceptibility to malign actors, and may require additional U.S. resources to mitigate those risks.

Mission Objective 3.4: The quality of education improves and educational linkages between the United States and Bangladesh expand.

Justification: Despite notable progress in expanding access to education, the quality of education in Bangladesh remains low, and the 2020 global pandemic resulting in extended closure of schools has slowed that progress further. The quality of instruction in the early grades is insufficient to guarantee basic literacy skills after five years of primary education. Weak teacher capacity, including lack of standardized certification requirements for teachers outside of state-controlled public schools and lack of student teacher training and ongoing professional development, poor curricula, and limited access to English-language resources in higher grades prevent students from acquiring the critical thinking and language skills needed to participate in the job market and, consequently, constrain key industries in Bangladesh. Improvements to the quality of basic education, particularly in early grade reading and English language learning, and a greater focus on developing critical thinking and analytical writing proficiency will provide students the foundational skills to succeed in school and in the workforce. Additionally, strengthened ties between Bangladesh and the United States through educational, academic, cultural, and professional exchanges will provide new educational and economic opportunities for Bangladeshi teachers, academics, and youth. Failure to achieve this objective may create the risk of slower economic growth in Bangladesh, strengthen the influence of nefarious actors and U.S. competitors, and increase the need for additional U.S. resources to mitigate those risks.

Mission Goal 4: Sustainable and broadly shared economic prosperity increases existing markets, promotes regional trade and connectivity, and opens opportunities and new markets for U.S. firms, measurably increasing bilateral trade and investment.

Description and Linkages: A growing and prosperous Bangladesh creates opportunities for fair and transparent export of U.S. goods and services and increased reciprocal trade and investment. A growing, more prosperous Bangladesh also enables the country to develop, using its domestic resources; provides employment opportunities for millions of Bangladeshi youth; and deters growing threats to prosperity within Bangladesh and in the region. This goal supports State-USAID Joint Strategic Goals 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 3.1, South and Central Asia (SCA) Joint Regional Strategy Goals 1, 2, and 3, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy. This goal also supports Pillars II and III of the 2017 National Security Strategy. Messaging and outreach will be key components in helping Post reach these goals, objectives, and sub-objectives.

Mission Objective 4.1: Expand inclusive economic growth and increase fair and reciprocal trade and investment.

Justification: With an average annual growth rate of nearly seven percent, the GoB and business sector are increasingly interested in creating an environment to improve productivity, attract investment, and diversify supply chains. USG programs and activities target increasing U.S. exports; promoting inclusive growth through private sector partnerships, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurship development, and promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and agribusiness; improving access to finance; and improving productivity and the income generation potential of small farming households. Post advocates for Bangladesh to meet international worker's rights standards and economic empowerment that can ensure economic growth is not achieved at the expense of worker safety and labor rights. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many factories, particularly in the crucial ready-made garment (RMG) sector, reducing workers' hours or jobs and rendering workers' unions ineffective in bargaining for their members and advocating for their rights during this period. Further, increased engagement among the Bangladeshi diaspora in promoting greater U.S.-Bangladeshi trade and investment, including participation with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Chamber in Bangladesh, and other economic-focused organizations, remains a top priority. Messaging and outreach will be key components in helping Post reach these goals. Failure to expand inclusive economic growth and increase fair and reciprocal trade and investment can impact stability, limit Bangladesh's ability to attract foreign investment, and hinder further economic growth, thus decreasing opportunities for maintaining and increasing U.S. exports to Bangladesh.

Mission Objective 4.2: A secure Bangladesh is an open economic market for the Indo-Pacific region with regional links to India and like-minded partners.

Justification: Bangladesh is poised to become a critical economic link connecting South Asia to Southeast and East Asia. Increasing the openness, transparency, and connectivity of Bangladesh's markets to regional and global partners would provide an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative, promote greater stability, and open opportunities for U.S. investors. Through the Indo-Pacific Strategy and its mechanisms the United States encourages regional cooperation to maintain free and open seaways, transparent infrastructure financing practices, unimpeded commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Failure to improve Bangladesh's regional ties hinders economic growth and leaves the country isolated and vulnerable to influence by actors less compliant with international best practices.

Mission Goal 5: Bangladesh is increasingly capable of and is meeting demands and challenges in addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis, and continues to refuse to return refugees to Burma unless the returns are safe, voluntary, and dignified.

Description and Linkages: Given the magnitude of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh since 2017, and the significant U.S. role as the largest humanitarian donor to the crisis, Post determined a specific Mission Goal was justified. Programs under Goal 5 support each of the four pillars of the 2017 National Security Strategy; the State-USAID Joint Strategic Goals; and the Indo-Pacific Strategy priorities under the security and governance pillars.

Mission Objective 5.1: Bangladesh meets international standards for humanitarian protection of the Rohingya refugees.

Justification: Bangladesh's internal security and stability is significantly impacted by the continued presence of approximately one million Rohingya refugees forced to flee from Burma. Building on Bangladesh's willingness to accept and house these refugees in camps, it is essential to bolster the sustainable logistical and operational mechanisms for these camps, in coordination with the international community and Government of Bangladesh. This effort requires commitments in both the humanitarian and development fields. Further, recognizing repatriation of these refugees will not be immediate, Bangladesh requires political and financial support to sustain efforts to manage this crisis over the mid-to-long-term, while efforts to voluntarily repatriate these refugees to Burma continue. Messaging, financial support, and outreach will be key components in helping Post to reach these goals. Failure to achieve this objective may leave Bangladesh less able to govern and sustain its population, thereby threatening its basic stability, and, by extension, our relationship and interests in the region.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1

Enhance Mission Dhaka's physical infrastructure to meet Diplomatic Security and Overseas Building Operations (OBO), Office of the Inspector General (OIG) mandates, and take proper COVID-related measures to ensure the safety and security of Embassy personnel.

Justification: The current physical infrastructure supporting Mission Dhaka is beyond full capacity, something the Department recognized by planning to build a New Embassy Compound to be completed late this decade. In the meantime, the current compound structure does not meet Department standards for security as well as OBO structural requirements and OIG recommendations, thus requiring enhancements. The COVID-19 pandemic has further delayed necessary upgrades. Failure to undertake these projects would result in an Embassy that is inefficient, insufficiently secure, unhealthy, inaccessible to differently abled staff and guests, and not conducive to practicing good management oversight.

Management Objective 2

Ensure appropriate, diverse, and adequate staffing to meet Embassy Dhaka's growing engagement with the Government of Bangladesh, and increased assistance required concerning the Rohingya refugee crisis and execution of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Justification: Due in part to the need for increased engagement with Bangladesh resulting from the Rohingya refugee crisis and implementation of the Indo Pacific Strategy, Embassy Dhaka's staffing is insufficient to meet current requirements. While the Bureau responsible for refugee issues, PRM has established and Post has filled a necessary position, similar new positions to address other realities and priorities have not been established. Such realities and positions include the nearly 10-fold increase in the value of Embassy Dhaka's commercial advocacy

portfolio, the need for more engagement with the media, the significantly growing demand for both immigrant and non-immigrant visas, the concomitant increase in demand for Management services, and the demands on a Front Office managing a 700-plus person Embassy. Further, Embassy Dhaka's status as an adults-only Post until February 2020 and position among countries having the world's worst air quality have negatively impacted Post's ability to fill already-established positions, including for EFMs and EPAPs. All of these matters have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in 57% of Post's American staff taking Global Authorized Departure for six-nine months. Additionally, a qualified and diverse workforce, including families with children, can best represent America to the Government of Bangladesh and will bring fresh perspectives in promoting U.S. objectives. Failure to meet this objective could result in incomplete U.S. Government engagement with Bangladesh and an inefficient, over-stretched workforce that does not reflect the United States.

Management Objective 3

Improve Management efficiency and operational effectiveness.

Justification: Due to significant and sustained manpower shortfalls over the last several years, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Post has focused on increasing automation to streamline processes and create efficiencies. ICASS worldwide has emphasized the need for better data collection for more informed decision-making concerning Management resource allocations. Post is following this model by concentrating on improving utilization of myServices and other reporting mechanisms. Combined with Management Objective 2 -- ensuring adequate staffing -- establishment of a management platform or logistics hub in Cox's Bazar would allow for better and more efficient use of Mission resources. Closing OIG recommendations will also increase efficient use of time, space, and resources, while other Management adjustments will result in greater ICASS efficiencies and customer satisfaction. Failure to implement these key activities would constitute a lost opportunity to both reduce government spending and increase efficiency in utilizing government resources.