



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **U.S. AMBASSADOR EARL R. MILLER VISITS COX'S BAZAR DISTRICT**

**DHAKA, March 12** – U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R. Miller visited Cox's Bazar from March 8-10 to observe U.S. government assistance in the region. Ambassador Miller visited both the local communities and the Rohingya camps, and met with government officials as well as UN organizations and NGOs operating in the region.

After his March 3 announcement of an additional \$45.5 million to the 2019 Joint Response Plan, bringing total U.S. contributions to \$105.5 million, Ambassador Miller traveled to Cox's Bazar on March 8 to ensure good stewardship of U.S. tax dollars and to review the outstanding work being done by the Bangladeshi government, UN agencies, and NGOs to provide humanitarian assistance and shelter to more than 900,000 Rohingya in Cox's Bazar.

During his visit, Ambassador Miller met with the American Red Cross, IFRC, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, and others, to discuss their outstanding efforts working with the local community to prepare for the annual cyclone and monsoon season and how the United States can further assist these efforts. The United States works hand-in-hand with the Bangladeshi government and local communities to build Multi-Purpose Cyclone Shelters (MPCS) and train emergency first responders. The United States, through USAID, has built nine MPCS's and upgraded another 60 in the Cox's Bazar district since 2008. USAID, in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh, plans to repair approximately 100 more existing MPCS's in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts. MPCS's serve both refugee and local communities during a cyclone, and are further used by local communities year-round to serve general community needs.

Ambassador Miller took the opportunity to visit a number of refugee camps and speak with the Rohingya and the NGOs providing services to the camps. He saw how the maintenance and general upkeep of the camps, as well as preparations for the upcoming cyclone and monsoon season, are progressing. Ambassador Miller also met with local government officials including the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner and the Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner to learn more about the government's plan to begin relocating up to 100,000 Rohingya to the Bhashan Char island as early as mid-April. He welcomed assurances that any movements to the island will be fully voluntary, based on informed consent, and those who choose to go will have free movement off the island to maintain connections with the rest of the Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar.

The United States is the leading contributor of humanitarian assistance in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis and has provided nearly \$500 million in assistance since the outbreak of

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violence in August 2017, with approximately \$450 million of that total dedicated to programs in Bangladesh for Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities.

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