



News Release

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Australian High Commissioner Commends WFP School Feeding in Bangladesh

DHAKA – More than 500,000 pre and primary school children in poor areas throughout Bangladesh now receive healthy supplemental food thanks to Australian support to the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

In addition to its own scheme, WFP also supports the Government-led school-feeding programme, which has grown to cover 3 million children this year.

The Government of Australia contributed US\$2.7 million to WFP last year for its activities in Bangladesh. Australia's contribution enables WFP to cover the associated costs of converting in-kind wheat contribution from Bangladesh Government. The money is utilized in production, transportation, packaging, monitoring and so on. The contribution plays a strategic role in leveraging use of government resources. The money is also utilized to support WFP's ongoing discussions with relevant government agencies to the development of a national School Feeding policy.

“Regular school feeding - including the high energy biscuits distributed by WFP - boosts children's nutrition and helps them concentrate on their studies.” said Greg Wilcock, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh on a visit to WFP supported schools in the north of Bangladesh this week.

High Commissioner Wilcock spent a recent morning at Jharuadanga Public School in Dinajpur, where he met with students and teachers who confirmed that enrolment and attendance rates have gone up since the biscuit scheme started.

“In a country where still too many children of primary school age remain out of school, the Australian Government’s support leads to outcomes that are mutually reinforcing, helping lift households out of poverty and end the intergenerational cycle of hunger,” said WFP Bangladesh Deputy Country Director Claire Conan.

In Bangladesh, 41 percent of children under the age of five suffer from stunting, an indicator of chronic malnutrition. This can affect learning ability, school attendance rates and long-term development.

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience. Each year, WFP assists some 80 million people in around 75 countries.

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Australian High Commissioner talking to a schoolgirl in Dinajpur



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