

RELEASE IN PART B1,1.4(D),B6

From: pverveer [redacted]
Sent: Friday, January 6, 2012 12:50 PM
To: H
Subject: Reporting in

B6

Greetings from Nepal where you are fondly remembered. It turns out that I'm staying at the hotel where we stayed in '95. The proprietor is a dynamic businesswoman who back then organized a discussion for you on women's economic participation. She thinks more attention should be paid to SME development for women and is thrilled to have your SF speech to support her advocacy. I met with several of the leaders from government (including an Army general) and civil society who were responsible for developing their National Action Plan. It was a terrific meeting, and they really would like us to support their efforts. They knew all about the US NAP. The Ambassador also realizes that what we're doing to support a democratic transition here and post conflict rebuilding has to involve women as an important part of the process and that the NAP has to be integrated into those efforts. I think we're off to a good start. There are immense challenges in Nepal, but it's a hopeful time. The Amb arranged for a dinner with some of the women political leaders, including the wife of the Prime Minister, who is a political force in her own right. She confessed that as a Maoist she protested your coming to Nepal, but then quickly added that she admires you greatly and went into detail about your efforts to get health care.

Amb Mozena and I had a good meeting [redacted]

1.4(D)
B1

Grameen Bank is such a success. It has about 1.5 billion in deposits. The average loan is now about \$150. There are over 5 million borrowers and many with savings accounts. Grameen has truly transformed Bangladesh. We went to a village about 2 hours ride from the capital and one could see how Grameen had turned the place into a very thriving area. It was an incredibly uplifting experience.

The civil society leaders and businesswomen with whom I met were despairing over the state of politics there and said the government is getting more antagonistic against anyone they perceive to be a threat. The polls that came out while I was there showed Hasina losing ground and anger at the corruption. Yet, in so many other ways, it is a good news development story, and institutions like BRAC and Grameen are a big part of the reason. BRAC has some 28k schools. I visited one where the students had all been drop outs were now now back in school. Maternal mortality has been cut significantly and there a many innovative women's health projects. The Minister for Women is a real dynamo working to do the right thing.

I'm heading back on Sunday.

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