

From: Boxer, Press Office (Boxer)

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To: Boxer, Press Office (Boxer)

Subject: Boxer Decries Bangladeshi Government's Decision Regarding Grameen Bank

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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BOXER DECRIES BANGLADESHI GOVERNMENT'S DECISION REGARDING GRAMEEN BANK

*Decision Could Lead to a Government Takeover of Grameen Bank
and Threaten Continued Financial Services to Bangladeshi Poor*

Washington, D.C. – Senator Boxer today called on the Bangladeshi government to stop interfering in the management of Grameen bank, an important institution that provides loans and other assistance to 8.3 million borrowers, mostly women, so they can gain financial independence and help support their families.

“I am deeply disappointed in the Bangladeshi government’s efforts to exert control over Grameen Bank,” Senator Boxer said. **“This move threatens the ability of millions of Bangladeshi women to find a path out of poverty. Critical decisions regarding the Grameen Bank’s leadership should be left to the Board of Directors so that the bank can continue its vital work helping Bangladeshis start businesses and provide for their families.”**

Yesterday, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over a Cabinet meeting in which a decision was made to give the government-appointed chairman authority to select a Managing Director. Senator Boxer has argued that Grameen Bank’s Board of Directors—which includes nine women elected by the Bank's shareholders—should be empowered to appoint a permanent individual to the position.

Grameen Bank was founded by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus and provides microcredit loans and other services to millions of poor borrowers. On June 27, Senator Barbara Boxer led the women of the United States Senate in writing to Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, urging her to allow the Bank's Board of Directors to appoint a managing director.

You can read the letter below:

June 27, 2012
The Honorable Sheikh Hasina
Prime Minister
Bangladesh

Dear Prime Minister Hasina:

As women Senators, we write to express our support for Grameen Bank—a crucial lifeline for many poor and formerly poor Bangladeshi women—and to strongly urge the Government of Bangladesh to fully support the integrity of Grameen Bank and its commitment to its borrowers. We are concerned that any actions to harm this model institution would seriously hurt Bangladesh and poor women in particular.

Through innovative and successful microcredit loans, Grameen Bank has allowed millions of poor women and men in Bangladesh to become entrepreneurs and have a chance at a better life. As you know, Grameen Bank serves more than 8.3 million borrowers, 97 percent of whom are women. These women own the vast majority of Grameen Bank's shares, making the bank one of the world's largest and most prominent institutions owned by rural women.

For decades, Grameen Bank's unique lending model has proven effective and positively impacted entire communities. Grameen's success has served as an example to countless other organizations seeking to address extreme poverty through independent innovation. That is why we believe it is absolutely essential that Grameen Bank be allowed to continue conducting business in an autonomous manner that best serves its borrowers.

For example, as you know, Grameen Bank has been without a permanent Managing Director since May 2011. It is vital that Grameen Bank's Board of Directors—nine of whom are women duly elected to represent the Bank's client-shareholders—be allowed to move forward in appointing a capable and permanent individual to fill this post.

We appreciate the commitments you have made to the advancement of women in Bangladesh, and look forward to working with you to ensure the long-term stability and integrity of this model institution.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
Dianne Feinstein
Barbara A. Mikulski
Kirsten E. Gillibrand
Mary L. Landrieu
Kay R. Hagan
Kay Bailey Hutchison
Olympia J. Snowe
Kelly Ayotte

Lisa Murkowski
Jeanne Shaheen
Patty Murray
Debbie Stabenow
Susan M. Collins
Amy Klobuchar
Claire McCaskill
Maria Cantwell

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