



World Summit on Food Security

Address

by

Her Excellency

Sheikh Hasina

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Food and Agricultural Organization

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Excellencies,
Director General of FAO,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be in the historic city of Rome to participate in the World Summit on Food Security. I warmly congratulate H.E. Mr. Jacques Diouf, the Director General of FAO, for convening this important Summit at a most opportune moment. The threat to food security seems now to be more than before, in the backdrop of sudden scarcity of food and its price spiral in 2007-2008, the recent world financial meltdown, and the looming impacts of climate change.

The picture we see now is a cruel one for a world where one-sixth of its population, or over a billion people, are faced with the specter of hunger. The vast majority of these people reside in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) facing food shortage, negation of development gains, and erosion of Millennium Development Goals. This is truly a sad and depressing sight, in an age of scientific and technological advancement.

Indeed, the unprecedented increase in food during the last two years aggravated further predicament of the LDCs, already reeling from declined remittances, reduced export earnings, a crunch, and unemployment at home and abroad, due to global recession. The increased costs of seed and fertilizer, paucity of water and energy have also added to the difficulties. These were further compounded by the barriers posed for the entry of products to developed countries' markets.

Excellencies,

Our new government on assuming power has confronted with all these challenges. As a first step we began implementing the agricultural policies, which we had during our previous tenure from 1996 to 2001, to help us attain food autarky and won us the prestigious FAO's Ceres Award. We also reduced substantial prices of fertilizers, and ensured water supply for irrigation with uninterrupted power supply. We are striving for fair prices for farmers, and removing bottlenecks in the marketing chain.

We have, once again, resurrected agricultural research to find flood, drought, and salinity resistant food and cash crops, access of small farmer sustainable agricultural technologies, social entrepreneurship, and financial credit. We have revived diversification of crop varieties; building grain storage capacities to ensure sustained supply of food around the year; putting in place social safety nets like cash and food transfers; and other poverty alleviation programs.

Among many measures, the government announced in May 2009 a National Food Policy Plan of Africa under which all national development partners' efforts and resources would be harmonized for ensuring inclusive food security.

Our efforts have also taken cognizance of certain principles that underpin an aligned response to reduce hunger while increasing sustainable levels of food security like:

(1). Country led plans that are sustainable, technically sound, and have the political and financial backing of partner country governments and other donors and stakeholders;

- (2). Comprehensive approach to food security including resources for agricultural development, assistance, nutrition, humanitarian food assistance, and risk mitigation tools;
- (3). Strategic coordination of assistance at the local, regional, and global levels to ensure resources are delivered effectively;
- (4). Sustained and accountable commitment of financial resources.

Excellencies,

Only production of food alone cannot guarantee food security. Available food must be accessible, particularly to the marginalized and the vulnerable. For which a fair and an equitable food governance system is required at both national and international level. The Summit Declaration provides scope to strengthen global governance on food security, including enhanced role of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Implementation of the Declaration provisions covering sustainable agricultural policies, transfer of technology

equitable and fair trade rules for food and agricultural products with special and preferential treatment for LDCs, under a reinvigorated and reformed FAO with Director General Jacques Diouf, is now imperative. Better coordination amongst FAO, IFAD and WFP would definitely contribute to our goal of attaining food security.

Clearly, for implementing the provisions of the Declaration, substantial funds are essential. If developed countries could provide trillions of dollars to stabilize collapsed financial markets, should they not feel an obligation to feed the starving millions? In this context, the recent G-8 decision in L'Aquila to mobilize US\$ 20 billion over three years for small farmers in food deficit developing countries is encouraging. However, the amount is insufficient. Additional funds would be available if only the developed countries fulfill their ODA commitment of 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to developing countries, and 0.2% to LDCs by 2010, as affirmed in the Brussels Program of Action.

Indeed, food security is also directly related to climate change. Bangladesh stands out as an example where agricultural production has been a hostage to frequent and erratic natural disasters, thereby, adversely affecting food production. Significantly, the demands for meeting the adverse effects of climate change is diverting funds away from sensitive social sectors as health, education, etc. Shortage of fund has also severely restricted research efforts in agriculture, particularly in high yielding or agro-based products could be developed, though growing need for discovering varieties resistant to salinity, drought, water submergence, has become urgent.

Excellencies,

The Summit Declaration has summed up the threats facing food security, as well as suggested remedial measures. It is now for us to abide by the Declaration in our bid to save future generations from the scourge of hunger and poverty. We, in our c

would indeed be guided by the Declaration in endeavor to attain food security, the basis for decent and dignified lives, which the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dreamt for people of his "Sonar Bangladesh".

I thank you all.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever