

Press Release

Launching Ceremony of the Master Plan for Agricultural Development in the Southern Region of Bangladesh

30 July 2013



On 30 July 2013, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture organized the Launching Ceremony of the Master Plan for Agricultural Development in the Southern Region of Bangladesh in the BARC Auditorium. Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Begum Matia Chowdhury, MP honoured the ceremony as Chief Guest. Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Mr. Shaikh Altaf Ali, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources and Mr. Mike Robson, FAO Representative in Bangladesh graced the event as Special Guests. Dr. S. M. Nazmul Islam, Secretary in Charge, Ministry of Agriculture chaired the event.

The coastal districts have generally been identified as a disadvantaged region in terms of poverty, food insecurity, environmental vulnerability and limited livelihood opportunities. To address this, the Ministry of Agriculture took the initiative to prepare a comprehensive plan for agricultural development in the region with the help of a multi-disciplinary team of national experts of FAO, backstopped by the technical divisions of FAO. The Master Plan covers the period from 2013 to 2021. The objective of the Master Plan is to provide a road map for integrated agricultural development in the coastal districts of Bangladesh aiming at sustainable food security, poverty reduction and livelihood development for the poor. Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Ministry of Environment and Forests and a range of other ministries have provided invaluable support in the formulation process of this plan. Continuous consultation also took place with the NARS institutes, CGIAR centers, development partners and other stakeholders including farmers,

local government institutions, the academia, CBOs, private sector and the civil society in preparing this significant national document.

The Master Plan has identified large development potentials in the region keeping the challenges in the region and the current scenario in mind. It provides a detailed plan, estimates of investment needs and a list of priority programmes. Major components of the plan are crop, horticulture and agro-forestry, fisheries, livestock, polder management, drainage improvement, water-management and nutrition. Total investment for the 26 programmes of the plan is determined as BDT 578,026 million for ten years.

The government has pledged support from the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for materializing the initiatives under the Southern Master Plan and has urged the community of development partners and also the private sector, such as the Chambers of Commerce & Industries to provide financial assistance for these initiatives, including financing of agri-business programmes. It also urged Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to keep providing support and technical assistance for necessary next steps after the formulation of the Master Plan in order to enhance the livelihood of the people of the region.