

**Statement by Leader of the Pakistan delegation (Rizwan Bashir Khan) to
the**

Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

Rome

19 November 2014

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I begin by congratulating the Director General FAO and their teams for the excellent arrangements.

Mr. Chairman,

The Constitution of Pakistan holds the State responsible for provision of basic necessities of life including food, for all without means, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race.

Pakistan Vision 2025, therefore, seeks a Pakistan where “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. This reaffirms our international commitment to the right to adequate food and nutrition.

While Pakistan faces challenges in targeting malnutrition, the multi-sectoral approach adopted enabled progress in some of its dimensions:

- Pakistan reduced poverty by more than half during the first decade of this century from 34.7 to 13.6 percent.
- In almost the same period the use of quality iodised salt increased from a mere 17 to 67 percent. It is now becoming a norm to use iodised salt.
- Severe iodine deficiency in 6-12 year old children and in women of reproductive age was reduced from 23 and 37 percent to just 2 and 3 percent respectively; prevalence of goitre amongst women of child-bearing age now stands at only 3 percent- a one third reduction.
- From a modest beginning in 2008, Pakistan's cash transfer programme to the poor is now monthly reaching 4.4 million families. Coverage to another 1 million is provided for those affected by disasters or shocks or for conditional cash transfer programs.
- A constitutional amendment granted greater autonomy to enable decision-making concerning health and nutrition at the grass root level.
- Policy guidance notes and multi-sectoral nutrition strategies at provincial level stand developed.

- Provincial governments committed notable counterpart investment to implement these strategies.
- Pakistan became the 34th country to join the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement a year ago.
- We developed and introduced bio-fortified high Zinc varieties of wheat within a short span of time with a regional impact.

In order to remain accountable and benchmark results a comprehensive nutritional survey was undertaken in 2011. The results provided no room for complacency. We therefore embarked on several fronts:

- Establishing networks of CSOs, businesses and researchers.
- Developing an Integrated National Nutrition Policy aligned with provincial priorities.
- Executing specific provincial nutrition projects by using the “1000 days window of opportunity”.
- Formulating a Food Security Strategy to evolve an equitable food system along its value chain focusing on affordable access for poor households, small farm holders and women farmers.
- Implementing the National Zero Hunger Program for reaching the most food insecure and vulnerable sections.
- Establishing centres of excellence and academic training in nutrition at university level; providing a nutritionist in every school through training of teachers.
- Strengthening the capacity of 130,000 mobile lady health workers in nutritional education, counseling, managing and monitoring.
- Expansion of food fortification for widely consumed foods with the eventual goal of mandatory food fortification.
- Enhancing nutrition surveillance for monitoring and effective planning of acute malnutrition through establishment of 50 surveillance centres.
- Increasing cash transfers and coverage to the vulnerable by 25 and 10 percent respectively by the end of 2014-15.

Herculean as these efforts might seem, these could be rendered insignificant if the challenge of linkages with global issues is ignored including: climate change; market failures; global governance and regulation; global and regional imbalances; inequalities across countries; unsustainable growth, resource use, consumption and lifestyles; unfair and inequitable trading regimes; and, non-inclusiveness of policies and instruments. We need to strengthen our commitment, research and sharing of knowledge to resolve these issues with the recognition that adequacy, availability, accessibility and sustainability of food require such a global framework of action

Nutrition, a cross-cutting area in the post 2015 development agenda, has a draft stand alone target. We hope that the final outcome document will retain and expand the emphasis on this goal.

We appreciate the consensual approach adopted at the appropriate forum for finalizing the ICN documents that reflect a global commitment towards balanced nutrition.

The role of UN agencies, particularly our hosts, is vital while partnering with other development agencies and stakeholders. They should prioritize resource mobilization, technical support and capacity building and track progress of the action plan for implementing the outcome documents. They will enjoy Pakistan's full support.

Before I end, I would like to express our support to efforts for overcoming the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, which is impacting the food security and nutrition of the affected countries.

In conclusion, I reiterate Pakistan's commitment to ending hunger and malnutrition. We fully associate with the Rome Declaration and the Framework for Action.

I thank you.