

**Forty-seventh session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS-47)
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**By
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Respected Director General, FAO
Honorable CFS Delegates and Observers
Esteemed Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning/Afternoon and Assalamualaikum

I have the honor to present the Bangladesh Country Statement and provide our contribution to the agenda of *Food Security and Nutrition : building a Global Narrative towards 2030* while emphasizing how Bangladesh endeavors towards *Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition*, through its tireless policy efforts for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, including how the nation is on its way towards achieving its SDGs within a 'nutrition sensitive food systems' context.

Right after the independence, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took strong steps to ensure the overall development of agriculture and food security in Bangladesh in the light of the constitutional commitment. With that commitment, Bangladesh has made sustainable improvements in food security and nutritional status in the current decade where the growth rate of food production is higher than the rate of population growth.

Distinguished Delegates,

Bangladesh has made significant strides towards meeting many of the targets of SDGs amidst resource constraints. A robust economic growth has been accompanied by corresponding improvements in important social indicators such as increased life expectancy and lower fertility rate despite having one of the highest dense populations in the globe. The inclusive growth has resulted in impressive poverty reduction from 31.5% in 2010 to 20.5% in 2019.

Steady progress on some of the SDGs merits attention given the impact at outcome levels of food security and nutrition. A slowly reducing trend in the prevalence of undernourishment is seen, reaching 13.0% in 2017-2019 which has made the SDG target 2 feasible.

Child undernutrition has continued to reduce with the prevalence of stunting falling to 28% in 2019 which makes the 25% target by 2025 of the Seventh Five Year Plan reachable. Prevalence of wasting dropped to 8.4% in 2018, which is aligned with the Second National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN2) 2025 target. However, it is likely that COVID-19 might have reversed the gains made in nutrition improvement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh implements an efficient government policy to procure, reserve and import rice and which is crucial to maintaining a balanced price in the market and prioritizing marginalized farmers and increasing accuracy in estimates of food grain production. As agriculture now contributes only 15 percent to the GDP, it needs to be mechanized for greater production and rational use of labor in other sectors. Analysis in the CIP2 Monitoring Report 2020 has recommended to promote mechanization and innovation after COVID-19 through subsidies, sub-contracting agreements, and loans facilities with low-interest rate, as an important means to revive agriculture.

Respected Participants,

Government initiatives have strengthened the storage capacity for cereals across the country by establishing Silos and providing household level silo drums. Storage facilities for other perishables and particularly fruits and vegetables are inadequate. Interventions are, therefore, urgently required to reduce losses and maintain quality and safety in fruit and vegetable supply chains. We estimate that the ongoing process of diversification is still slow and needs to accelerate to provide more diverse nutritious food to the people of Bangladesh and to improve and diversify the livelihood of farmers.

Over the last two decades, Bangladesh has been expanding and strengthening a large agriculture diversification programme including fisheries and livestock, which are the primary source of all nutrients to provide safe and diversified diets to all. Beside this, a food system approach is adopted across rural and urban areas with integrated interventions across all sectors.

In the operationalization of the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, effective integrated approaches towards ensuring food safety in all primary sources of production (fish, animal and crop); enabling the environment for improved third party verification/inspection and certification to national food control and implement food safety rules and regulations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tackling 'hidden hunger' or micronutrient malnutrition is a challenge ahead to achieving healthy and sustainable diets and enhancing the delivery on nutrition outcomes among households, mothers, young children, and communities. To this end, diversity of diets among women and adolescent girls, and infant and young children feeding practices requires specific attention. Youth and adolescents have been mobilized through nutrition learnings, e-learning tools, enhanced awareness, and practice to undertake nutrition-relevant activities through clubs, youth centres and communities towards improving diets and nutrition at scale. Policy guidance tools such as the food based dietary guidelines 2020 have been updated and are being launched this year for nationwide dissemination to enable people to demand healthy diets for all ages, while agriculture and food sectors enhance their supply of safe and healthy foods to meet dietary recommendations.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Eighth Five Year Plan has harmonized the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) taking into consideration its alignment with the priority areas of national plans. It is being implemented for the period 2021-25. With an emphasis on "Promoting Prosperity and Fostering Inclusiveness", it focuses on a pro-poor growth strategy including seven themes: labor-intensive, export-oriented manufacturing-led growth, agricultural diversification, dynamism in cottage, small and medium enterprises, modern services sector, ICT based entrepreneurship, and overseas employment.

Bangladesh aims to have 8.5 percent GDP growth by 2025. There are also targets for many indicators including inflation, public and private investment, employment, poverty reduction, revenue mobilization, allocation for Annual Development Plan (ADP), and sectoral performances including education and health. We are expected to face several challenges, specifically related to Covid-19 pandemic, graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate change vulnerability.

Despite Bangladesh's resilience to various shocks including natural disasters, dealing climate change will be beyond its capacity given the nature and scale of the impact. While the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has provided scientific evidence on this, Bangladesh has to negotiate at the global level to receive funds for climate change adaptation.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Monitoring progress on food and nutrition security (FNS) policy goals will increase the demands on information, data and resources, and innovative ways of collecting and communicating disaggregated data will be essential to fill gaps to maintain a strong track record of extensive monitoring of national plans and programmes. In August 2020, Bangladesh demonstrated its renewed interest in ending hunger and achieving food and nutrition security for all by formulating 'National Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2020' and is now elaborating its' Plan of Action to implement the policy interventions.

In conclusion, I would like to give my heartiest thanks to all participants of this virtual session and the Secretariat of CFS and FAO to organize this important event.

Thank you all!