



BANGLADESH FOOD SECURITY INVESTMENT FORUM 2010

26–27 May 2010 • Pan Pacific Sonargaon • Dhaka

Inaugural Session
26 May 2010 • Dhaka, Bangladesh

Welcome Address by
Mr. Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary, Food Division,
Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Respected Chief Guest, Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Mr Chairman, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management

Special Guests: Begum Matia Chowdhury, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. Md. Abdul Latif Biswas, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Dr. Rajiv Shah, Administrator, United States Agency for International Development

Guest of Honour, Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, FAO

Guest of Honour, Dr. David Nabarro, UN Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition

Dr. Shenggen Fan, Director General, IFPRI

Dr. M. K. Mujeri, Director General, BIDS

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests and Participants

Representatives from the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all!

I am delighted to welcome you all to this inaugural session of the 'Bangladesh Food Security Investment Forum 2010', on behalf of the Food Division, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. You all know that this Forum is taking place on the background of the L'Aquila G8 Summit in 2009, and the upcoming events: the G8 Summit in Canada and the Asia Pacific Food Security Investment Forum in Manila.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Government of Bangladesh considers agriculture, food security and nutrition as one of its topmost priorities. Although the country has made impressive performance in agriculture and economic growth over the years, it is increasingly facing challenges of population growth, climate change impacts, deteriorating access to natural resources, vulnerability to price shocks and persistent poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. We need to invest considerable resources to address these challenges.

We know that the main objective of this forum is to finally lead to a country investment plan for agriculture and food security which includes (i) planning for and investing resources in a coordinated way addressing the three dimensions of food security, (ii) increase coverage of budget and external sources of fund in support of agriculture, food security and nutrition. (iii) mobilize additional resources (both from the budget and from development partners such as through the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP).

Distinguished participants,

You are all aware of the fact that food security is not only about the production but also about proper distribution and management of food. Producers must get fair price of their produce. At the same time, the consumers particularly the low income groups must have access to food within their reach. To satisfy these apparently conflicting objectives we must strike a balance through various policy interventions and investment. The other side of the problem of food security is reflected in the widespread malnutrition, specially child and maternal malnutrition. Our goal is to reduce the extent of malnutrition within the shortest possible period by effectively implementing comprehensive food security policy and strategies. The National Food Policy (NFP) represents a unique exercise having a comprehensive approach to food security and nutrition, encompassing the three dimensions of food security namely availability, access and utilization of food.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are organizing the 'Bangladesh Food Security Investment Forum' with the technical support of IFPRI, BIDS and FAO. The financial support was extended from USAID, DFID and EU. I would like to thank our technical and funding partners for their gesture of good will.

Our partner Ministries and Divisions have provided us with inputs and feedbacks for the papers and guided us with valuable suggestions right from the beginning. I am very pleased to thank them as well. We are much thankful to the Special Guests, Guests of Honour and the internationally renowned experts from Harvard, UN, IFPRI who took a lot of trouble flying to Bangladesh. Your presence has enlightened us.

We are grateful to our Honorable Prime Minister, whose presence has indicated her wholehearted support to investments for food security..

I extend my appreciation to the Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, for his inspiration and close guidance all through. I also thank FPMU & my colleagues in the Food Division who worked very hard to organize this event.

I will not lengthen my speech further. We will soon be listening to all important guiding speeches from the Chief Guest, and other Guests of the inaugural session. I hope you will enjoy the deliberations. I also hope this Forum leads towards the Country Investment Plan for sustainable food security of Bangladesh.

Thank you all.