

BANGLADESH DEVELOPMENT FORUM
Business Session-III - Agriculture¹, Food Security and Water Resources

KEY MESSAGES FROM DPs

- The DPs **congratulate the Government** for its successful handling of the food price crisis and for the adoption of the National Food Policy Plan of Action, which provides a comprehensive vision for government and DPs' interventions. The DPs equally appreciate the notable achievements in:
 1. Containing rice price growth below that of the reference international market and maintaining reasonable public stocks of rice and wheat;
 2. Increasing rice production to the level required for securing domestic availability even in the absence of importable rice, by ensuring adequate supply of fertilizers and other key agricultural inputs, and adopting measures for facilitating farmers' access to credit;
 3. Successfully containing Avian Influenza outbreaks;
 4. Approving at Cabinet level the amended Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council Act of 1996, increasing research funding, promoting public private partnerships and supporting demand driven agricultural research;
 5. Allocating food security assistance more equitably and effectively through the use of poverty maps for planning and targeting;
 6. Preventing and controlling vitamin A and iodine deficiency and developing the National Anaemia Prevention and Control Strategy
 7. Investing in the National Nutrition Programme (NNP) and establishing institutional arrangements for nutrition and health services delivery;
 8. Passing the Consumers' Rights Protection Act 2009.
- However, some **key challenges** remain:
 1. Despite agricultural production growth, food security remains fragile and nutritional status poor, with persistently high undernourishment, inadequate quality of diets, low birth weight, high levels of underweight, stunting and wasting in children under 5 years and anaemia.
 2. Low productivity and weak production diversification undermine nutrition outcomes and income growth.
 3. As proved by recent experience, rice might not be available from international markets during crises. Further intensification of rice production is needed to ensure availability and to release natural resources required for diversification
 4. Participation of small and marginal farmers in the market continues to be below the level required to strengthen their livelihood and contribution to growth. Access to land by rural poor households is highly constrained by land availability and terms for sharecroppers and land leasers.

¹ In this text "agriculture" is used in a comprehensive manner, i.e., including all crops and plant products, fishery, livestock, etc.

5. Limited budget for safety nets and inadequate targeting translate into insufficient coverage and low nutrient value of food rations.
 6. There is no national policy on food safety and effective food risk monitoring.
 7. Vulnerability of agricultural systems to natural disasters is compounded by the impending effects of climate change
- The DPs are ready to support the **implementation of the NFP PoA** to address challenges in availability, access and nutrition. Specifically, they look forward to Government **policy and programming actions in the following areas::**
 1. Support to technological innovation through research, education and extension to foster farm productivity, production and diet diversification, and climate change adaptation;
 2. Promotion of small farmers' livelihood adaptation and participation in the markets through improved access to land, water bodies, risk coping mechanisms, and though support to farmers' groups and associations and other community based organizations;
 3. Improvement in land and water management, building of embankments in the South to restore and promote livelihood owing to disaster-related damage and impending climate change impacts;
 4. Promotion of public/private/NGOs partnerships to develop non-farm small and micro enterprises in rural areas, rural infrastructure, marketing and agribusiness through investments and improvements in the market environment (rules and incentives enhancement);
 5. Assessment of trade-offs between support to rice production and diversification into other high value and nutritious crops;
 6. Strengthening of private-public partnerships in local veterinary services, diagnosis and surveillance, as well as of vaccine procurement and distribution;
 7. Strengthening of government capacity to operate safety nets and public food stocks, based on a strategic review of safety net programs and greater participation in the planning, targeting and monitoring of safety net programs of all levels of Government;
 8. Scaling up of the National Nutrition Program, implementation of the National Infant and Young Child Feeding Strategy and Plan of Action, anaemia prevention and control, and institutional strengthening to ensure coordination among nutrition activities;
 9. Updating of the Food Composition Tables for use in food and agriculture planning;
 10. Reinforcement of early warning and disaster preparedness systems both within the country and regionally/globally to enhance preparedness to climatic and market shocks;
 11. Reinforcement of project and policy formulation, monitoring and implementation capacity through capacity building and institutional reforms.