

**Statement by Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to
UN at the Third Open-ended Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals,
Issues: Food Security, Agriculture, Deforestation, Desertification
New York, 22-24 May 2013**

Mr. Co-Chair,

Yesterday morning, we heard a number of excellent presentations from the representatives of FAO, WFP, IFAD, and UNCCD on various aspects of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. These were very informative and thought provoking. We appreciate the strong recommendation put forward in their presentations to adopt food security and nutrition as a stand-alone SDG goal. Elements of future targets and indicators also came up in their deliberations. It may not be too difficult to converge on some specific areas. That is what we perceived listening to the interventions and comments of delegates here.

Food security is fundamental to human survival and nobody can deny this. It is only natural that the issue will receive higher importance in the discourse on the post 2015 development agenda. It is an irony that there is available food to feed everybody in the world, in fact, more food is available than what is required. Yet, many people go to bed every night hungry. This is unacceptable. We appreciate and support the 'zero hunger challenge' campaign launched by the Secretary General last year. This should also be our moral and political imperative. But we should strive to move beyond just ending hunger and target ending malnutrition. The dividend of twin attack is well documented. Addressing food insecurity and malnutrition would significantly advance global agenda of sustainable development. And it is achievable, as we heard from the experts over the last two days.

Food security is not only an issue of production of food, though it is largely so. It is about availability, accessibility and affordability. There is a key role of agriculture and rural development in this respect. We need higher investment in agriculture and rural development. Success in food security is intrinsically linked to issues like poverty alleviation, land quality, distribution, as well as, commercialization of food. Poverty eradication has been the overarching goal of the global community. Ending poverty should be a goal in itself, this will help attain food security and vice versa. There has been very little discussion about infrastructure issue, though it is closely related to distribution of food and as such, an important factor for food security. Financialization of commodities is identified as one of the reasons for food price volatility and the recent global food crisis. As such, judicious management of food price, control of speculative market is essential. If possible, such practice should be entirely banned as it affects basic necessity of human being. Food grain is being used to produce biofuel. This is luxury when many people die out of hunger and it must stop. The growing global population, land erosion and land degradation, make food security a daunting challenge. Land quality is deteriorating due to overuse and unscrupulous use of fertilizer and pesticides. Not only the environment is affected, these are causing gradual decline in food productivity. We heard yesterday reach presentations on the land regeneration and land restoration. We are not sure of the cost effectiveness of such efforts. Provisions of international support in the form of technology transfer and capacity building may be the utmost need here.

Another critical component of achieving food security would be to provide social protection to the marginalized and impoverished section of society. It is well-argued that social protection floors, food assistance and safety nets are critical enabling conditions for ending food insecurity and malnutrition. If small holders do not get price for their products, they would be discouraged to produce more. We know, they are the mainstay of achieving food security as the small farmers contribute more than 60 percent of global food production.

Finally, food security can not be fully realized if we do not change our life style, consumption pattern particularly in the West and stop food loss and food waste. This certainly means a paradigm shift- a

transformation in food production and consumption system. Such transformation should essentially include all the three pillars of sustainable development. As we call for more investment in research and innovation in the agricultural field, we also emphasis on rule-based, equitable, multilateral trade regime needs to be put in place for agricultural products. Unjustifiable and trade distorting subsidies should be discontinued. We would strongly recommend that all these elements should be factored into possible SDG on food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture. We look forward to the opportunity to deliberate on the issue as we move to drafting exercise in formulating SDGs early next year.

I thank you.