

**STATEMENT BY Mr. BANSA GOPAL CHOWDHURY, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION ON AGENDA ITEM NO: 26
AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF
THE 67TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 01, 2012**

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor. India aligns itself with the statement made by Algeria on behalf of the G-77.



Food Security, Mr. Chairman, is one of the most pressing issues on the global sustainable development agenda. At the RIO+20 Summit, we identified food security as a key priority in crafting a future for all. This seminal understanding must now be implemented, and also brought forward in the ongoing discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post 2015 development agenda.

Ensuring food security especially for the poor and the marginalized is a challenge that preoccupies Governments in developing countries foremost. Rising food

inflation and food price volatility are seriously undermining our efforts to fight hunger, poverty and malnutrition. The global economic slowdown has only made matters worse.

Recent spikes in global food prices have exposed the inherent limitations of unsustainable market practices, unsustainable consumption patterns and unsustainable farming to deal with food as a basic human need.

Today, we are producing enough to feed the global population. But high food prices, wastage of food, post harvest losses along with host of other systemic macro-economic issues are hampering our efforts to provide food for all. A large number of Least Developed Countries, especially in Africa perpetually remain in food insecurity.

Tackling waste remains critical to addressing food security and the issue must get greater attention in the global discourse on the matter. We waste 1.3 billion tons of food annually, including post harvest losses. This is roughly 1/3 of our annual global food production. If we are able to curb it, we would have enough to feed the 1 billion hungry people we still have to look after.

Mr. Chairman,

Unsustainable consumption patterns, emphasis on producing non-food crops, environmental degradation, and stagnant agricultural productivity has led to a mismatch between global food demand and supply.

There are, however, other systemic issues that are equally responsible for the present global food uncertainties. We have consistently had higher global food prices in spite of bumper crop production.

In recent years, we have seen a surge in the flow of speculative capital into global commodity markets and increase in the number of future traded contracts in developed countries. Excessive speculation has held to spike in prices and high volatility in the market. We must make concerted effort to improve regulation in the world commodity markets.

Mr. Chairman,

Of late, we have seen persistent arguments being made to suggest that food security is a function of aggregate population. We do not see merit in such postulations. For if that was the case, developing countries by virtue of being home to a larger population would have been consuming much more than developed countries. Fortunately, that is not the case.

Mr. Chairman,

Agriculture development is a livelihood issue in developing countries. In India, around 70% of our population is dependent on agriculture. Two-third of our agriculture is rain-fed which is totally dependent on the vagaries of nature.

The Government of India has undertaken several measures to tackle food security and agriculture development in an integrated manner. Our national policy for farmers addresses the issue of improving the economic viability of farming; promoting sustainable use of natural resources; empowering small and marginal farmers; and undertaking appropriate price and trade policy mechanisms.

My Government's commitment to providing food security to every citizen of India remains resolute and unflinching. We are in the process of considering a food security bill that would guarantee subsidized grains to more than 600 million people in India, with special provisions for women and children. In the meantime, the Public Distribution System even though not a universal one is maintained to provide essential commodities which include food grains to the poor.

India has also launched a National Food Security Mission for enhancing production of rice, wheat and pulses. Efforts are being made to shelter the small and marginal farmers from the vagaries of the market through price support initiatives. India has taken steps for providing crop and cattle insurance. We have also made a beginning in providing information on market intelligence and price analyses to farmers and other stakeholders using Information and Communications Technologies.

Mr. Chairman,

The solution to enhancing global food security lies in global action.

We recognize the need to improve global policy coordination and coherence for food security among countries.

Our collective effort should be to ensure higher investment, greater use of modern technology, and access to farm credit to enhance agriculture productivity and growth. And while doing so, we must specially focus on empowering women as critical agents of change.

Our approach should equally keep in mind the concerns of ecology and environment, the need to empower small and marginal farmers and to give special attention to dry land agriculture. Our bio-diversity resources and traditional knowledge and practices should also be harnessed in an optimal way to feed our people.

The ongoing multilateral trade negotiations, where arguments for liberalizing trade in agriculture products are being put forth, must bear in mind the imperative of providing adequate safeguards to agriculture, food security and livelihood issues in developing countries.

India reiterates its support for the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative and calls upon countries to meet their financial commitments to enhance capacities of developing countries.

India remains committed to sharing its technical assistance to ensure food security of our fellow developing countries. At the India-Africa Forum Summit in Addis Ababa last year, we announced establishing an India-Africa Food Processing Cluster, an India-Africa center for medium range weather forecasting to harness satellite technology for agriculture and fisheries sectors and an India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development. These initiatives are geared towards meeting the food security of the people of Africa.

I thank you.

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