Statement by
Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to
the United Nations, New York
Second Committee Plenary on
Agenda Item-25 :Agriculture Development, Food Security and Nutrition
28 October 2013

Madam Chair,
My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of G-77 & China. I thank the Secretary-General for his Report under this agenda item.

Madam Chair,
Agricultural development, food security and nutrition are fundamental to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication and other dimensions of sustainable development. Despite progress over the past decades, it is of great concern that a total of 868 million people are still undernourished and approximately two billion suffer from micronutrient deficiencies. It is mentioned in the report of Secretary General that it may be possible to reach the MDG target of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015. There will be still another half a million who go to bed hungry every night. However, we are deeply concerned at the situation in the least developed countries remains critical as necessary resources are still lacking.

Madam Chair,
The agricultural sector is more adversely affected by unpredictable and extreme effects of climate change than any other. The impacts of climate change disproportionately affect developing countries particularly the LDC and the most vulnerable populations therein who rely upon subsistence agriculture. In such situation, Climate-sensitive agricultural practices aimed at building the resilience of vulnerable groups can have a wider positive impact on food security. We hope that the upcoming COP-19 on Climate Change this November will address these issues appropriately.
Madam Chair,
The agriculture sector in LDCs faces huge challenges owing to lack of adequate investment in physical infrastructure, scientific and technological development, research and agricultural extension services. We are disappointed to note that Agriculture’s share in ODA has also dropped significantly. We call upon the International Community to provide adequate resources for the long-term investment in agriculture and rural development, in these countries.

I would also like to reiterate the need for the provision of system of stockholding in dealing with humanitarian food emergencies and as a means to limit price volatility, as appears in the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Madam Chair,
Let me also remind us that food security is not only an issue of production of food but it also about availability, accessibility, affordability. Development of agricultural infrastructure, including supply-chain, access to modern seeds variety, irrigation, pesticides, fertilizers and technologies are critically important. The water shortages should be resolved to increase the global food production. Regional cooperation in the form of trans-boundary water management is critical. The UN can also play a supportive role in this regard.

Madam Chair,
As we call for more investment in research and innovation in the agricultural field, we also emphasize the need for rules-based, equitable, multilateral trade regime to be put in place for agricultural products. In this regard, we stress the necessity of a timely conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations and calls for the outcome of the Bali Ministerial Conference to fully respect the development mandate and take into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

Unjustifiable and trade distorting subsidies should be discontinued. 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, and control of speculative market is essential. Food grain is being used to produce biofuel. Land quality is deteriorating due to overuse and unscrupulous use of fertilizer and pesticides. In addition, population explosion, urbanization, pollution and erosion of land due to erratic climate change are realities. Not only the environment is affected, these are causing gradual decline in food productivity. Therefore, provisions of international support in the form of technology transfer and capacity building is very important.

Another critical component of achieving food security would be to provide social protection to the marginalized and impoverished section of society. We need to support the economic viability of smallholder or family-farm agriculture and thus reduce their vulnerability. Closing the gender gap in access to productive resources in agriculture should also be a high priority.

Finally, food security cannot be fully realized if we do not change our consumption pattern particularly in the developed world and stop food waste and food loss. Eliminating, or substantially reducing, food waste and loss could greatly augment the available food supply, helping to answer the question of how the world will feed another 2 billion people in the coming decades without additional deforestation and further land degradation.

Madam Chair,
We would like to reiterate our support to the strong recommendation of the third session of the Open Working Group on SDGs to adopt food security and nutrition as a stand-alone SDG goal. Food security, nutrition and agriculture development are basics for human development and it is only natural that these will receive higher importance in the discourse on the post 2015 development framework.

I thank you.