

**36th Session of FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific  
8-11 March 2022**

**Agenda Item 12: Ministerial Round Table on Greener and Better Agrifood  
System after covid-19**

**Thursday 11 March 2022, 11:00 – 12:30 hours**

**Venue: Hotel Intercontinental, Dhaka**

Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh & the Chairperson of the session [Name, Position, Country], and [Name, Position, Country], Vice Chairpersons Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of FAO Excellencies, Hon'ble Ministers, Heads of Delegations from Member Countries, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning

No doubt this is a very important and time befitting issue. Recent technological innovations drastically changed the style of Bangladesh's agriculture. Mechanization and specialized chemicals had initially pushed the government to enact policies that helped foster production. However, this growth was accompanied with negative effects on the environment, such as soil depletion, water contamination, neglecting interest of farm laborers and biodiversity loss. In line with SDGs, the target of agriculture productivity increase with a little or no harm to the environment.

**Excellencies,**

In Bangladesh, now we have focussed on nutrition sensitive agrifood system and underlined the need for developing micronutrient enriched crop varieties and expanding nutritious fisheries and livestock products with standard quality. Adoption of bio-fertilizers & bio-pesticides, balancing the use of fertilizer, lowering the use of pesticides along with IPM and ICM practices resulted in healthy food production. We have also initiated Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and organic farming system.

In 2015, the FAO recognized a farming system in Bangladesh as a “Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Site” called the ‘floating gardens’. In areas where floodwater lays for prolonged periods, farmers grow plants on floating organic beds of algae and other plant residue. By utilizing wetlands, the country's farmers provide numerous ecological and economic benefits to locals.

## **Excellences,**

As regards to our successful initiatives to face COVID-19, I would say, Bangladesh agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors has responded favourably as compared to other developmental sectors for ensuring adequate food production and maintain supply with stimulus package and generous support from our government. At the initial stage of pandemic, supply chain of agricultural products experienced temporary disruption due to limited transport movement. Government functionaries played a constructive role in reviving innovative marketing strategies across the country. Soft loan, incentives for purchasing farm machineries, transportation facilities for farm produces, creating online platform marketing, etc. were taken to overcome the Covid 19 challenges.

Fish, meat, milk and eggs were delivered to the doorsteps of the people through mobile sales centers and online markets through government initiatives. Our government provided cash incentive of Tk more than eight thousand (8,181) million for more than six hundred thousand (6,69,071) fishermen, dairy and poultry farmers affected in COVID-19. Therefore, the rural economy as well as the entire farming sector was not affected seriously.

Now, it's important to invest more resources in developing greener technologies, including advanced genetic innovations and climate resilient varieties. These initiatives evolve system transformation approach and establish modalities of digital marketing system, and to take measures to offset shocks on farmers at the time of their needs. We would call upon APCR member states to enhance collaboration and FAO to support countries for a greener and better agrifood system, as follows:

- Initiating a green procurement policy for agricultural inputs;
- Developing technological innovations to use balanced fertilizer, use of bio-fertilizer and bio-pesticide for sustainable production;
- Assisting implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP);
- Technological innovations for reducing the use fossil fuels;
- Development of green agricultural friendly technologies and their dissemination;
- Reducing biodiversity loss;
- Developing of aerobic and low water requiring rice;