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RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF FOOD SECURITY POLICIES: IMPROVING AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS



Proceedings of the Workshop

21 March 2010



National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme

The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP) was initiated to enhance national capacity to implement the National Food Policy and the ensuing Plan of Action.

The NFPCSP is implemented jointly by the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) under the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with financial assistance from the European Union (EU) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The programme aims at strengthening the capacity of the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit and the members of the policy wings and planning units in partner ministries to effectively implement and monitor the National Food Policy in order to improve food availability, enhance physical, social and economic access to food, and ensure safe and nutritious food. It also aims at expanding and deepening the civil society capacity to conduct high quality research on food security, and to establish an effective platform for dialogue between government policy officials and civil society researchers to better inform the elaboration and implementation of the NFP as well as its Plan of Action .

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Organized by

Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU), Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
and
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations
with the Financial Support of USAID and the European Union

Proceedings of the Research Workshop

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**National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme Dhaka,
Bangladesh**

Contents

S #		Page #
	Glossary	1
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Inaugural session I	4
3.	Technical session II	8
3.1	Ultra poor households’ flood coping strategies towards food security in two flood prone regions by Dr. Hammadur Rahman, Department of Agricultural Extension, BAU.....	8
3.2	Food security and income generation through access to common property water bodies in monga-affected areas of Bangladesh by Dr. Md. Amzad Hossain, Department of Fisheries, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University.....	9
3.3	Access to fisheries resources by the poor fishers for income generation and livelihood and their coping strategies during lean and ban fishing period in Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Liaqut Ali, Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies.....	11
3.4	Concluding remarks from the chair.....	
4.	Research Area: Enhancing efficiency of production and post harvest	12
4.1	Post harvest losses and technical efficiency of rice, wheat and maize production system: assessment and measures for strengthening food security, by Prof. B. K. Bala, Department of Farm Power and Machinery, BAU.....	12
4.2	Post harvest losses and technical efficiency of potato storage systems in Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Ayub Hossain, Machinery Repair and Maintenance Division, BARI.....	13
4.3	Domestic and international competitiveness of production of selected crops in Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid, Training and communication Wing, BARI.....	14
4.4	Investigation of constraints on farmers’ access to fertilizer for food production, by Dr. M. Jahiruddin, Department of Soil Science, BAU.....	
4.5	Study on fertilizer marketing and distribution system, its impact on food grain production and household food security of the resource poor farmers in selected areas of Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Mukarram Hossain, Centre for Agri Research and Sustainable Environment, and Entrepreneurship Development	
4.6	Closing remarks by Chair, Dr Mahbub Hossain, Executive Director, BRAC.....	
	Annexes:	
	Annex 1: Programme of the workshop.....	
	Annex 2: List of Attendees.....	
	Annex 3: Welcome address by Mr. Mirza Fazlul Karim, Director General, FPMU, MoFDM.....	
	Annex 4: List of Research Projects for Poster Presentation	
	Annex 5: Address by the Guest of Honour, Mr. Milko van Gool, Charge d’ Affaires a. i. Delegation of the European Union, Bangladesh.....	
	Annex 6: Address by the Guest of Honour, Mr. Nicholas Dean, Deputy Chief of Mission, U. S. Embassy in Bangladesh.....	
	Annex 7: Address by the Special Guest, Mr. Ad. Spijkers, FAO Representative in Bangladesh.....	

- Annex 8:** Address by the Chief Guest, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.....
- Annex 9:** Address by the Chair, Mr. Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary, Food Division, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.....

Glossary

Aoi	:	Area of Intervention
BAU	:	Bangladesh Agricultural University
BCC	:	Behaviour Change Communication
BCSIR	:	Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
BIDS	:	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BRAC	:	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CAB	:	Consumers Association of Bangladesh
CF	:	Challenge Fund
CPI	:	Consumer Price Index
CTA	:	Chief Technical Advisor
DAE	:	Department of Agriculture Extension
DAM	:	Department of Agricultural Marketing
DGF	:	Directorate General of Food
EC	:	European Commission
ESA	:	Agricultural and Development Economics Division
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FS	:	Food Security
FPMC	:	Food Planning and Monitoring Committee
FPMU	:	Food Planning and Monitoring Unit
FY	:	Final Year
HIES	:	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HQ	:	Head Quarter
INFS	:	Institute of Nutrition and Food Science
MoFDM	:	Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
NAEP	:	New Agricultural Extension Policy
NFP	:	National Food Policy
NFPCSP	:	National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organisation
OMS	:	Open Market Sales
PFDS	:	Public food Distribution
PHAs	:	Post Harvest Activities
PoA	:	Plan of Action

PR	:	Programme Funded Research
PRA	:	Participatory Rural Assessment
SAAO	:	Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer
TAT	:	Technical Assistance Team
TTs	:	Thematic Teams
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
WFS	:	World Food Summit

‘The food policy analysts and researchers must look ahead through continued research and analysis, to predict what kind of information policy-makers are likely to need several years into the future.’

The National Food Policy, 2006

1. Introduction

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM), Government of Bangladesh are jointly implementing the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP) with the financial support of the European Union and USAID. A core objective of the NFPCSP is to expand and deepen the capacity of civil society to conduct high quality research on food security and support effective dialogue between policy makers and researchers so as to inform and enrich the implementation of the National Food Policy. To support this process under its Research Grant Initiative, the NFPCSP is promoting research on a broad range of food security policy issues related to food availability, access, and utilization for nutrition, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender, governance, environment and infrastructure.

National debates and events over the past two years clearly demonstrate that food policy related research issues are becoming increasingly important and are high on the policy agenda. NFPCSP along with FPMU have been promoting dialogue among researchers and between researchers and the Government. In this regard, four Consultative Workshops have been held since the inception of the programme. These workshops provided a useful forum for debating food security policy issues where presentations and discussions were held on evidence-based and action-oriented research that have been responsive to GoB’s medium and long term needs and priorities.

Based on the research carried out, a one-day Workshop was held on Sunday, 21 March 2010 in Dhaka at Sheraton with an emphasis on food security issues. The workshop covered three dimensions of food security namely availability, access and nutrition.

As part of the research monitoring process, periodic meetings, email communications, field visits and seminars involving the research teams, the NFPCSP Technical Assistant Team (TAT), FPMU staff and members of the four inter-ministerial Thematic Teams (TTs) have been taking place to review and discuss research progress with special reference to methodological issues, expected results and their relevance to food security policy-making. Regular in-house seminars are held to discuss needs, review objectives, work plan and methodologies of the newly awarded research studies. In addition to providing monitoring support to the research studies, the regular dialogue with civil society and government partners has helped to demonstrate the strong interest and priority accorded by the government to food policy related research issues.

The objectives of the workshop are to:

1. Present the results of the completed CF and on going PR research studies to policy makers, peers, media and interest groups
2. Facilitate dialogue among the researchers and between the researchers and the policy makers.
3. Increase awareness of local authorities and the community on food security issues within the context of CHT and other vulnerable coastal areas

Workshop Outcomes :

- ⇒ Research findings shared and discussed with policy makers, peers, media and interest groups.
- ⇒ Policy implications of the completed and on-going research discussed.
- ⇒ Sensitization of food security issues among local government and community members enhanced.

The Programme of the Consultative Workshop is given in Annex 1.

The workshop was attended by around 350 participants (Annex 2) from government ministries and agencies, academia, NGOs and other civil society organizations. Beginning with an Inaugural Session, the workshop programme was divided into two consecutive Technical Sessions, which then ended with closing remarks by the Chair Dr. Mahbub Hossain, Executive Director, BRAC. The technical sessions focused on the results of the completed and on-going research studies.

2. Inaugural Session

The workshop began with a recitation from the Holy Quran by Moulana Sultan Ahmed. Thereafter, Mr. Mirza Fazlul Karim, DG, FPMU welcomed all the guests and experts and fellow colleagues and civil society members and the media. He informed the meeting that FPMU has actively contributed to the preparation of the National Food Policy Plan of Action (NFP PoA). The PoA is expected to provide guidance for planning and implementing food security actions and research has a critical role to play in this process. The importance of research has been felt in the wake of emerging challenges and issues. Mr Karim recalled the 2008 price crisis and the current situation. He said that with the financial support of EC and USAID NFPCSP has provided technical support and facilitated 44 research projects . Policy makers will be given evidence based results and actionable recommendations. The findings of 8 completed CF projects and 14 research on going projects will be presented at this workshop. The studies have relevance to the NFP. The FPMU has been engaged in monitoring studies along with NFPCSP technical Assistance Team (TAT). Four consultative workshops have been carried out and members of the inter-ministerial teams where the process of the research, results and outcomes have been reviewed. He was pleased to note that some of the research has been able to enhance the Food security actions in the government. He added that the workshop would serve as good source of dialogue and discussion. The text of the welcome address by Mr Karim is given in Annex 3.

Mr Ciro Fiorillo, Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) of NFPCSP highlighted the context in which it takes place. He stated that results of the various HIES showed that in Bangladesh there had been improvement in terms of food production by threefold. However, this could not keep pace with the increase in population. Poverty therefore, remained a major concern for all round development including achieving food security for all in Bangladesh. He mentioned that 7 million or more ultra poor consume less than 1805 kcal/d. Serious concern for short term trends was voiced; anthropometric indicators suggested that wasting had increased by ¼th. Measures to increase in food production was therefore, recommended. Comparison between rice availability and rice consumption shows that at this point, Bangladesh is doing well in terms of food availability, notably rice. Stocks have increased substantially and self sufficiency is being achieved. However, prices are a source of concern. This year again there is a lesson to be learned. Though the country has not imported rice,

there should not be room for complacency, Mr. Fiorillo pointed out. The comparative prices in Bangladesh and India show that prices in Bangladesh have risen less than that in India, though it has been accompanied by price volatility. India is a key reference point for Bangladesh and the changes in prices and rice situation in India have marked implications for the situation here. It is also observed with near lag, the production has not been going down but is reducing its rate of growth; eg; the increased price and the expected trends in neighbouring countries.

Mr Fiorillo also highlighted that the availability of import and the global economic crisis also means reduced income from remittances. This has been analyzed and while there has been some decline in earnings, much also depends upon how much is the demand from US and Europe on garments. Factors such as migration and remittances; quantities of remittances also affect the situation. From a policy point of view, it is important to concentrate on the agriculture sector at this point and in particular, investing in agriculture will provide resilience. There is need to highlight policy priorities. Increasing agricultural productivity for fuel and pumping water is an example. Stabilization of the prices, ensuring that stock is adequate, improving targeting and coverage of safety nets and improving infrastructure and looking at the way people demand food are all issues that need to be carefully examined. Promoting food security calls for increased investment, mobilizing resources and food security policies should be adjusted to local context. When prices had gone down, the government had combined short term and long term approaches.

The National Food Policy Plan of Action is being used by international community as a reference and the PoA principles count on a broad political consensus. Research studies have been contracted out sharing a broad consensus and selection process. The findings of 8 large research studies are presented and as oral sessions 14 are presented as posters for the attention of the researchers and policy makers. The list of posters presented at the Poster Session is given in Annex 4.

As part of the partnership with GoB, the NFPCSP is providing technical support to the FPMU in implementing and monitoring the NFP Plan of Action which is being carried out in collaboration with 11 partner ministries and departments.

Mr Kostas Stamoulis, Director, ESA, FAO HQ, Rome, in his address as Guest of Honour pointed out that 1.02 billion are estimated to be undernourished worldwide and that this represents more hungry people than any time since 1979 and a worsening of the unsatisfactory trends that were present even before the economic crisis. Bangladesh has not been that hardly hit as other countries, but traditionally vulnerable households have been particularly affected. While the crisis added about 150 million people in the army of the undernourished, increases in global hunger have been continuously observed since 1996 even during period of high growth and low prices. The crises simply amplified and exacerbated existing trends.

Given the global nature of the crisis, it is noted that the increase in food insecurity is not a result of poor harvest but because of high domestic prices. There have been two years in a row of near-record harvests in global cereal production so global food availability cannot be the main driver of the current food security situation. Access to food is fundamental. The co-existence of widespread hunger and global food abundance, the increase in hunger even in the face of global growth and low prices means that the global system of governance of agriculture and food security is not able to properly channel gains in growth and welfare to

the most needy has also been proven unable to protect them from the effects of crises. It has become obvious that the system is in need of reform.

He remarked that there is promise in the air that the world community not only has realized that food security is a serious problem, but it has also realized that unless proper attention is paid to agriculture and concrete actions are taken, low-price food is not guaranteed. Links between energy and agriculture, additional demands for food commodities and biofuels industry and climate change paint a different picture for agriculture in the future as compared to the past. Agriculture in many developing countries is particularly unprepared to face such important challenges.

Gains in world production have been observed and global prices have fallen. However, the response to high food prices with increased production came mainly from the developed and a handful of large developing countries. Not all countries participated in the increases in global agricultural recovery. While global supplies have recovered and prices have indeed fallen, there is no guarantee that the global system will not find itself in front of another food price crisis in the years to come. Global economic recovery especially by some of the larger developing countries and the demand for energy which such growth will generate will activate the mechanism: high energy prices and the increases in demand for bio-fuels stock as well the challenges associated with climate change offer the context for another round of price increases. If another two years of production shortfall is added along with poor stock dealings, it would be the perfect climate for another round of price hike.

The food security crisis of the 2007-2008 is the fruit of short and long term factors two of which are fundamental. On the short term side, the uncoordinated policy responses by importers and exporters of food created the type of climate in world markets which favoured panic buying on one hand and border closing on the other, both of which exacerbated the effects of the crisis. On the long term side chronic neglect of agriculture in the developing countries prevented especially small scale farmers from responding properly to the crisis.

Addressing those two fundamental shortcomings of the world food and agricultural system (lack of coordinated action and deficient investment and policies for agriculture) has been at the basis of the response of the international community to an unacceptable chronic food insecurity food security situation. As a response to the crisis a number of high level meetings were called and commitments were made in order to improve global food security and prevent another crisis.

The reform of the global food security system governance can be traced through high level events that have taken place globally. These have included in April 2008, HLTF was created to coordinate UN action in facing the crisis; in 6/2008, FAO HLC on CC and Bio-energy re-focused on food security problems. Initiative to create a GPAFS and HLPE; in 7/2008: G8 Japan, resumed and re-affirmed the GPAFS initiative; in 1/2009: Madrid meeting reaffirmed the idea on GPAFS; in 7/2009: G8 L' Aquila summit became a food security summit, with the world's largest economies countries committed themselves to giving US \$21 billion over 3 years for agriculture and food security; in 10/2009: CFS in Rome, reform of CFS for the CFS to become the fundamental pillar of the GPAFS (the only concrete institution); in 11/2009: To provide a highest level of political support to this series of initiatives, the World Summit on Food Security in November, 2009, confirmed the central role of the CFS in improving the global governance of food security.

The declaration of the Summit included the following Rome principles: invest in country-owned plans derived in a participatory manner; strategic coordination at all levels (better governance, avoid duplication of efforts); adhere to a twin-track approach to food security with key role for agriculture; strong coordination role for the multilateral system; sustained and substantial commitments: monitoring and accountability (includes substantial increases in resources for agriculture).

There are good signs that the agenda for action on agriculture and food security emerging from the Rome principles is actually being implemented. Countries, supported by donors, UN agencies and other stakeholders are gearing up towards putting together food security plans and investment proposals to mobilize resources towards strengthening agriculture and reducing hunger. Some donors have already committed (and some actually disbursed) substantial amounts of resources for agriculture and food security. In December 2009, a Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme Fund has been set up in the World Bank to coordinate donor support towards such country owned investment plans.

In Bangladesh, Agriculture and food security have been important priorities in the country's development strategy. Such priorities are clearly reflected in the National Food Policy and the relevant Action Plan. The latter is the natural basis for eliciting concrete, coherent actionable priorities for policy and resource mobilization.

Mr Stamoulis concluded that the global food crisis had a catalytic role in the commitments and action that followed. This workshop takes place in what seems to be a changing context, and changing for the better. The work which constitutes the basis of this workshop and the workshop itself, should strive to come up with sound analysis leading to policy proposals which are sound, coherent and consistent. He added that Bangladesh is in an excellent position to move forward. Priorities have been flagged and these can be the basis for investing in agriculture and food security with the context changing for the better.

Mr Milko van Gool, Charge' d'Affaires a.i. Delegation of the European Union, Bangladesh and Guest of Honour said that it was a pleasure and honour for him to speak at this workshop that provides a platform for the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management to foster dialogue and collaboration within and between Government and civil society. He considered the event as a milestone under the Government's National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP), jointly funded by the European Union and USAID, and implemented by the Government with technical assistance provided by FAO.

Mr Gool remarked that the European Union has a long experience with fighting food insecurity all over the world and it has been an active partner both with the Government of Bangladesh and civil society and that they are committed to continue providing support. Over the past five years, the European Union has disbursed more than 100 million Euros in support of food security programmes in Bangladesh. With food security remaining a particularly challenging issue, continued joint efforts are necessary, in order to achieve the objective of halving hunger by 2015, one of the core Millennium Development Goals. The full text of the speech by Mr Gool is given in Annex 5.

Mr Nicholas Dean, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy in Bangladesh as Guest of Honor pointed out that it was a great pleasure for him to be at this important workshop. Throughout the world, and especially here in Bangladesh, food security is of paramount importance.

Ensuring food security for Bangladesh's neediest citizens is one of the country's biggest development challenges. The Bangladesh Government and its development partners, including the United States, continually look for new ways to enhance accessibility, utilization and availability of food for the people of Bangladesh.

He commended the resilience shown by Bangladesh in withstanding numerous natural disasters over the years. In spite of these challenges, the country is currently self sufficient in rice production. However, Bangladesh needs to diversify agricultural production, not only to enhance rural incomes but also to diversify the diets of poor households in order to attain food security, improve health and stop the vicious cycle of poverty, malnutrition and stunting.

In particular, the U.S. Government was proud to support the Bangladesh Government to find solutions to food insecurity through the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme. They were delighted to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and European Union in assisting the Bangladesh Government through this programme, Mr. Dean said. The full text of the speech by Mr Dean is given in Annex 6.

Mr Ad Spijkers, FAO Representative in Bangladesh and Special Guest to the Workshop, echoed the views of FAO and reiterated the points made by FAO colleagues. He emphasized the collaboration among the stakeholders and partners from the Government of Bangladesh, Dhaka, USAID, Washington, EC, Brussels and FAO Rome and Bangladesh. He expressed appreciation to USAID and EC who have been very resourceful. The recent Bangladesh Development forum provided a solid platform for bringing together the priority food security issues and steps ahead and linking them up with the global scene. FAO is working with member countries and in particular, the work of Bangladesh deserves mention. The Prime Minister has been the recipient of the FAO Ceres Award and the momentum towards sustainable action is being enhanced.

He also emphasized the need for strengthening collaboration with the Livestock and Fisheries sectors, given its role in providing opportunity for labour and more critically in providing valuable protein and promoting nutrition for the population. Mr Spijkers informed the meeting of the potential partners in future collaboration on food security notably involving Government of Bangladesh, FAO, ADB and IFAD. He also highlighted FAO's role in providing agriculture inputs, seed and technologies at the field level. He appreciated the role of the government and notably the Ministries of Agriculture and Food for their partnership. He noted that the country needs to be ready every year given that it has withstood natural calamities over 40 years, with cyclones and other challenges of climate change. There is a lot to be done and while hard work was being undertaken, large investments will be needed in addition to what there is. Mr Spijkers thanked his team and recorded appreciation of the government, other UN partners and the donor community. The full text of Mr Spijkers' speech is given in Annex 7.

Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Honorable Minister for Food and Disaster Management, MP and Chief Guest at the outset welcomed the participants and said that he had the opportunity to participate in earlier workshops. He is aware that the research results are being monitored and are being reviewed. Food security in Bangladesh is viewed within a multi sectoral framework, and the National Food Policy is pro poor and aimed at ensuring a dependable food security system for all people at all times. The government is committed to the cause of food security and is determined to uphold the constitution Article 18 (1) which vests all responsibilities on the State to ensure food security, health and nutrition for all.

Dr Razzaque reiterated that Bangladesh has to become completely self sufficient in its food production. He emphasized that Bangladesh has made a commendable progress in food production which increased nearly 3 times since independence, outpacing the population growth. During the previous tenure of office in the government (1996-2001), the current government achieved self sufficiency in food for the first time in the history of this country in 1999-2000. Food grain availability from domestic production increased significantly which helped to overcome the repeated natural disasters like floods and cyclones. However, a large proportion of the population, especially the women and children, still suffer from a poor state of nutrition and health. The focus of the government policy has therefore been expanded to include nutrition as one of the major agenda issues in the National Food Policy.

He added that food intake of the small and marginal farmers depend largely on their subsistence nature of production. Due to the relatively comfortable level of rice production, people consume more rice than what is recommended and because of lesser production, consume less of the other non rice food items such meat, egg, fish and milk, which provide protein and valuable micronutrients. Even the consumption of vegetables and fruits is far below than the recommended amounts. This creates imbalance in the diet and as a result large part of the population, particularly women and children, suffer from malnutrition. This calls for an urgent need to diversify our agricultural production and consumption.

Dr Razzaque mentioned that he was pleased that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management and the policy and planning wings of 11 partner ministries are trying to implement the National Food Policy through monitoring of its Plan of Action. He was confident that the collective efforts of research by the civil society organizations facilitated by NFPCSP would add enormously to the body of knowledge so crucial for informed policy making in the country. He remarked that the policy recommendations that emerge from the research studies will be carefully examined with high priority and will be utilized in implementing the National Food Policy and its Plan of Action. He also thanked the EU and USAID for their funding support and continued cooperation. The full text of the speech of Dr Razzaque is given in Annex 8.

Mr Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary Food, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, as Chair of the Session, said the increased food grain availability from domestic production, among others, has helped greatly to overcome the repeated natural disasters like floods and cyclones. However, a large proportion of the population, especially the women and children, still suffer from malnutrition. The government is giving utmost importance to gender issues as they are central to improving food security and nutrition and to maintain momentum in reaching the MDG targets.

The lessons of the 2008 global food price hike have shown that the population needs to be safeguarded and buffered from the price volatility of the world market. Top priority is being given to augment domestic food production, increase public stock and expand the coverage of safety nets. Alongside, climate impacts and natural disasters are washing out the development initiatives. Mr Mitra congratulated the organizers for this initiative and reiterated the government's renewed focus on addressing food security issues, poverty alleviation and nutrition improvement of all, especially nutrition for women and children. Knowledge and practice gaps need to be identified and he was looking forward to actionable policy recommendations. The full text of the address by Mr Mitra is given in Annex 9.

3. Technical Session II: Research Area: Food security and livelihoods of ultra poor

The session was chaired by Mr Kostas Stamoulis, Director, ESA, FAO HQ, Rome and co-chaired by Mr Md Ruhul Amin Talukder, Research Director, FPMU, MoFDM.

The following papers were presented.

3.1 Ultra poor households' flood coping strategies towards food security in two flood prone regions by Dr. Hammadur Rahman, Department of Agricultural Extension, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh

The Principal Investigator Dr. Hammadur Rahman described the methodology used in the study and presented the main results. The study found that the ultra poor usually had low level coping ability to floods. Although there was no significant differences between the labourer and farmer ultra poor in respect of flood coping ability, the ultra poor of haor area of Kishoreganj had significantly better coping ability than those of Jamalpur. The main coping strategies of the poorest flood affected people were found to be eating cheaper foods and limit the amounts eaten and/or the numbers of meals. Results were also shown of ultra poor households' opinions on how their livelihood opportunities could be improved. A number of policy implications were drawn from the findings. Among them , it was recommended that the government undertake special poverty alleviation programmes for the ultra poor people of the river erosion and haor areas; that a favourable environment be created for private entrepreneurs to establish industries and businesses in the flood affected; to provide training, credit, technological supports and marketing opportunities using GO-NGO partnership; to distribute khas land in haor areas; social safety net programmes be designed so as to give more attention to the ultra poor; agriculture be promoted through income generating activities; and that measures be taken to try and prevent that the ultra poor drop out of school.

The key discussant Ms Marie Jo A. Cortijo recognized the importance of such study and went on to point out a few issues towards the improvement of the report and possible follow-up research.

Thus, it was suggested that the researchers make cross reference to existing literature on the same topic in the discussion of findings. It was found that the data and findings needed to be contextualized and the justification for the choice of two areas and two types of households better made. Characteristics of the particular areas and households could be further exploited. A comment was also made regarding the limited exploitation of the data and it was suggested that more elaborate techniques be used. Finally, it was suggested that coping strategies to *minimize* the effects of floods could also be taken into account. Preventive and mitigative such strategies have been identified in other studies. In a similar vein, the importance of looking at the impact of coping mechanisms on the overall livelihood system given that some coping mechanisms are more costly than others was stressed.

In the discussion that followed, someone felt caloric intakes of the poor should have been calculated for the purpose of the analysis. The presenter disagreed, pointing out that this would have required too many resources, well beyond the scope those available for this study. A question was raised regarding the food quality during the times of flood. However, the main researcher pointed out that this was not the focus of the research. It was suggested

the coping strategy index as constructed by WFP be used and results compared to the 2006 and 2008 WFP studies. The principal Investigator explained however that such index was not prepared because this index was only about food security and did not focus on the flood aspect.

A member of the audience felt that information regarding the types and amounts of aid given by the Government of Bangladesh before, compared to after the floods would have been interesting, along with details of which Ministry administered each type of help and whether there existed duplication. The presenter explained that some such issues were included in the report although not in depth. Indeed, here only the perceptions of the people were covered.

The Chair concluded the discussion on this study with a few comments. He felt that generally, the policy recommendations were very generic and seemed delinked from the findings. It was also suggested that instead of determining who the ultra poor the way that had been done, the results on the coping mechanisms be used to determine who is ultra poor using relevant statistical techniques such as factor component analysis. This could provide information of the type: households that reduce their food intake by at least x% during flood crises, are ultra poor.

3.2 Food security and income generation through access to common property water bodies in munga-affected areas of Bangladesh by Dr Md Amzad Hossain, Department of Fisheries, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University

The presenter Dr.Md. Amzad Hossain began by defining what munga was as understood in the study. Different intervention programs and policies have been taken to combat *munga*. One of the ways to ensure food security of *munga* affected areas is poor people's access to and utilization of common property resources (CPRs), such as khas land, forest and waterbodies, the specific focus of this study. The study was conducted through PRA, survey, monitoring, discussion and consultation and also secondary information in three selected locations under Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat Districts, three mostly poverty prone areas of the country. The progress of the data gathering was described in detail but the results were limited in scope as not all the data had yet been collected and processed. Among the preliminary results, it was found that although according to existing laws genuine fishers should have access to CPW through lease, in practice, they have no or limited access. Fishers' associations are not able to obtain lease due to lack of capital, as they are unable to obtain loans from any financial institution for this purpose. Thus, many fishers are now earning income by catching fish from private water bodies on hiring/sharing basis. Some fishers are also engaged in fish trading for their livelihood. Generally, female members contribute to the family income through net making/repairing, fish drying, etc. Fishers have very limited scope of work during the ban or lean seasons of fishing. Preliminary observations indicated that the productivity of CPW has decreased in the recent years due to lack of proper management. Hence contribution of CPW to the income generation and food security of the poor is also decreasing.

The key discussant Prof. Rezaul Talukder felt that the sections of the study could be better organized and a better justification for the study given. He also felt that a more elaborate literature review was required to contextualize the research and findings. While most of the analysis was based on the comparison of fishers and non fishers, at no point in the report were the definitions of these two groups provided. This has given rise to some apparent

inconsistencies in the reported findings. For example, one of the tables finds that 5% of the income of non fishers comes from fishing. This would require an explanation. Also, when talking about of the sampled households, one cannot assume that the same types of training would be needed or would have been received by fishers and non fishers. In a similar vein, why should one look at the level of knowledge of fishery technology of non fishers? Finally, the discussant felt that little had been included on the constraints that inhibit the fishers' access to CPWs.

In the general discussion that followed, the question of what appropriate policies for sustainable for fisheries management would be, was raised. A member of the audience felt that more should have been done on comparing different aspects of fishers and non fishers. However, the presenter reminded that this was not the topic of the study. It was also felt that the title of the study did not seem to match the findings presented so far. A general comment was made regarding the slides which, it was felt, were difficult to read because of the colours used and the amount of information included. The fact that a large number of projects working on the issue of access to common property resources with concrete programs existed in Bangladesh was raised. Yet, no mention has been made of this in the paper. In fact, 250 CBOs are working in Bangladesh with water resources currently. In their study, the authors should take into account what is currently happening, what is successful and what is not.

3.3. Access to fisheries resources by the poor fishers for income generation and livelihood and their coping strategies during lean and ban fishing period in Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Liaquat Ali, Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies

The presenter Mr. Md. Liaquat Ali reminded the audience that this study had been undertaken to analyze different access mechanisms to fisheries resources by the fishers under different fisheries management systems, fishers livelihood including coping strategies during fishing ban and lean fishing period in order to suggest appropriate and better access mechanism, fisheries management system and their coping strategies during ban and lean fishing period for food security and sustainable livelihoods of the poor fishers. The study/research has been undertaken based on secondary source information/data and primary source/data/information in respect of fisheries management system, fishers access mechanism to fisheries resources, fishing ban/restriction and their impact on fish resources and fishers livelihood including socio-economic condition and coping strategies during lean and ban fishing period. The main findings from the analysis carried out so far were presented. Based on these, a set of policy recommendations were made to ensure fishers access to fisheries resource for income generation and improved livelihood including enhancement of their coping strategies during lean and ban fishing period. Among them, it was suggested that revenue oriented short term leasing/management system be replaced by biological management through community based/co-management of fisheries resources (CBFM) and new fisheries management policy (NFMP)/licensing system to the genuine fishers; purpose the fishers be organized and empowered. The principal investigator also recommended that only hilsha fishing gear be banned instead of banning all types of fishing gears and that government support be increased to the affected fishers during fishing bans and proper management and distribution be ensured during fishing ban period if the fishing ban continues. He proposed that alternative income generation activities be developed for fishers during lean and ban fishing period and also for controlling over fishing. Fisheries laws and regulations should also be enforced strictly and sufficient number of fish sanctuaries is established in suitable locations as a national programme and enforced properly. Finally, easy term institutional credit with low interest without collateral should be introduced for the benefit of poor fishers.

The key discussant Ms Lalita Bhattacharjee summarized the salient points of the study and emphasized the need for specific recommendations regarding livelihoods and nutrition given the importance of fisheries in the economy, livelihoods and nutrition of the population. The study has particular relevance in that not only will it help to strengthen livelihoods but also promote the conservation of biodiversity. In terms of institutional weakness, the presenter was advised to provide actionable mechanisms for enhancing implementation at the Department of Fisheries and its extension services.

The general discussion that followed raised a number of interesting points. It was pointed out that the presentation had mainly focused on livelihood strategies but that no analysis of vulnerability was carried out. The principal investigator of the study however, felt that this aspect was not within the scope of the study. The focus was to look at the access to fisheries resources. Another member of the audience felt that some of the recommendations sometimes seemed contradictory: by proposing that over fishing be stopped for example, the poor would lose their main livelihood source. It was also felt that the study had been over ambitious and that while a lot of data has been collected, their analysis was limited. On the topic of the fishing gear used by fishermen, it was pointed out that gear considered to be safe today could become unsafe tomorrow because of the way it is used. Poor fishers would for example over use a certain type of technology because of their poverty status and for lack of access to other income sources. The presenter explained that this issue was covered in the study although not presented at the workshop. A question was raised regarding the method used to select the poor. This had been done based on the perceptions of respondents gathered during a PRA exercise. To justify the existence of a non fisher group in the sample although the study was about fishers, it was explained that a control group to compare socio economic conditions had been needed.

The Chair Dr. Kostas Stamoulis proceeded by saying that the discussion had been rich and that some of the papers had been extremely ambitious. In all papers however, he felt that the sequence between the objectives, findings and recommendations broke at a certain point, usually at the level of policy implications. He felt that these were too general and generic and did not relate to the research results. He reminded the audience that this research was to be used to make implementable policies, as had been mentioned by the Minister and secretary in the morning session. Another point made by the Chair was that although there existed a large body of literature in the three fields investigated, little was utilized although it was important to do so. Furthermore, in some cases, there was obvious underutilization of the data. Although usually there was data on complete livelihood profiles, the analysis usually only focuses on one single aspect, for example fisheries. Yet, to improve the lives of poor people, into other livelihood options needed to be looked into. Finally, he made a general statement about the presentations which he felt contained too much information thus doing great disservice to the papers.

The co-chair Mr. Md. Ruhul Amin Talukder raised a question regarding the number of VGD beneficiaries in the first paper which he felt would have been important to mention. On the second paper, he questioned the measurements on water and soil samples. On the last paper presented, he regretted that no mention had been made of the relative efficacy of different management practices from livelihood, management, biological etc point of view. He concluded the session by appealing to the researchers to take into account and accommodate the comments that had been made during the discussion in the finalization of their studies.

3.4. Concluding remarks from the chair

4. Technical Session II: Research Area: Enhancing efficiency of production and post harvest

This technical session was chaired by Dr Mahbub Hossain, Executive Director, BRAC and co- chaired by Mr Mirza Fazlul Karim, Director General, FPMU, MoFDM. A total of five presentations were made. The following technical papers were presented.

4.1 Post harvest losses and technical efficiency of rice, wheat and maize production system: assessment and measures for strengthening food security.

The presenter Prof. B.K.Bala pointed out that food production consists of crop production and post harvest operation systems. He highlighted that at least 10% of the crop is lost during post harvest operations and cutting this down can greatly help food security. Prof. Bala showed the region wise post harvest losses of rice at farm level where Khulna has the highest loss and that highest losses are seen in milling operations and at retailer and whole sale levels. The producer level losses were greatest and need to be given due policy attention and action. He also provided a comparative analysis of the post harvest losses of wheat, rice and maize.

The technical efficiency at individual farm level was estimated using the stochastic frontier production function and technical efficiency model for rice. He demonstrated that food security = food available from different sources – food requirement and concluded that post harvest losses are 11.24%, 12.29% and 12.18% for Boro, Aus and Aman, respectively. Post harvest losses of wheat and maize were 3.68% and 4.12% respectively. Prof. Bala highlighted that the inefficiencies of the crop and food production systems can be reduced by increasing the technical efficiency and reducing post harvest losses. New technology and participatory extension services need to be strengthened as also creating awareness about the importance of proper drying and storage systems and storage structures.

The key discussant Prof. Sheikh Abdus Sabur, NFPCSP remarked that it is widely recognized that to improve soil fertility more manure needs to be applied. This was contrary to the findings highlighted by the study and he advised caution in interpretation of results. Fertilizer impacted negatively in case of wheat and maize production due to excess use of fertilizer. This could have happened due to imbalanced use of fertilizers rather than excess use. He also advised that separate variables for urea, TSP and MoP or at least two variables one for urea and another for non-urea be taken in the estimation of production functions.

He further remarked that total losses would not be equal to sum of all losses at different stages because after initial stage at each stage the quantity of rice/paddy decreases at amount equal to loss at previous stage. So loss percentage would be estimated based on reduced quantity. Parboiling loss appears to be counted twice: one at producer level and another at processor level. It should be counted once or else total losses would be higher than actual losses.

Food security needs to be measured at household level for all seasons in a year to ensure that food security estimation clearly reflects all the dimensions. Prof. Sabur further mentioned that according to HIES 2005, poverty is higher in Rangpur and Mymensingh areas compared with

Comilla and Sylhet area while the study showed highest positive food security status in Pirgonj followed by Muktagacha and the highest food deficit upazilas in Comilla sadar and Sylhet sadar farming villages. It would be useful to seek some clarification in this regard.

The general discussion highlighted that among local varieties, amon crop is a local crop; with irrigation costs highly significant in food security. This study is very relevant from the policy perspective. At present 12 % is applied as post harvest losses for seed and feed and wastage. It would be good to clarify why the estimation for rice is very different. It was also pointed out that maximum loss during storage occurs also due to rat menace. What is needed is awareness creation and establishment of silos and better facilities.

4.2. Post harvest losses and technical efficiency of potato storage systems in Bangladesh by Md. Ayub Hossain, Machinery Repair and Maintenance Division, BARI.

The presenter highlighted that potato is a very perishable crop and needs to be kept fresh for everyday use. Post harvest losses of potato are as high as 20- 35% in Bangladesh. The causes of which are water loss, mechanical damage, physiological damage, diseases and insect damage. The study examined the influence of different factors on post harvest losses of potato at different levels namely, farmer, trader and cold storage. The Cobb Douglas production model was used for estimating the coefficients of these factors. Farmer's awareness needs to be sustained and potato should be stored in cold storage at all times on a weight basis.

Components of cold storage losses of potato, a mechanism for marketing of cold stored potatoes and post harvest losses of traditionally stored and cold stored potatoes at different levels were presented. The estimated maximum, minimum and mean technical efficiencies were reported.

The key discussant Prof. Rezaul Karim Talukder mentioned that the analytical techniques are sound, however, the presenter needs to give justification on post harvest losses; He declined to believe the results reported by the presenter in the aforesaid model. He stated that in a decomposition model generally such models are used but not on the post harvest model. The dependent variable has been used and the presenter should go for revising the findings and examine cost and benefit types of relationship and what is the cost benefit ratio. Finally Mr. Talukder stated that some fine tuning is required for identified loss. The question is how one can get rid of the loss and where this can be useful in the policy.

4.3 Domestic and international competitiveness of production of selected crops in Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid, Training and Communication Wing, BARI

The presenter Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid stated that the rate of growth in agriculture sector has an important bearing on the overall growth of Bangladesh economy. He pointed out that the trading opportunities of the products depend on the comparative advantage, without subsidies or with limited subsidies. An analysis of the level of protection is important to determine the incentive structure in respect of production of food and non-food crops. Mr. Rashid mentioned that both the nominal and effective protection rate i.e, NPR and EPR respectively are used for measuring various factors affecting relative incentives in agriculture. Besides

domestic resource cost (DRC) criterion was used in determining economic profitability of selected agricultural commodities. It was recommended that the rice production could be expanded for substitution of imports by using more improved technology.

Wheat and maize production would need to be expanded for substitution of imports by using more improved technology as the country's wheat and maize demand is met largely from imports every year. The presenter also pointed out that the favourable DRC estimates and world price implied that potato and lentil could be exported even under moderate upward changes in the cost structure. To exploit the export opportunities, it was suggested that Bangladesh would need to enhance its supply-side capacity and pursue a broad based diversified agricultural production and export strategy.

The key discussant Ms. Marie Jo A. Cortijo stated that the findings of the study were in agreement with other studies, notably the study by Shahabuddin and Dorosh, carried out in 2002. More comparisons with preexisting studies and data would have been useful to be alignment with other related findings. The study consistently finds Bangladesh to have a comparative advantage in producing wheat, with a Domestic Resource Cost less than one from 2005 to 2009. Other studies have also found this number to be less than unit but certainly find it to be quite close to 1, unlike this study. Given what is known about wheat in Bangladesh, the finding that this crop should be so profitable seems implausible. This aspect might require some clarification.

It was also pointed out that the policy implications should be elaborated. It was also advised that very general conclusions should not be drawn and whatever is proposed should be backed by concrete evidence from the studies.

Another issues discussed was the profitability analysis that is based on certain *simplifying* assumptions regarding production technologies. Since the values used for these parameters affect the analysis, it is important to know the extent to which the empirical results are sensitive to the simplifying assumptions that were made. Further, the efficiency rankings produced by the Domestic Resource Cost framework are static in that, they represent a snapshot taken at a fixed point of time. It is therefore important to ascertain whether the results are likely to be affected by probable future changes in any of these basic parameters. The example of potatoes was illustrated, where this year, potato production crossed an estimated nine million tonnes, topping the national requirement by at least two million, resulting in steep fall in local prices. The situation has thus now changed. While the Government has announced measures to try and support the potato price by, notably, subsidizing potato export, this instability in production (due to weather etc) alters the potential trade status of potatoes for the country. Finally it was pointed out that while the results may show great potential for one particular crop, other factors that may not be captured in the numbers need to be taken into account.

While the study was limited in scope by its funding and timeframe, it would be useful to carry out this exercise for minor crops. Previous literature has indeed identified some of these minor crops as potential sources of foreign exchange which could benefit smallholders and thus have a positive impact on poverty reduction.

4.4 Investigation of constraints on farmers' access to fertilizer for food production by Dr. M. Jahiruddin, Department of Soil Science, BAU

The presenter identified constraints of farmers' access to fertilizers, evaluated the fertilizer marketing system and suggested modifications of existing fertilizer policies to mitigate the constraints. The approaches included consultation of relevant documents and reports, key informants' interview (KII), and household survey. It was noted that fertilizer demand in Bangladesh is met by domestic production and import. In the case of urea, a significant portion of the demand is met from local production and for non-urea fertilizers, the major demand is met by import (about 90% import for TSP, 100% for MoP and about 50% for DAP) which is largely done by private sector and a small portion by BADC.

The key discussant Professor Sabur pointed out that the study provides some useful information related to access of fertilizers to the farmers by examining the immediate past and current fertilizer distribution/marketing systems in Bangladesh. The Upazila Agriculture officers estimate fertilizer demand based on cultivable land, crops grown and previous year allocation, but they ignore soil fertility level. The study developed a method for estimating fertilizer requirement based on soil fertility level and fertilizer requirement for each crop. It was remarked that the upazila agriculture officers can consider applying this method for estimating fertilizer requirement. Inadequate availability of urea and very high price of non-urea fertilizers were the major constraints for fertilizer access and use in 2008. Although farmers are now using more balanced fertilizers than before, they need to use the appropriate quantity of non-urea fertilizers. It was suggested that farmers' training and field demonstration on balanced use of fertilizer be provided to motivate them.

Non-urea fertilizers, particularly those imported and marketed through private channels, are frequently reported to be adulterated. However, the farmers tend to use locally produced fertilizers and the study suggested strong monitoring, especially at storage and distribution points to check adulteration. Although urea super granular (USG) is superior to prilled urea (PU), farmers are not using it because of non-availability and cost. In order to popularize use of USG, such constraints need to be addressed.

4.5 Study on fertilizer marketing and distribution system, its impact on food grain production and household food security of the resource poor farmers in selected areas of Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Mukarram Hossain, Centre for Agri research and Sustainable Environment and Entrepreneurship Development

The presenter Mr. Md. Mukarram Hossain reviewed the fertilizer distribution, marketing and management systems and assessed the fertilizer distribution, marketing and management systems. The study also determined resource poor farmers' accessibility to fertilizer use for food grain production and determined the impact of fertilizer prices on its use.

Review of fertilizer marketing in Bangladesh revealed that, in the marketing chain, numerous problems were seen. Short supply of fertilizer at the beginning of Boro season has become a common scenario. All marketing problems were handled on piecemeal basis or on short term perspective. Different governments adapted different procedures to make fertilizers available to farmers but none of them was 100% successful. Farmers needed to come to dealers' shop several times with "Fertilizer Distribution Card" to collect their fertilizers, and this practice was not acceptable to farmers for justified reasons.

By considering the cost of production and sales prices of paddy, it was observed that resource poor farmers do not have adequate economic accessibility to the fertilizer market. No significant difference in the use of fertilizers with lowering of fertilizer prices was observed, as there was little difference in the cost of production and market prices of paddy.

Discussion

The key discussant, Professor Sabur noted that the study presents some important information on fertilizer distribution, its prices, availability and accessibility to farmers under previous system. Although most of the problems were no longer exist now after adopting right policy by the present government, some of the issues need to be discussed in this session. Although there is no fertilizer crisis now under present distribution system, the farmers still consider fertilizer prices higher compared with cost of production and market prices of paddy even after reducing non-urea fertilizer twice.

He further remarked that farmers complain on the use of Indian MoP which is believed to be of poor quality thus resulting in low paddy yield. It was suggested that necessary action be considered by the government against irresponsible traders using adulterated fertilizers.

Only five percent of farmers use balanced doses of fertilizers due to poor accessibility and lack of knowledge. It was discussed that fertilizers would not be accessible to the resource poor farmers only by making available it in the market. Purchasing power would need to be increased either through reducing fertilizer price or providing easy short term loans at lower interest. An in depth study with larger sample size was recommended for future action.

4.6 Closing remarks by Chair, Dr Mahbub Hossain, Executive Director, BRAC

In conclusion, the Chair remarked that MoP coming from across India was an easy option for use and this issue needs to be addressed from the policy perspective. The Co- Chair and DG, FPMU then thanked all the presenters for their contribution and support to policy information. He also thanked the rapporteurs and NFPCSP discussants for their support. He further requested to give his concluding remarks.

Dr Hossain noted that the post harvest loss for maize and wheat were very low and this issue needed examination given its policy implications. He further stated that there was need to take necessary measures to reduce the losses, examine how much investment would be required and what would be the specific policy action in this regard.

Likewise, cold storage of potato is an issue that needs to be considered while planning national storage facilities and systems and might require substantial investment. Given the shortage of power and electricity, there was need to carefully include related facilities such as generator availability and use. Other storage facilities, notably that at farmers' levels also needs to be considered and studied.

The comparative advantage from Eastern India and Punjab would need to be examined as also issues related to opportunity costs and shadow prices. Domestic and border prices were specific issues to be kept in mind. In particular, the studies of Paul Dorosh and Shabauddin can serve as a point of reference.

On the issue of fertilizer marketing, the actual fertilizers supply was much higher and the prices have come down. These need investigation. The use of compost as fertilizer is now being revived and there is to explore and encourage its use along with sustaining the soil fertilizers and balanced use of other fertilizers. Finally Dr Hossain expressed his appreciation and thanks to FAO for involving him the research process and to the researchers for the knowledge updates provided through the workshop.

Annexes

Annex 1 Programme of the Workshop

Date: Sunday, 21 March 2010
Venue: Ball Room, Hotel Sheraton, 1 Minto Road, Dhaka

09 00 ~ 09 25 Arrival and Registration
 09 25 ~ 09 30 Guests take their seats

Session I Inaugural Session

Chief Guest: Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM)
 Chair: Mr. Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary, Food Division, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
 Rapporteurs: Ms. Lalita Bhattacharjee, NFPCSP TAT & Mr. Ruhul Amin Talukder, FPMU

09 30 ~ 09 35 Recitation from the Holy Quran
 09 35 ~ 09 45 Welcome Address by Mr. Mirza Fazlul Karim Begh, Director General, FPMU, MoFDM
 09 45 ~ 10 00 Workshop Objectives by Mr. Ciro Fiorillo, Chief Technical Adviser, NFPCSP, FAO
 10 00 ~ 10 10 Address by Guest of Honour, Mr. Kostas Stamoulis, Director, ESA, FAO HQ, Rome
 10 10 ~ 10 20 Address by Guest of Honour, Mr. Nicholas Dean, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh
 10 20 ~ 10 30 Address by Guest of Honour, Mr. Milko van Gool, Chargé d'Affaires, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh
 10 30 ~ 10 40 Address by Special Guest Mr. Ad Spijkers, FAO Representative in Bangladesh
 10 40 ~ 10 55 Address by the Chief Guest Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP, Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
 10 55 ~ 11 05 Address by the Chair Mr. Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary, Food Division, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management
 11 05 ~ 11 25 **Tea/Coffee and Poster Session**

Session II Technical Session: Food security and livelihoods of ultra poor

Chair: Mr Kostas Stamoulis, Director, ESA, FAO HQ, Rome
 Co-chair: Mr. Ruhul Amin Talukder, Director (Nutrition), FPMU, MoFDM
 Rapporteurs: Ms. Marie Jo A. Cortijo and Mr Mostafa Farouque Al Banna, FPMU, MoFDM

11 25 ~ 11 40 Ultra poor households' flood coping strategies towards food security in two

- flood prone regions by Dr Hammadur Rahman, Department of Agricultural Extension, Bangladesh Agricultural University
- 11 40 ~ 11 45 Key Discussant – Ms Marie Jo A. Cortijo, NFPCSP
- 11 45 ~ 12 00 General Discussion
- 12 00 ~ 12 15 Food security and income generation through access to common property water bodies in munga-affected areas of Bangladesh by Dr Md Amzad Hossain, Department of Fisheries, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University
- 12 15 ~ 12 20 Key Discussant – Mr. Rezaul Karim Talukder, NFPCSP
- 12 20 ~ 12 35 General Discussion
- 12 35 ~ 12 50 Access to fisheries resources by the poor fishers for income generation and livelihood and their coping strategies during lean and ban fishing period in Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Liaqut Ali, Bangladesh Center for Advanced Studies
- 12 50 ~ 12 55 Key discussant – Ms Lalita Bhattacharjee, NFPCSP
- 12 55 ~ 13 10 General discussion
- 13 10 ~ 14 10 **Prayer and Lunch**

Session III Technical Session: Enhancing efficiency of production and post harvest

Chair: Dr Mahbub Hossain, Executive Director, BRAC

Co-chair: Mr. Mirza Fazlul Karim Begh, Director General, FPMU, MoFDM

Rapporteurs: Ms Lalita Bhattacharjee, NFPCSP & Ms. Ferdousi Ara, FPMU, MoFDM

- 14 10 ~ 14 25 Post harvest losses and technical efficiency of rice, wheat and maize production system: assessment and measures for strengthening food security, by Prof B.K Bala, Department of Farm Power and Machinery, Bangladesh Agricultural University
- 14 25 ~ 14 30 Key Discussant – Mr. Shaikh Abdus Sabur, NFPCSP
- 14 30 ~ 14 45 General Discussion
- 14 45 ~ 15 00 Post harvest losses and technical efficiency of potato storage systems in Bangladesh by Mr Md Ayub Hossain, Machinery Repair and Maintenance
- 15 00 ~ 15 05 Key Discussant – Mr. Rezaul Karim Talukder, NFPCSP
- 15 05 ~ 15 20 General Discussion
- 15 20 ~ 15 35 Domestic and international competitiveness of production of selected crops in Bangladesh by Mr Md Abdur Rashid, Training and Communication Wing, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute
- 15 35 ~ 15 40 Key discussant – Ms Marie Jo A. Cortijo, NFPCSP
- 15 40 ~ 15 55 General discussion
- 15 55 ~ 15 10 Investigation of constraints on farmers' access to fertilizer for food production, by Dr M. Jahiruddin, Department of Soil Science, Bangladesh Agricultural University
- 16 10 ~ 16 15 Key Discussant - Mr. Shaikh Abdus Sabur, NFPCSP
- 16 15 ~ 16 30 General Discussion
- 16 30 ~ 16 45 Study on fertilizer marketing and distribution system, its impact on food grain production and household food security of the resource poor farmers in selected areas of Bangladesh by Mr Md Mukarram Hossain, Centre for Agri research and Sustainable Environment, and Entrepreneurship Development
- 16 45 ~ 16 50 Key Discussant – Mr. Shaikh Abdus Sabur, NFPCSP
- 16 50 ~ 17 05 General Discussion
- 17 05 ~ 17 15 Concluding Remarks by Chair
- 17 15 **Tea/Coffee**

Annex 2 List of Attendees

Annex 3 Welcome address by Mr. Mirza Fazlul Karim, Director General, FPMU, MoFDM

Respected Chairman of this session, Mr. Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary, Food Division, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management

Hon'ble Chief guest Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management

Special Guest Mr. Ad Spijkers, FAO Representative in Bangladesh

Guests of Honour:

Mr. Kostas Stamoulis, Director, ESA, FAO HQ, Rome

Mr. Nicholas Dean, Deputy Chief of Mission, U. S. Embassy in Bangladesh

Mr. Milko van Gool, Chargé d'Affaires, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

Mr. Ciro Fiorillo, Chief Technical Adviser, NFPCSP, FAO

Distinguished experts, researchers and scientists

Fellow colleagues from the ministries

Representatives from civil society organizations

Representatives from media

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Assalamualaikum, Namashkar and a very good morning to you all.

This is the month of Independence. I remember our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I also remember the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the liberation war of 1971 including my father who fought in Pabna district.

I feel very privileged to welcome you all on behalf of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management to this workshop on **“Research in support of food security policies: Improving availability and access”** organized jointly by NFPCSP and FPMU.

Ladies and gentlemen, you all know that the National Food Policy, 2006 was formulated by the MoFDM to ensure, in coordination with the partner Ministries, development partners and NGOs, a dependable food security for all people of Bangladesh at all times.

The Food Planning and Monitoring Unit of the MoFDM is mandated to assist the Food Planning and Monitoring Committee (FPMC) with the monitoring of food security situation and implementation of food security interventions.

With the assistance of the NFPCSP and in collaboration with partner ministries, the FPMU has actively contributed to the development of the National Food Policy Plan of Action for the period 2008-2015, which was officially launched on 28 May 2009. This plan of action is expected to provide the necessary strategic guidance for a coordinated implementation of the National Food Policy and monitoring of progress towards its three core objectives, such as:

- (i) Adequate and stable supply of safe and nutritious food
- (ii) Increased purchasing power and access to food of all people
- (iii) Adequate nutrition for all individuals, specially women and children

As stressed by the National Food Policy, research has a critical role to play in this process, as the policy makers need a clear appreciation of the options at their disposal and the likely result of their choices to successfully implement the policy.

The importance of research has also been felt in view of the persisting and emerging challenges of food security in the country. The recent food prices volatility threatened the food security of the poor in developing countries like Bangladesh. The price of coarse rice has jumped by 60% during July 2007 to June 2008, because of high prices in international market and limited availability from domestic production arising from twin floods followed by the super cyclone 'sidr'. However, the price of rice has declined sharply since the second half of 2008 due to worldwide economic depression and national wholesale price of coarse rice has gone down by 34% during July-June 2008-09. Wheat price also declined sharply during this period. Thus, the new food security environment in which Bangladesh finds herself places new constraints on the achievement of NFP goals. Food security policy decisions are becoming more complex, and need to be grounded on solid research based evidence.

On this backdrop and as part of its Research Grant Initiative of NFPCSP jointly implemented by FAO and MoFDM, supported by EC and USAID has been supporting 44 research projects, 22 each in its first and second calls. These studies are expected to provide policy-makers with evidence based policy related knowledge and actionable recommendations to support the implementation of the National Food Policy. In the various technical sessions of this workshop, the findings of 8 completed challenge funded projects will be presented. Moreover, poster presentations of 14 research studies are being displayed. Your active participation will help to review and share and certainly improve the research works.

We are pleased that the studies being carried out have relevance to the strategies of the National Food Policy. Along with the NFPCSP the FPMU has been engaged in the monitoring of the research studies and has been facilitating interactions between researchers and promoting dialogue between researchers and government food security stakeholders. Four Consultative Workshops have so far been held.

While the NFPCSP Technical Assistant Team (TAT) has been monitoring the progress of the research projects, FPMU staff and members of the four inter-ministerial Thematic Teams (TT) are also providing inputs to the review process with special reference to methodological issues, expected results and their relevance to food security policy - making. I am pleased to mention that these interactions have proved very useful in promoting a better understanding of the research goals of NFPCSP and how the research is able to inform and enrich the National Food Policy in trying to address food security issues in the country.

I am extremely pleased to see that such a large group of experts and personalities representing the government, non-government organizations and development practitioners gathered today to continue this dialogue and I trust that it will be a source of valuable suggestions and recommendations.

I thank you all for your kind presence in this workshop. I particularly thank our Chief Guest, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque for gracing this workshop in spite of his very tight schedules. I also thank the Chairman of this session Mr. Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary, Food Division, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, for his encouragement, guidance and support. I thank the distinguished professional experts, colleagues and other participants who have kindly responded to our invitation to this workshop.

I thank Mr. Ad Spjkers, FAO Representative in Bangladesh and Special Guests, as well as Mr. Ciro Fiorillo and his team of experts, for the technical support and guidance given. Let me finally thank the EC, USAID and other Development Partners. Your presence here today and continued support is greatly appreciated.

Thank you all again.

Annex 4 List of Research Projects for Poster Presentation

Title of Research Projects for Poster Presentation

Sl. #	ID #	Implementing Institutions	Title of Research	Principal Investigator
1.	PR-1/08	Department of Farm Power and Machinery, Bangladesh Agricultural University	Management of Agricultural Systems of the Uplands of Chittagong Hill Tracts for Sustainable Food Security	Dr. B. K. Bala
2.	PR-2/08	Department of Cooperation and Marketing, Bangladesh Agricultural University	Farm Level Availability of Rice and Its Losses: An Assessment Study for Food Policy Options	Dr. Md. Idris Ali Mia
3.	PR-3/08	American International University-Bangladesh	Food Security Strategies of the People Living in Haor Areas: Status and Prospects	Dr. Mohammad Mizanul Haque Kazal
4.	PR-4/08	Institute of Agribusiness Management (IABM), Bangladesh Agricultural University	Livelihood Adaptation of Disadvantaged People of Bangladesh to Economic Volatility and Other Shocks	Professor Tofazzal Hossain Miah
5.	PR-5/08	Department of Fisheries Technology, Bangladesh Agricultural University	Livelihood Adaptation of Disadvantaged People of Bangladesh to Economic Volatility and Other Shocks	Dr. A K M Nowsad Alam
6.	PR-6/08	Department of Agronomy, Bangladesh Agricultural University	Studies on Policy Option for Quality Seed Production and Preservation of Cereal Crops at Farmers' Level for The Improvement of Food Security	Dr. Najrul Islam
7.	PR-7/08	Department of Economics, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology	Food Poverty and Consequent Vulnerability of Children: A Comparative Study of Ethnic Minorities and Monga-affected Households in Bangladesh	Dr. Rezai Karim Khondker
8.	PR-8/08	Department of Horticulture, Bangladesh Agricultural University	Post harvest Loss Assessment: A Study to Formulate Policy for Loss Reduction of Fruits and Vegetables and Socio-Economic Uplift of the Stakeholders	Dr. Md. Kamrul Hassan
9.	PR-9/08	Manob Sakti Unnayan Kendro (MSUK)	A Quantitative Analysis of Fertilizer Demand and Subsidy Policy in Bangladesh	Prof. Abul Barkat
10.	PR-10/08	Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)	Assessing Long-term impacts of vulnerabilities on crop production due to climate change in the coastal areas of Bangladesh	Dr. Md. Muslem Uddin Miah
11.	PR-	Institute of Nutrition and	Preparation of Food Composition	Dr. Sheikh

	11/08	Food Science, University of Dhaka	Database with Special Reference to Indigenous and Ethnic Foods	Nazrul Islam
12.	CF-7/08	On-Farm Research Division, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute, Bandarban Hill District	Identifying livelihood patterns of ethnic minorities and their coping strategies at different vulnerabilities situation in Chittagong hill tracks region, Bangladesh	Mr. Mohammed Jamal Uddin
13.	CF-10/08	Faculty of Agriculture, Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University	Consumption of Maize - An Alternative Food Habit to Improve Food Security in the Hilly areas of Bangladesh	Dr. Md. Hazrat Ali
14.	CF-11/08	Agriculture Economics division, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute	Land use pattern, nutritional status and food security of indigenous people in hill Areas of Bangladesh	Dr. Quazi Mesbahul Alam

**Annex 5 Address by the Guest of Honour, Mr. Milko van Gool, Charge d' Affaires
a. i. Delegation of the European Union, Bangladesh**

Honourable Minister, Chief Guest,

Mister Chair,

Guests of honour and Special guest,

Dear Colleagues and friends,

It is my pleasure and honour to speak at this workshop that provides a platform for the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management to foster dialogue and collaboration within and between Government and civil society. The event is a milestone under the Government's National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP), jointly funded by the European Union and USAID, and implemented by the Government with technical assistance provided by FAO.

The European Union has a long experience with fighting food insecurity all over the world. Since the beginning of its partnership with Bangladesh, the EU has been an active partner in this field both with Government and civil society and we are committed to continue providing support. Over the past five years, the European Union has disbursed more than 100 million Euros in support of food security programmes in Bangladesh.

Food security remains a particularly challenging issue, as evidenced by the fact that for the first time in history the number of undernourished people in the world crossed the 1 billion mark last year. Population growth and the expected impact of climate change are threatening long term food security. Our continued joint efforts are necessary, if we want to achieve the objective of halving hunger by 2015, one of the core Millennium Development Goals.

It is clear that to achieve food security in Bangladesh, the right mix of policies needs to be in place and implemented in a flexible way, allowing adaptation to emerging issues. The National Food Policy and its Plan of Action are important achievements. We strongly support the Government decision to closely monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action and look forward to receiving the first report shortly.

To be efficient and effective, this process needs to be well informed and participatory. Endeavours such as the research activities supported by NFPCSP and the regular consultations between policy makers, key representatives and members of civil society, academics and other development stakeholders are important contributors to this process. Of particular importance are the discussions on the policy implications of the recently concluded research activities.

I understand that the participation in the previous workshop where research results were discussed was large and active. A wide range of stakeholders are again present today and this is a clear encouragement. It is only by embedding policies in sound and clear analysis, based on relevant research, that the necessary enabling environment for sustainable food security can be re-enforced.

I trust that the discussions during this workshop will prove that the rigorous process through which research needs were identified, research proposals selected and research contracts implemented, has produced the high quality outcomes that will enrich the policy dialogue amongst all stakeholders. We trust that the ongoing and future research activities supported by the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme will provide the same quality outcome.

Thank you very much.

Annex 6 Address by the Guest of Honour, Mr. Nicholas Dean, Deputy Chief of Mission, U. S. Embassy in Bangladesh.

Honorable Minister for Food and Disaster Management, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque,

Secretary, Food Division, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Mr. Barun Dev Mitra,
Director General, Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Food and Disaster
Management, Mr. Mrza Fazlul Karim Begh,
And other Government of Bangladesh high officials,
FAO/Bangladesh Representative Mr. Ad Spijkers,
Charge' d' Affaires of Delegation of the European Union/Bangladesh, Mr. Milko van Gool,
FAO/Rome ESA Division Director Mr. Kostas Stamoulis,
Chief Technical Adviser of National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Program in
Bangladesh, Dr. Ciro Fiorillo,

Food Security Researchers, development practitioners and policy makers,
Distinguished participants: ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today for this important workshop. Throughout the world, and especially here in Bangladesh, food security is of paramount importance.

Ensuring food security for Bangladesh's neediest citizens is one of the country's biggest development challenges. The Bangladesh Government and its development partners, including the United States, continually look for new ways to enhance accessibility, utilization and availability of food for the people of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has shown amazing resilience and fortitude, withstanding numerous natural disasters over the years. In spite of these challenges, the country is currently self sufficient in rice production. We commend Bangladesh for this great accomplishment. However, Bangladesh needs to diversify agricultural production; not only to enhance rural incomes but also to diversify the diets of poor households in order to attain food security, improve health and stop the vicious cycle of poverty, malnutrition and stunting.

The U.S. Government is proud to support the Bangladesh Government to find solutions to food insecurity through the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme. We are delighted to collaborate with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and European Union in assisting the Bangladesh Government through this programme.

We applaud the fact that the Bangladesh Government is increasingly turning to research and analysis as a basis for food security policy development. Food policy research can enable Bangladesh to more effectively utilize its public expenditures, enhance domestic food production, and reduce dependence on high priced and uncertain food commodities. The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme enhances the Bangladesh Government's capacity to implement the National Food Policy Plan of Action and ensure that initiatives to improve food security are equitable, gender-sensitive, and help reduce poverty. To support this goal, the programme also supports stronger links between policy analysts and researchers in academia and civil society. The research activities conducted within this programme can help guide better-informed decisions to address food security problems.

Today's workshop will present the results of completed and on-going research. I am sure that this workshop will educate us all- policy makers and administrators factors affecting food security and their relationship to each other. You, as participants, will have many opportunities to assess and analyze the policy implications of these research findings for designing new programmes to improve food security in Bangladesh. I know the workshop organizers and researchers are enthusiastic to hear your views on the research findings. I encourage you to use this opportunity to develop solid and useful recommendations, based on the data and analysis, to reinforce the ability of the Government of Bangladesh to better develop and implement Bangladesh's food security policy agenda.

I wish you every success in the workshop as we work together to help realize our common goal – food security and a brighter tomorrow for all Bangladeshis. Thank you

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Revised by: Mahin Rashid, USAID/PRO
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Denise Rollins, USAID/DIR

Harvey Sernovitz, PA

Annex 7 Address by the Special Guest, Mr. Ad. Spijkers, FAO Representative in Bangladesh

Mr. Chairman,

Honourable Chief Guest, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP, Hon'ble Minister, MoFDM
Guests of Honour, Mr. Kostas Stamoulis, Director, ESA, FAO HQ, Mr. Nicholas Dean,
Deputy Chief of Mission, U. S. Embassy in Bangladesh and Mr. Milko van Gool, Chargé
d'Affaires, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

Distinguished representatives from partner ministries

Partners from the EC and USAID

Distinguished Experts from Universities/Research Institutions/NGOs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is once again a great pleasure for me to participate in this important platform for dialogue on food security research in Bangladesh.

This opportunity for dialogue comes at a critical time when the 2008 events in the global food security environment - soaring food and energy prices, climate change – have put agriculture and food security back at the heart of the development policy debate. In fact, important international initiatives ensued, such as l'Aquila G8.

After the food price crisis of 2008, food prices plunged as rapidly as they had increased. We are now again witnessing an exponential growth in these prices. This price volatility negatively affects in turn the farmers and the consumers, leaving policy makers with a great challenge to devise and adopt the right policies at the right moment.

The effects of these remarkable changes in the food price structure are placing new and tremendous challenges on achieving and the World Summit goal of halving the number of hungry by 2015 and the National Food Policy (2006) goals of securing food availability, food access and improving the nutrition welfare of all people.

The Government of Bangladesh has reacted to the situation by deploying all efforts to secure an adequate availability of food grains in domestic markets and to protect low income and vulnerable people's access to food through widening the scope of public food distribution operations and other social safety nets. The 2010 National Budget thus foresaw a substantial increase in the Public Food Distribution System. New innovative programs have been devised targeting the poorest of the country living in the worst affected areas, learning on past experiences.

However, in addition to this, as we have learnt from the recent past, measures are needed to sustain food grain production efforts at all times, including when prices are too low for farmers to see any incentive in planting.

Moreover, we need to continue supporting small and marginal farmers, reduce their vulnerability to ever increasing natural disasters, diversify the food they produce so as to ensure adequate, balanced and safe nutrition for all.

Since 2006, the FAO, through the technical assistance of the NFPCSP, funded by the EC and USAID, has been supporting the Government of Bangladesh towards implementing and monitoring the National Food Policy (2006) in a coordinated and informed manner. Out of this assistance, the Plan of Action (2008-2015) of the National Food Policy was prepared and approved through an extensive consultation process between the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, partner ministries and development partners. This provides the comprehensive framework needed for effective short and longer term interventions and has become the key reference for aligning development partners support to national priorities.

The National Food Policy sets out a clear inter-agency strategy for improving food security and nutrition. In the Bangladesh Development Forum which took place last month, the Government, with Development Partners, agreed to focus its efforts on implementing key priorities of the Food Policy in the short and medium term. Emphasis was given to the need for investments for the Southern delta and the impoverished North-East, overall technological innovation and research and institutional and human capacity building.

At this very moment and as a result of l'Aquila, we are supporting the Government in the preparation of an investment plan consistent with the NFP Plan of Action, that is to become the reference for the mobilisation of foreign resources for developing Bangladesh agriculture.

We are here today to take stock and discuss the findings of 8 completed research projects funded under the NFPCSP Research Grant Initiative in support of the implementation and National Food Policy and its Plan of Action. A poster session will also allow us to see the progress of on going Programme Research studies.

All these projects share a common objective: to provide policy-makers with a better understanding of the issues and needs for policy action in various strategic areas of intervention set forth in the NFP and its Plan of Action.

I trust that the discussions today will contribute to strengthen the links between food security research and policy.

On this occasion, I wish to reiterate FAO's commitment to accompany and support the Government of Bangladesh, in collaboration with partners, in its efforts to address both the immediate and longer term food security challenges.

Thanks to all.

**Annex 8 Address by the Chief Guest, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP
Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.**

Mr. Chairman, **Barun Dev Mitra**, Secretary, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management;
Guests of Honour : **Mr. Kostas Stamoulis**, Director, ESA Division, FAO Headquarter;
Mr. Milko Van Gool, Charge d'Affairs, Delegation of the European Union;
Mr. Nicholas Dean, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy;
Spacial Guest, **Mr. Ad Spijkers**, FAO Representative in Bangladesh;
Chief Technical Advisor, NFPCSP, **Mr. Ciro Fiorillo**,
Fellow colleagues from the MoFDM and partner Ministries,

Guests and Experts from other national and international organizations,
Representatives from different Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning to you all!

It is my great pleasure to be present here at today's Workshop on "Research in Support of Food Security Policies: Improving Availability and Access", organized by the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme, FAO and the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Government of Bangladesh. I also had the opportunity to be present at two other similar workshops, one in February and the other in July last year when results of other sets of research were presented and discussed. I am glad to see that these Food Security related research awarded through this programme are being closely monitored and the results are being shared with the cross-section of experts and civil society members.

The Bangladesh National Food Policy 2006 was developed and formulated by the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management in a multi-sectoral framework. It is a very comprehensive, pro-poor, gender sensitive and equitable policy document. Its ultimate goal is to ensure a dependable food security system for all people at all times. Our Government is firmly committed to achieve food security as ratified at the World Food Summit 1996 and the Millennium Summit 2000. As a pro-people Government, we are pledge-bound to uphold the Constitution Article 18(1) which vests all responsibilities on the State to ensure food security, health and nutrition for all.

Bangladesh has made a commendable progress in food production which increased nearly 3 times since independence, outpacing the population growth. During our previous tenure of office in the government (1996-2001), we achieved self sufficiency in food for the first time in the history of this country in 1999-2000. Food grain availability from domestic production increased significantly which helped to overcome the repeated natural disasters like floods and cyclones. However, a large proportion of the population, especially the women and children, still suffer from a poor state of nutrition and health. The focus of the government policy has therefore been expanded to include nutrition as one of the major agenda in the National Food Policy.

The unprecedented global price hike of food commodities in 2007-08 has taught us a lesson that we have to produce our own food in order to protect our people from the price volatility of the world market. Our government has therefore attached top priority to augment domestic food production. We have drastically reduced the price of non-urea fertilizers. Measures have been taken to make more quality seeds available to the farmers. To facilitate irrigation, we have made more electricity available for the irrigation pump users. Arrangement has also been made to provide cash support to small and marginal farmers using irrigation facilities provided by diesel operated pumps. All these measures have been paying dividends in the form of successive record harvests of boro rice.

Food intake of the small and marginal farmers depends largely on their subsistence nature of production. Because of relatively comfortable level of rice production, people consume more rice than the nutritionists would recommend. On the other hand, because of lesser

production, consumption of other nutrient-rich food items such as meat, egg, fish and milk is relatively lower. This creates imbalance in the diet and as a result large part of the population, particularly women and children, suffer from under-nutrition. To address this situation, we need to diversify our agricultural production.

I am glad to see that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, in collaboration with the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management and the policy and planning wings of 11 partner ministries are trying to implement the National Food Policy through monitoring of its Plan of Action. The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP) of the FAO is playing a commendable role in this regard. I thank FAO for taking up the Programme, and the European Commission and the USAID for giving financial support for its implementation.

I can see that this workshop is being attended by a large number of participants from research and civil society organizations engaged in quality research on strategic food security policy related issues. I am confident that the collective efforts of research by these organizations facilitated by the NFPCSP would add enormously to the body of knowledge so crucial for informed policy making in the country.

I wish the workshop all success and assure you all that the policy recommendations that will emerge from the research studies will be carefully examined with high priority and will be utilized in implementing the National Food Policy and its Plan of Action.

I thank the organizers for inviting me to this workshop as the Chief Guest. With these few words I declare the Workshop open.

Thank you all.

**Annex 9 Address by the Chair, Mr. Barun Dev Mitra, Secretary, Food Division,
Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.**

Hon'ble Chief Guest, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, MP, Minister, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM)

Special Guest, Mr. Ad Spijkers, FAO Representative in Bangladesh

Guests of Honour:

Mr. Kostas Stamoulis, Director, ESA, FAO HQ, Rome

Mr. Nicholas Dean, Deputy Chief of Mission, U. S. Embassy in Bangladesh

Mr. Milko van Gool, Chargé d'Affaires, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

Mirza Fazlul Karim, Director General, FPMU;

Chief Technical Advisor, NFPCSP, Mr. Ciro Fiorillo and TAT members;

Fellow colleagues from the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management;

Guests and Experts from civil society and research organizations;

Representatives from the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Morning to you all!

It is my great pleasure to be here at today's Workshop on "Research for Food Security Policies: Improving Availability and Access", organized by the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme, FAO and the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Government of Bangladesh. I congratulate the organizers for holding this workshop which is so timely, because the Government as well as development partners have their renewed focus on food security issues. In particular, the government is committed to promote specific action programmes for achieving faster growth and poverty reduction, food security and nutrition improvement for all, especially for women and children and other vulnerable groups.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the goal of Bangladesh National Food Policy is to ensure a dependable food security system for all people at all times. It transcends beyond the traditional issues of food production and availability and relates them to the equally important dimensions of access to food and sound utilization of food for nutrition. The National Food Policy Plan of Action (2008-2015) launched by the Government in May 2009 serves as a reference framework to implement food security actions and monitor progress towards achieving the objectives of food security policy of the country. However, knowledge and practice gaps need to be identified by research and studies and that the economic, social and resource constraints are to be addressed to improve food security status of the population especially women and children. The research initiatives under NFPCSP are aimed towards identifying the gaps and suggesting actionable policy options.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Bangladesh has made a commendable progress in food grain production. You all know that the food production has been tripled since independence outpacing the population growth. Increased food grain availability from domestic production, among others, has helped greatly to overcome the repeated natural disasters like floods and cyclones. However, a large proportion of the population, especially the women and children, still suffer from malnutrition. Therefore, the government is giving utmost importance to gender issues as they are central to improving food security and nutrition and to maintain momentum in reaching the MDG targets.

The lessons learned from the 2008 global food price hike clearly demonstrate that the population needs to be safeguarded and buffered from the price volatility of the world market. The government has, therefore, attached top priority to augment domestic food production, increase public stock and expand the coverage of safety nets. But the climate impacts and increasing frequency of natural disasters are washing out the development initiatives.

I note that a good number of research studies on food availability and access issues are being presented in this workshop today. The topics will cover important issues related to flood coping strategies of the ultra poor, access to common property resources, access to fertilizers, and issues related to enhancing efficiency of production and post harvest technologies. I believe that the information and knowledge generated through the research would help improve the capacity of policy making.

I would like to thank NFPCSP for undertaking these research and studies. I also thank FPMU, NFPCSP and partner Ministries for their efforts in monitoring the Plan of Action. I would like to extend my gratitude to the European Union and USAID for the financial support and FAO for its technical assistance to the program.

I wish the workshop all success and like to assure that the policy recommendations that emerge from the research studies will be examined with high priority. I thank the organizers for inviting me as Chair to the Inaugural Session of this Workshop.

Thank you all.