

Statement of His Excellency Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations on behalf of LDCs in the Second Committee on Agriculture development, food security and nutrition under agenda item no. 25 UNHQs, New York, 24 October 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I deliver this statement on behalf of the 48 least developed countries. We align ourselves with the statement made by Thailand on behalf of the G77 and China.

Agriculture is the dominant sector in most LDCs that are depending on agriculture for food and nutrition security. It is also the primary source of employment for a vast majority of the rural population. Despite huge potentials, the sector faces several challenges such as inadequate investment in rural infrastructure, research and development, extension services, and lack of affordable and adaptable technologies. It also suffers from the adverse impacts of climate change. Moreover, LDCs that are conflict-affected are plagued by high incidences of poverty, food deficit and malnutrition.

On average, agriculture employs 60 per cent of the population in most LDCs. In 2011-2014, the average share of agriculture to GDP is 23.7 per cent compared to only 10 per cent in developing countries as a whole. Agricultural productivity is very low in LDCs which is around half of the world average. In recent decades, LDCs have been disproportionately affected by climate change. The current 2015-2016 El Niño event has badly affected the crop production, livestock and agricultural livelihoods in many LDCs. Increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods are also affecting the agricultural sector in LDCs. The reduction of productive land caused by desertification, land degradation is further undermining their efforts in sustaining food production to meet the growing demand for food and nutrition.

In LDCs, the proportion of people living in poverty remained high on average. It is estimated that 22.6 percent of the population of LDCs-around 211 million people-lived with hunger in 2014, mainly in rural areas. It is gratifying to see the decline of prevalence of undernourishment in LDCs. However, in 2013-2015 there were still close to 245 million undernourished people in LDCs, accounting for 26 per cent of the total population. Similarly, malnutrition of children under five years of age is still high in LDCs.

Aggravated by inherent structural and technological constraints, low value addition of agricultural produce in LDCs has been a common phenomenon. LDCs are increasingly dependent on imports of basic food commodities to meet their consumption requirements. Even with the projected fall of global food import prices in 2016, the decline is expected to be slower for economically more vulnerable nations, many of which have depreciating local currencies. The decline could also negatively affect rural food producers by cut in incomes of farmers and hamper investment in production, infrastructure and services.

The vast majority of farmers in LDCs are smallholders, and many of them are women who have a high degree of exposure and vulnerability to environmental and price shocks. In recent years, food insufficiency and nutritional status of the displaced people caused by

climate change, natural hazards and conflicts in LDCs is an emerging challenge, which adds a new dimension to food security and malnutrition.

To realize SDG 2 and the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of eradicating poverty and its ambitious target of enabling half of LDCs to reach the stage of graduation by 2020, building a resilient and sustainable food system is of paramount importance.

The nexus among agriculture, food security, peace and migration needs a holistic approach. Investing in food security and agricultural development will strengthen efforts to prevent conflict and achieve peace.

Concerted efforts at national, regional and global levels with participation of all stakeholders are essential with a view to strengthening agricultural sector, ensuring food security and ending malnutrition in all its forms. Increased investment in agriculture, including through enhanced international cooperation in rural infrastructure development, agricultural research and extension services, access to finance and technology is vitally important.

Climate change, sustainable agriculture, and food and nutrition security are interwoven. Climate change affects food security, and LDCs, particularly smallholders and women in these countries, have limited capacities to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change. On a pathway to zero hunger, agriculture and food system need a transformation to cope with climate change. Building resilience and resilient crop varieties are vitally important to cope with the impacts of climate change. LDCs need capacity building and financing to adopt climate-smart practices and technologies.

Empowerment of women, especially rural women, in LDCs is critical to the success of eradicating poverty and malnutrition as women are the backbone of rural communities, responsible for food security and nutrition in many households.

Improved rural infrastructure and access to innovative rural financing will facilitate their participation in regional and global value chains, generating cash flows to the rural communities for improved livelihoods.

In conclusion, LDCs represent the most vulnerable countries in the world. Their success in achieving food security and ending malnutrition through sustainable agriculture holds the key to the realization of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Thank you.