

Addressing poverty ...

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adaptation projects but also mitigation projects. Indeed, Bangladesh must focus mainly on adaptation to climate change impacts inflicted on it extraneously; it has not contributed to the climate change episode at all. Surely, Bangladesh may seek to mobilise as much resources as possible from internal sources, but that will be very limited. Therefore, Bangladesh needs finances and transfer of technologies from the international arena to make a dent in terms of reducing climate change inflicted sufferings of the people as well as climate risks and vulnerability. In this context, capacity enhancement is also very important.

But, Bangladesh or any other country facing similar circumstances cannot go one adapting years and years on end unless the worsening climate

change is arrested soon and reversed. In fact, in The Paris Agreement, the goal of containing global warming to well below 2°C and possibly to 1.5°C by the end of this century over pre-industrial level has been set. But as analyses show, commitments made so far for reducing global GHG emission will keep the world on a path for 2.7°C to well over 3°C warming, which will spell disaster not only for countries like Bangladesh, but, in fact, for the whole world. There is a provision that the Agreement will be reviewed every five years and it is expected the large emitters will raise their mitigation ambition in terms of further emission reductions commensurate with the agreed global warming goal. The future will tell how things play out.

Although as an LDC, Bangladesh is not required to reduce GHG emis-

sions. Moreover, the country emits only 0.3 tonne per capita per year, compared to 10-20 tonnes in developed countries, about 7 tonnes in China, about 8 tonnes in South Africa, and about 2 tonnes in India. Bangladesh's per capita annual emission constitutes only about one-sixth of the average of the developing countries. Overall, currently, Bangladesh's contribution to annual GHG emission is only 0.35%. Yet, Bangladesh, in solidarity with the global emission action, has unconditionally committed to reduce emission in power, industry and transportation sectors by 5% by 2030 compared to business-as-usual scenario, and another 15% if necessary finance and technologies are provided by the international community.

Given the awareness and commitment of the Government of

Bangladesh and other stakeholders in the country, the future course will depend how best we can turn that awareness and commitment into concrete action and ensure their effective and transparent implementation. But, obviously, adequate external resources and technologies will be needed.

Past experience in relation to delivery on commitments by the developed world is not very encouraging. For example, way back in 1970, the developed countries promised to give 0.7% of their GNIs as official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries. After 45 years, the delivery reached about 0.32%, i.e. about half of the promised figure. Can the future be different, particularly with reference to implementation of The Paris Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda? In both the documents, it has been recognised that

all countries of the world will make their contributions on the basis of CBRD & RC. This is a cornerstone of the negotiations for partnerships to be built to implement these two global compacts. But, as of now, we may prepare to work hard and hope for the best; but uncertainties are rife and future unclear. Yet, undeterred Bangladesh must press on and not deflect from its continued efforts as much as practicable, taking on board suggestions offered in this paper, to eradicate extreme poverty, sharply reduce poverty, and bring down inequality of all manners to tolerable levels within the next decade or so, well ahead of the conclusion in 2030 of the international SDG and Climate Change compacts.

The writer is an economist, development thinker and Chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)

Food security: It's not only about production



PHOTO: STAR

REAZ AHMAD

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to maintain healthy and productive lives. The key elements of food security are: (a) availability of enough food from domestic production and/or imports to meet the demand, (b) access of the food to all people at all times through enough incomes and

affordable prices, (c) proper hygiene and sanitary practices and safe water for utilisation of food to have optimum impact on health and nutrition, and (d) a regulatory framework in place and its proper implementation for controlling contamination to ensure food safety.

So when we talk about food security status in Bangladesh, we need to keep in mind that it's not only about food production. Food

security is a larger canvas - where production of food is definitely an important part but, that's not all of it.

Once production of food is enough to meet consumers' demand, it fulfils one criterion of food security but a whole range of other issues still remain to be addressed. Even after producing sufficient volume of food grains, system may fail ensuring its availability at all the places, all the time in a certain geographical territory, in certain market, in certain pocket. Once foods are transported, marketed and managed properly and distributed in every nook and corner, still some consumers can miss out accessing the same because of their poor buying capacity. So the question of making food available, making food affordable are no less important issues than the challenge of producing food for the people.

Besides, the full cycle of food production is equally important. Maintaining proper hygiene and sanitary practices are crucial. Unless foods are produced safe, consumers would remain exposed to unsafe food. This is a public health concern. From farm-to-fork food can be contaminated, adulterated at any stage of production, marketing, preserving and distribution cycle. Unless necessary regulatory frameworks are in place; and even if, those are in place, but not enforced than we are asking for a great public health danger.

Right at the moment Bangladesh is a case of success as far as producing food is concern, particularly rice, the staple. But, is it safe to have food in Bangladesh remains a big question. Food contamination and food adulteration remain a nagging problem here. Thanks to 18 million farming households and their back-breaking jobs that Bangladesh today able to grow over 35 million tonnes of food grains annually, over three times higher what it used to produce back in 1971 (11 million tonnes). Unfortunately, our regulators, policy planners, and political leadership in charge of ensuring food safety governance, failed us in having access to safe food yet. Till the time we have safe and unadulterated safe food in our plates, food security will remain a far cry no matter how much we produce, how efficiently we market, how wonderfully we distribute.

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