

FROM CHALLENGED BEGINNINGS TO STANDING TALL

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Revitalising Bangladesh's agriculture sector

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demonstrates the strategic focus to gear up efficiency in the agriculture sector as the country moves up towards middle-income and high growth trajectory. Input subsidies, concessional credit, upgraded techniques, reduced pressure on agricultural land, efficient storage, distribution and access could generate self-sufficiency in food and adequate foreign exchange for food imports. Key challenges in food security relate to inadequate production due to crop erosion, uneconomic agricultural sizes, and environmental risks. Food security challenges could also be addressed through monitoring range of fluctuations in production yield, disruptions in supply-demand trends and cropping intensity. In the medium to long-term, measures should be undertaken to address critical deficiencies due to inadequate purchasing power, reduced income and employment, uneven access to inputs, insufficient storage, price fluctuations, and market volatility. In addition, insufficient coordination,



global food security mechanisms and institutions could increase risks and vulnerabilities. Sustainable and effective food security can be ensured through retention of efficient supply and market demand, strengthened marketing and distribution mechanisms and market-driven resilience, especially for vulnerable segments of the population in disaster-prone areas.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND MEDIA-DRIVEN FOCUS

Media and community support and engagement has contributed to significant momentum to agriculture revitalisation and overall efficiency. This is well reflected through the programmes over the past three decades by media and

development personality Shykh Seraj, through popularising policy dialogue based on farmers' views, experiences and insights for incorporation in key national development strategies and programmes. Seraj's efforts also resulted in increased flow of knowledge and information dissemination among stakeholders, promoting urban agriculture. Highlighting success stories in farming beyond national frontiers has added value to the process. Shykh Seraj also popularised the community-driven approach, that is well centred on sharing best practices on agricultural expertise, improved non-farm activities and agro entrepreneurship. On the one hand, this has facilitated mainstreaming agriculture in the comprehensive development

discourse. This adds value to skills and entrepreneurship expansion and substantive stakeholder engagement.

EXTERNAL OUTREACH AND ALIGNMENT TO REGIONAL AND GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Bangladesh's agriculture development strategy requires extensive alignment to mid-term frameworks by the World Food Program (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) especially designed to combat Covid-19 implications. Broader engagement in Regional Cooperation and Integration (RCI) frameworks should facilitate sharing of experiences and best practices.

THE WAY AHEAD
Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP)

2100 aims at a Delta Vision for an integrated approach for sector plans (incorporating agriculture, water resources, support to food security and mitigating climate change risks). Efficient implementation of BDP will ensure effective and sustainable development of these sectors.

Expatriate and local agro entrepreneurs may be given incentives for increasing remittances and investing in domestic agro industries, agro-based SMEs and agro-supportive Special Economic Zones. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) should be able to strengthen agro-based industries and for promoting agro entrepreneurship. In the post-covid scenario, it is important to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the four pillars of GAP (that includes sector viability, economic sustainability, social acceptability and food quality and safety). Investments in agricultural extension and diversification will improve TFP growth and enhance competitiveness in the sector. Land use policy should augment the agriculture policy mechanisms in the Eighth Five Year Plan and Perspective Plan. Added focus on improved governance and efficient management will add substantive value in achieving the envisioned objectives and implementing programmes for agricultural sustainability. Agricultural diplomacy could be used as a core component of comprehensive economic diplomacy. This could not only contribute to strengthening food security, but also strengthen advancing our national economic interests.

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inadequate oversight and monitoring and inefficient management could weaken competitiveness and efficiency. Inadequate alignment to regional and



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