

**Statement by H.E. Rabab Fatima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
Bangladesh to the UN at the General Debate of the
54th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD)**

21 April 2021, Virtual

Time: 4 minutes

I thank you, Madam Chair.

Excellencies,

The theme of this year's session: "Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development" is very timely. It appropriately captures the multidimensional challenges to advance the broader ICPD-POA agenda, especially now in our efforts to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Secretary General's reports rightly put the spotlight on the impacts of the pandemic on the state of food security, nutrition, and public health. Clearly urgent action is needed to address these crises.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh is bearing a heavy brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic. It stands to jeopardize our hard-earned gains in the population and health sectors. To tackle the multidimensional impacts of the pandemic, the Government has rolled out various stimulus packages of US\$ 14.6 billion, around 4.4 % of our GDP. We have identified public health and food security as one of our priority areas. We have expanded manifold our social safety net programs and launched a massive

vaccination campaign. We have already administered over 5 million doses of vaccines throughout the country.

The crisis, however, is of a much higher magnitude for any country to tackle alone. We need global solidarity and enhanced cooperation to tackle the multifaceted challenges confronting us. Allow me to share a few specific thoughts in this regard:

First, the call of the hour is to ensure safe, reliable, and affordable vaccines for everyone, everywhere. Vaccines must be treated as 'global public good'. Strong partnership is needed now. Given the high demand and quantity needed, countries producing vaccines should share the technology with other countries with production capacity, such as my country Bangladesh, to ensure universal vaccine access and coverage. Vaccine divides and nationalism is not taking us anywhere.

Second, the number of hungry people has seen an alarming rise worldwide due to the pandemic. We need multi-pronged approach to tackle this situation. The expansion of social safety net has proven to be effective in many countries. This is, however, a temporary solution. We need innovative support measures to ensure sustainable livelihood options for everyone, especially the marginalized segment of the society.

Third, we need targeted technology support from the developed and advanced developing countries for agricultural R&D to enhance productivity, and for effective food storage and distribution systems. South-South and Triangular Cooperation can play an important role in this regard.

Fourth, around one-third of the world food production is wasted or lost annually due to lack of storage facility. Irresponsible consumption patterns also add to this problem. Besides, it also leads to many non-communicable diseases, obesity, under-nutrition, and so on. We need real-time international cooperation to tackle the challenges of food shortages on the one hand, and of over consumption and waste on the other.

Fifth, we must improve the resilience of the agricultural sector against increased frequencies of droughts, floods, river erosion, and other climatic events. The advanced countries must fulfill their commitments under the Paris Agreement for climate financing and technology transfer. Bangladesh despite its resource constraints has established a Climate Trust Fund of \$450 million to tackle climate emergencies.

Finally, we have a long way to go to fully implement the ICPD POA. We must forge stronger partnerships at regional and global levels for increasing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection, achieving gender equality, investing more for reproductive health services, and reducing child and maternal mortality.

Madam Chair - We are preparing for some flagship UN summits and conferences at this moment, which include the UN Food Systems Summit, the COP-26, Biodiversity Summit and LDC5 conference. We earnestly hope that the CPD54 will have important contributions to those landmark events. Essentially to our shared commitment to leave no one behind, as we build back stronger and more resilient from this crisis. Bangladesh will remain engaged towards that end.

I thank you, Madam Chairman.