

# MODEL UNITED NATIONS ESCAP-POSITION PAPER

Committee: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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School: Lyford Cay International School

The implementation of a climate-smart agriculture (CSA) paradigm has become an issue of much controversy in recent years. Climate-smart agriculture is an integrated approach that primarily focuses on food security and the environmental implications of climate change. According to CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), CSA programs are conducive to sustainable agricultural productivity, which facilitate equitable income and food security development (CCAFS, 2014). In Bangladesh, political dissolution, poor economic infrastructure, and dilatory economic reformation procedures have resulted in a protracted agricultural decline. As such, Bangladesh's emerging free market economy and limited laissez-faire commercial tradition, compounded by country-wide corruption and instability has led to unfair treatment.

Bangladesh's economy continues to grow by approximately 6.8% (2015 est.) per annum (measured in terms of real GDP growth). As of 2016, the agricultural sector was the largest employment division in Bangladesh. It comprises 47% of the workforce and constitutes 16% of Bangladesh's GDP (CIA World Factbook, 2016). This sector has a significant effect on several macroeconomic indicators, such as unemployment, poverty eradication, and food security. In Bangladesh, 66% of the population live in rural areas. Consequently, it is necessary to address the importance of increasing productivity and the enhancement of economic growth, encouraged by sustainable development, discussed extensively by ESCAP (Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific). Dependence on the agricultural sector minimizes both socioeconomic stability and allocative efficiency, whereby the economy is no longer in equilibrium. It is, therefore, imperative that the Asia and Pacific region takes regulatory and reformatory measures to ensure the continued, sustainable development of the Asia and Pacific nations. Commensurately, persons of low socioeconomic status in developing countries are considerably affected by climate change, as they lack the means to respond appropriately. "The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognizes the vulnerability of least developed countries to these impacts" (VanAntwerp & Lim & Chow SSUNS UNESCAP, 2016).

The Bangladesh Agricultural sector has observed a steady increase in produce yields, despite poor weather conditions. This growth is ultimately due to the improvement of irrigation systems, more efficient fertilizers, and better commercial networks, subject to fair trade mandates. Moreover, rice is Bangladesh's highest yielding crop. Insecticides used on rice are not only a serious environmental threat but are also widely unavailable to poor subsistence farmers. Consequently, the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, along with several non-governmental organizations have motioned to reduce insecticide use. The delegation of the Economic and Social Commission for Bangladesh believes that urbanization and population pressures inhibit agricultural production and productive capacity. Such limitations have resulted in famine and food deficits, particularly in alluvial, plain areas. National imports and financial subsidization act to offset this deficit. Unemployment in this sector continues to be a serious drawback and concern for the Bangladesh ESCAP delegation.

The agricultural sector contributes significantly to anthropogenic climate change, as a consequence of greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU) constitute approximately 20-24% of anthropogenic emissions (VanAntwerp & Lim & Chow SSUNS UNESCAP, 2016). Climate change is conducive to modulation in rain patterns, increased temperature volatility, and perturbations in the environment. Conversely, cultivation

methods have adverse ramifications on the environment. For instance, soils and fertilizers release nitrous oxide, and livestock produce methane (VanAntwerp & Lim & Chow SSUNS UNESCAP, 2016). To this end, climate change is a source of volatility and vulnerability for agricultural development. The rise in sea levels may result in the diminution of arable land in small developing islands in the Pacific, including Bangladesh. Climate change also increases the frequency of natural disasters, which in turn, heightens the onset of food insecurity. Hence, climate change may have an influence on commercial, domestic, and national trade. Referencing the International Food Policy Research Institute, climate change will manifest an 8.5-10.3% percent increase from the baseline malnourishment index for children in developing nations.

CSA methods include vertical farms, skyscrapers greenhouses, and in the particular case of the Philippines, seaweed farms. Such CSA systems provide methods of poverty mitigation, diversification of revenue, and food security infrastructure. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Climate-Smart Agriculture is a new archetype that increases productivity in a sustainable and effective manner, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions. The FAO hypothesizes that by 2030, carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced by as much as 7.5% by adopting appropriate agricultural productivity measures. In doing so, it advocates the ratification of national food security measures and the sustainable developmental goals. By 2050, agricultural production yield must necessarily grow by “60% to meet the greater demand and provide a basis for economic growth and poverty reduction” (VanAntwerp & Lim & Chow SSUNS UNESCAP, 2016). The underlying agricultural paradigm used in the Asia and Pacific region must be appropriately rectified to accommodate more sustainable and less resource-intensive systems. The food and nutrition security standard, adopted by the United Nations, is by definition the state in which persons have “physical, social, and economic access to food.” (UNSCN Wüstefeld, 2013). As such, the delegation of the Economic and Social Commission for Bangladesh gestures for the realization of this standard herein.

Bangladesh proposes a multilateral framework that implements sustainable CSA (Climate-Smart Agriculture) methods in a manner that adheres to the equitability of consumers and producers, predicated on the notion of fair trade, sustainability, and environmental conservation in the Asia and Pacific region. The most appropriate production technologies and practices should be established with respect to the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) of the country. Further, such CSA technologies should be systematically introduced in the fulfillment of the second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) subsection four, adopted in September 2015 by the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, which states: “ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices...that progressively improve land and soil quality” (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs). Accordingly, Bangladesh fully supports the use of viable and sustainable, alternative CSA technologies for further agricultural and economic development. In a multi-faceted context, Bangladesh moves to prevent and rectify trade distortions in agricultural markets, in the realization of the Doha Development Round mandate.

Furthermore, Bangladesh motions to adopt measures “to guarantee the functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives” (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs). It is critical that Bangladesh increases agricultural productivity to mollify poverty and sectoral productivity discrepancies. The implications are twofold, in that this would increase food security, and hence contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Hence, Bangladesh advocates the socioeconomic policies, concerning poverty reduction

# MODEL UNITED NATIONS ESCAP-POSITION PAPER

measures and development of sustainable agricultural productivity methods, established by the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA).

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