

# Family farming in Bangladesh

Hosting 60 percent of the world's population and 70 percent of its family farmers, the Asia-Pacific region is the global home of small-scale family farmers. Producing 80 percent of the region's food, family farmers ensure the future of Asia-Pacific and are at the heart of food security and sustainable food systems. The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF 2019-2028) aims at unleashing the potential of family farmers as key agents of change to transform food systems world-wide. Within this framework, the ComDev Asia communication initiative implements the regional campaign "Family Farming at the heart of sustainable food systems" to raise awareness on the UNDF and promotes improved communication capacities and services for family farming in Asia-Pacific.

## KEY FIGURES

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in its agriculture sector despite decreasing arable land, population growth, and adverse climatic effects (MoF, 2019). In fact, the country has one of the lowest land-person ratios in the world, estimated at 0.088 ha per person (BBS, 2018). The number of agricultural farm households has been recorded to 16 562 974 which accounts for 46.61 percent of total households (BBS, 2019). The agriculture sector contributes 13.31 percent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), provides employment for around 40 percent of the total labour force, and feeds about 164.6 million of its population (BBS, 2018). Rice production of the country nearly quadrupled from 10 million metric tons (MT) in the 1970s to 36 MT in 2018 coupled with significant production increase in non-rice crops like potato, maize, wheat, vegetables and fruits along with fish and poultry, helping Bangladesh achieve near self-sufficiency in rice production and ensuring food security. This has also been instrumental in raising farm incomes and increasing real agricultural wages, thereby contributing to rural poverty reduction. Bangladesh ranked 3rd in rice, 7th in mango, 8th in potato and guava, 3rd in inland open water capture production and 5th in world aquaculture production (MoP, 2020).



## UNDF in Action

Bangladesh is one of the signatories of the UNDF. Public policies recognize the diversity and complexity of the challenges faced by family farms is the key to end hunger and achieve inclusive food systems. The Government of Bangladesh formulated a National Agriculture Policy in 2018 which emphasizes women empowerment, participation of youth in agriculture and integrated farming for food and nutrition security, increased income and improvement of the livelihood.

Furthermore, the 8th Five Year Plan represents the first phase of the country's Perspective Plan 2041 (PP2041), which aims to bring Bangladesh closer to attaining major Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and eliminating extreme poverty by FY2031. In particular, the Plan aims at reducing moderate poverty from 16.36 to 11.54 percent, and extreme poverty from 7.57 to 4.78 percent, creating employment opportunities for youth and most importantly entrepreneur development and addressing the gap in issues related to nutrition, food security, production sustainability and impact of climate change in agriculture.

Bangladesh government is currently implementing result-oriented specific programs for sustainable agricultural management. Some of the on-going programs are: integrated farming (My House My Farm); incentives (Tk. 9 500 crore) for small & marginal farmers (input incentives); irrigation surcharges reduced to 50 percent by the Government, post-harvest machinery subsidy by 50 percent (70 percent in stress prone area); agriculture loans without mortgage for the small holders; agricultural loans at 4 percent interest (coping with COVID-19 pandemic); Farmer's Bank Account with Tk.10; establishment of vegetables and fruit village in each Upazila; agricultural rehabilitation and incentive for disaster affected districts; awareness for safe vegetables and fruit production; and training on improved and modern technologies etc.

Bangladesh is currently progressing in mobilizing actors to draft a national action plan.





# Contribution to sustainable food systems

The Constitution of Bangladesh recognises food and adequate nutrition as a fundamental right. Bangladesh has integrated food system transformation in its national policies and action plans as an integral tool to achieve Agenda 2030.

Investment in human capital and women’s empowerment, accompanied by sound macroeconomic management with a comfortable balance of payment position, and improved business climate, enabled Bangladesh to attain lower middle-income country status in 2015. A Perspective Plan: 2021-2041 (PP2041) has been developed to achieve the SDGs Agenda 2030, and to graduate to an upper middle-income country by 2031 and become a prosperous high-income country by 2041. The Eighth Five Year Plan (8th FYP) for the period July 2020 to June 2025, has initiated the implementation of PP2041, targeting achievement of SDGs’ targets, including the elimination of extreme poverty by 2031. A long-term comprehensive Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP) 2100 has also been formulated that focuses on economic growth, environmental conservation, and enhanced climate resilience.

The Eighth Five Year Plan, the National Agricultural Policy-2018, the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy-2020 and its Plan of Action (2021-2030) recognise the need for transformation of food systems. Bangladesh is also working on climate resilient agriculture and food system, intensifying efforts for ensuring food safety and quality food for everyone.



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# Bangladesh - a family farming story

**Mithy Barua** is part of a “dol” or team of an all-female rural farmers who live in communities near the Kuputalong camp in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. Kutupalong is home to the world’s biggest refugee camp with almost 255 000 Rohingya refugees. Through the Farmers’ Market Project of the World Food Program (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), local farmers like Mithu, found a new base of customers, improving diets of vulnerable refugees and generating higher incomes for farmers. Mithu wakes up early morning to collect the fresh produce harvested from her own farm and her team members’ farms. Her husband transports the produce to the market while Mithu does household chores before joining him in their bamboo stall. According to WFP, women farmers earned US\$ 15 000 selling vegetables, chicken, eggs, and fish to the refugees. The Farmers’ Market aims to address the deeply rooted challenges female farmers face in profiting from their labor, and bridge the gender gap which, in turn, benefits whole families.



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