



*Intergovernmental Institution
for the Use of Micro-algae Spirulina
Against Malnutrition*

Permanent Observer to the United Nations Economic and Social Council

STATEMENT BY:

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**INFORMAL PRESENTATION:
THE FOOD CRISIS AND MALNUTRITION/ SPIRULINA`S ROLE
AND BENEFITS IN DEVELOPING STATES.**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS:
28TH OF JULY 2008 CONFERENCE ROOM C**

IN COOPERATION WITH THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA TO THE UN

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Check Against Delivery

At the outset, I am most thankful to the Permanent Mission of Argentina that was instrumental to take lead and help IIMSAM organise today's seminar on an issue that demands an urgent attention by the international community, 'Food Crisis and Malnutrition- Spirulina's Role and Benefits for the Developing Countries.'

Malnutrition because of its severe negative impacts has been the main challenge towards the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Its cost in terms of human lives is enormous as around 40,000 children die daily because of malnutrition and related diseases across the world; not to mention the lives of around 852 million people that are disempowered in a drastic way globally.

According to the United Nations World Health Organization, more than starvation the real challenge today is malnutrition-the deficiency of micronutrients (vitamins, minerals and essential amino acids) that no longer allows the body to ensure growth and maintain its vital functions.

The present food crisis that the world is witnessing has further aggravated the problem where the international community had already failed to fulfil its promise to deliver adequate nutrition required by the human body to the peoples of the world.

Oxfam came out with a report last week about millions of people in East Africa that are being pushed into starvation and destitution due to rocketing food prices.

Spiralling cost of food combined with successive droughts, violent conflict and endemic poverty has affected almost 13 million people in the region. Unless addressed immediately the situation might turn into a potential catastrophe.

The Developing and the Least Developed Countries are especially vulnerable to this catastrophe as they not only suffer tremendous erosion in their respective human capital but are also derailed from the sustainable and equitable development process.

I was much inspired by Mahatma Gandhi in my younger days. I recite his words from various platforms whenever I speak on the very issue as they are imprinted in my memory; it was Gandhi who said ***that there are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.*** How very true these words seem in the present scenario.

To fulfil our commitments and promises in present crises environs is indeed a significant challenge.

We live today in an increasingly integrated and globalised world; and the growing interdependence of nations besides creating new challenges also creates significant opportunities to address various problems that impact the humankind. There are problems which no nation acting alone can solve and therefore we need participatory mechanisms of regional cooperation, we need multilateral cooperation, and we need global cooperation to deal with these new challenges.

Through IIMSAM, we aspire to make Spirulina a key-driver to eradicate malnutrition, achieve food security and bridge the health divide. Spirulina is an edible micro-algae that is abundant in all the essential proteins, minerals, vitamins and micro-nutrients required by the human body for healthy functioning.

Besides being cost effective in production and a long shelf life, Spirulina gets assimilated in the human body very easily and delivers nutrition even in circumstances where other supplements fail.

It has special relevance for the Developing Countries as most countries are endowed with physical conditions that are conducive to cultivate Spirulina, which are Sun and Water.

Spirulina cultivation at the grassroots or local levels initiates a multi-tiered virtuous empowerment process that leads towards building of substantial capacities and capabilities.

Food fortification through Spirulina, which in essence means adding a little Spirulina to the food consumed, is a potent tool to counter and eradicate malnutrition.

To realise a world free of hunger and malnutrition, IIMSAM advocates with various stakeholders to realise, recognise, implement, and mainstream the use of Spirulina in order to deliver adequate nutrition to the peoples of the world.

Participation is the key to success. I am grateful to you all who have come here today to participate in this vital discussion that has significant bearing and implications in current crises that we are facing.

When I was small, I was told that man is a special being and, if left to himself in an isolated condition, would be one of the weakest creatures; but associated with his kind, he works wonders.

I am confident that each one of us that is present here would be an instrument of positive change for a better world; and would help IIMSAM spread its message and fulfil its mandate of a world free of hunger and malnutrition. For there are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.

I thank you all for lending me a patient ear.