

[United Nations, 8th June 2007]

Your Excellencies, and distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most delighted to be here and interact with you on this fateful occasion, when IIMSAM is launching its official program, “The Right to Food Campaign Initiative Against Malnutrition” with its aim to counter, combat, and overcome malnutrition through the use of micro-algae Spirulina.

Malnutrition, no doubt, is the biggest challenge that the humankind faces and must be overcome on an immediate priority basis, should there be a sincere and common will to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

The linkage between nutrition and human development is well recognized and so is the significance of quality nutrition in public health. Malnutrition is by far the most important single cause of illness and death globally. The costs of malnutrition in terms of lost development and productivity are enormous. Even mild to moderate malnourishment in the womb reduces future cognitive development of a child. It has serious impacts on groups that have traditionally been marginalized such as women and the girl child. Thus nutrition plays a crucial role in the reproduction of poverty from one generation to the next and must be tackled to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Without the distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition, it is a fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger and have access to safe and nutritious food. Only when basic necessities are fulfilled will there be real progress. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as the right of every human being cannot be realized unless there is felt need for establishing equitable and sustainable food systems.

The Right to Food Campaign Initiative against Malnutrition envisions raising the level of nutrition and improvement of public health through Spirulina- a micro-algae abundant in essential proteins, minerals and vitamins that can be easily assimilated by the human body.

Spirulina’s preventive and curative aspects; and inherent benefits of easy availability, accessibility, and affordability coupled with its easy assimilation in the human body would make it an important policy tool of tremendous practical significance to enrich the human capital across the globe.

I am confident that The Right to Food Campaign Initiative Against Malnutrition would pave way for genuine partnerships between the state and non-state actors, institutions and individuals and would make them a willing and an active stakeholder in our aspirations and mission to attain global food security and bridge the health divide.

Through The Right to Food Campaign Initiative against Malnutrition, IIMSAM shall redeem its pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to our mandate to end malnutrition and to the still larger cause of humanity.

It is my fervent hope that the agenda of IIMSAM's "The Right to Food Campaign Initiative against Malnutrition" would be given serious consideration and acted upon by the policy makers, planners and others to make Spirulina a key-driver to secure the Right to Food and quality nutrition for all.

Inclusion of Spirulina as a viable option in the global food security agenda would not only have a special relevance for the developing countries but would also be a significant step to make 'health for all' and achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, a reality.

As we celebrate, millions perish because of malnutrition. Developing countries fail to stem their erosion of human capital and continue to lag behind in the development process and agenda. There is human misery and darkness and gloom abound. That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving. We have to do much before we redeem the pledges we have so often taken. As long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over. And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams and ambitions.

The moment we mark and celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. To the Member States and the peoples of the world we send greetings and reiterate our commitment to cooperate with them to end the scourge of malnutrition.

I thank you all for joining me to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future.