

**Deliberation of Md. Abdul Latif**, Executive Director, CDB during the inaugural session of the 6<sup>th</sup> Asian Cotton Research and Development Network Meeting at BARC auditorium on June 18-20, 2014.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim,

Honourable Chairman of the inaugural session of the 6<sup>th</sup> Asian Cotton Research and Development Network Meeting, Dr. Nazmul Islam, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Honourable Minister, Ministry of Agriculture

Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council, Dr. Md. Kamal Uddin,

Dr. Abid Mahmood, Chairman, Asian Cotton Research and Development Network, Pakistan

Dr. M. Rafiq Chaudhry, International Cotton Advisory Committee, USA

Distinguished Cotton Scientists of different countries of the world,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamu Alaikum & Good morning.

It is a great pleasure to be with you this morning to participate in the inaugural session of the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Asian Cotton Research & Development Network jointly organized by ICAC, BARC, and Cotton Development Board, Ministry of agriculture, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. I welcome every participant to join this meeting in Dhaka.

Dear Participants,

We know that the textile industry is the largest manufacturing sector in Bangladesh, providing employment to approximately 5.5 million people, contributing to around 13 percent of GDP, 40 percent of value addition in manufacturing, and accounting for 78 percent of the country's export earnings. During the last three decades textiles has come out as the major manufacturing sub-sector with spectacular growth in Bangladesh. The Textile Sector meets almost 95% domestic requirement of yarns & Fabrics. Besides it largely fulfils the demand of our export oriented RMG Manufacturers both in the knit & woven categories. But our production of raw cotton is very small amount. Under normal conditions, domestic cotton production can only meet about 3 to 4 percent of the country's current demand for raw cotton. We import most of the raw cotton from different countries such as Uzbekistan, India, USA, and some African countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The cultivation of cotton and its manufactures into textile has been practiced in the region since prehistoric time. The finest cotton fabric- Moslin once produced in medieval Bengal was famous throughout the world. The cotton for producing Moslin was grown on high lands around the capital Dhaka where most Moslin handlooms were located. However, the production and trading of Moslin gradually declined during the British rule ultimately resulting to closure of the industry by early nineteenth century. Prior to the independence of Bangladesh, raw cotton requirement of our textile industry was met from Pakistan. After independence, textile industries of Bangladesh faced serious crisis. Under these circumstances, Cotton Development Board (CDB) was established by the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1972, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh to boost up cotton production in the country.

Dear scientists,

Two types of cotton, namely the upland cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum*) and Comilla/Hill Cotton (*Gossypium arboreum*) are grown in Bangladesh. Upland cotton cultivation was commercially started in 1974-75. Recently, CDB was introduced upland hybrid cotton varieties from china with the collaboration of private seed companies. The average yield in farmers level of hybrid cotton is 3.0-3.5 tons per hectare. Due to high yield and good price, cotton is now a profitable crop to the farmers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cotton Development Board (CDB) conducts adaptive research of cotton varieties/hybrids, and is also responsible for providing extension services to the cotton farmers. Collaborating with private seed companies, the CDB has introduced a few high yielding Chinese hybrids. As a result, cotton production trend is increasing. The CDB has undertaken a program to increase gradually domestic cotton production to 670,000 bales (from 100,000 hectares) by the end of 2021. The CDB strategy includes expanded use of new high yielding varieties, a gradual replacement of 20,000 hectares of tobacco to cotton cultivation, increased cultivation in the drought and saline prone areas of Bangladesh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting will create an opportunity for the Cotton Scientists and Cotton Experts from public and private sector of the Asian countries including Bangladesh to share their experience, views and ideas for the development of research network among the cotton growing countries of Asia.

CDB feels proud to host the meeting and welcoming the participants from home and abroad for their active participation in the meeting. I hope that the participants from Asian countries will enjoy our heritage and hospitality.

I believe this meeting will help us to develop the linkages with big and advance cotton growing countries in respect of research, development, and cotton trade and cotton textile of our country. I think ICAC can play important role in the field of research and development of cotton and can develop other inter governmental linkages for trade and business of cotton.

I welcome again you all to attend the meeting and I wish every success of this meeting.  
Thank you very much.