Mr. Chairman,

Ensuring food security for its citizens has been a focus of India’s development efforts. We have, among other measures, improved both agricultural output as well as productivity. An example of our success is that India is the world’s second largest producer of both wheat and rice.

However, our land and water resources are under considerable strain. Despite accounting for only 2.4 per cent of the world’s geographical area and 4 per cent of global water resources, India supports about 17 per cent of the world’s human population.

This problem is expected to intensify, with increasing food grain demand and falling per capita water availability.

India’s policies and programmes are, therefore, oriented towards sustainable agricultural practices and sustainable development.
India’s National Action Plan on Climate Change includes a National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture as a key component.

We have launched a National Food Security Mission, which aims at a substantial increase in production of rice, wheat and pulses. A national agriculture development scheme has a primary focus on incentivizing local governments to increase the share of agriculture in their development plans.

Other measures aim at integrated rural development, including improving the economic well being of farmers, avoiding diversion of agricultural land for other purposes, appropriate land-use planning, promotion of bio-fertilizer, crop diversification, micro irrigation systems, and judicious use of organic, soil nutrients and chemical fertilizers.

In addition, we are actively promoting integrated management of land and water resources through watershed development programmes and holistic development of rainfed areas.

Local government participation has been particularly successful in these efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

Sustainable development, however, cannot be addressed without addressing poverty, especially in developing countries, where millions depend for their livelihoods primarily on the natural resource base of their immediate environment.

Poverty eradication measures must, therefore, be the centrepiece of national development efforts, as well as of the international agenda.

Growth and development in developing countries is key. The ongoing financial and economic crisis must not be an excuse to dilute ODA and other commitments, or to
institute protectionist measures in any form. Development cannot be halted or sacrificed in the search for solutions to the crisis.

Mr. Chairman,

A major challenge before all of us is that of climate change. Ongoing negotiations under the UNFCCC must ensure that the development imperatives of developing countries are fully taken into account, with the outcome being ambitious and equitable.

The outcome must fully respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in letter and spirit.

High agricultural subsidies in developed countries must be significantly reduced if not eliminated.

The international community must actively facilitate development and transfer of technology to developing countries in a cost-effective manner. Collaborative R & D between the developed and the developing countries needs to be promoted in particular. The existing IPR regime must also be revisited in a way that ensures a balance between reward for innovators with a common good of humankind.

Before concluding, Mr. Chairman, let me emphasize the importance of South-South cooperation. India is very happy to share its useful and wide-ranging experience in various fields with fellow developing countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.