

Professor Dr. S M Abdul-Awal

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The Honorable Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mr. Tarique Rahman, appointed Professor Dr. S M Abdul-Awal as a Principal Coordinator of SDG Affairs at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on March 15, 2026, tasking him with the responsibility of coordinating and advancing the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh. Dr. Awal is a Professor of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, Khulna University, and a former Vice Chancellor of Pabna University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh.

Dr. Awal earned his Ph.D. in Plant Sciences (Biochemistry & Cell Signaling) from the Churchill College, University of Cambridge, UK in 2015. Before coming to Cambridge, he obtained a Master of Molecular Biology from Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium and B.Sc. in Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering from Khulna University, Bangladesh. He completed postdoctoral research at University of California at Berkeley (2018–2020), and later served as a Research Scientist at Colorado State University, USA (2022–2024), contributing to a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded allele (gene) mining project. As the lead scientist of the drought trait discovery wing, he applied advanced computational biology and data science approaches to develop high-yielding, drought-tolerant sorghum varieties. In this capacity, he also coordinated activities across the USA and African regions to support food security initiatives for vulnerable populations. Dr. Awal has been invited to deliver scientific talks at leading global institutions and international conferences and summits, including the University of Glasgow, University of British Columbia, University of Geneva, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the Global Sorghum Conference (France) and the Global Food Summit (Germany). He was recognized as an outstanding alumnus of the Beahrs Environmental Leadership Program at UC Berkeley. He received national and international grants and published a significant number of journal and conference papers and one manual book on mangrove tree species for the coastal shrimp farmers in Bangladesh. Based on his academic and research excellence, he has served as a reviewer for leading journals such as Plant Physiology and The Plant Cell, published by the American Society of Plant Biologists. Throughout his academic career, Dr. Awal has been awarded several prestigious international fellowships, including Fulbright, Cambridge Commonwealth Trust, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), VLIR-UOS, and AIBS.

In his current role, Dr. Awal's vision is to implement sustainable solutions that promote climate-resilient agriculture, enhanced food security, equitable access to nutrition, improved health and education, and social justice, thereby contributing to a hunger-free, healthy, and inclusive society.