

**India Offers to Share Experience in Agriculture with ASEAN Nations Agriculture  
Minister Addresses Third ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting**

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Minister for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries, Shri Sharad Pawar, today invited ASEAN countries to collaborate with India in farm research so as to face common challenges such as climate change. He also offered to share India's vast experience in agriculture with ASEAN nations.

The Minister was speaking at the third ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture at Kuala Lumpur.

Elaborating on the importance of ASEAN-India cooperation in farm sector, the Minister said: "The report of the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change has projected rise of average temperature, intensification of rains resulting in floods, enhanced frequency of natural disasters, new biotic stresses etc., thus threatening the growth and sustainability of the agricultural sector. The severity of these climatic events is also likely to more in the South and South East Asia region. A National Initiative on Climate resilient Agriculture (NICRA) has been launched [in India] to assess the impact of climate change on agriculture and allied sectors in the country and evolve cost effective adaptation and mitigation strategies.

"There are also other formidable challenges such as shrinking land base, dwindling water resources, shortage of farm labour, and increasing costs and uncertainties associated with volatility in international markets. Diversification towards higher value crops and livestock remains the best way not only to improve farm incomes and accelerate growth, but also to reduce stress on natural resources which form farmers' production base. The challenges are common to the region and their impacts often cut across the national borders.

"These call for a strong research support to harness the potential of modern science, encourage innovations in technology generation, and provide for an enabling policy and investment support. Some of the critical areas such as genomics, molecular breeding, diagnostics and vaccines, nanotechnology, secondary agriculture, farm mechanization, energy efficiency, agri-incubators and technology dissemination need to be given priority. Multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional approach in research is the present day need given the fact that technology generation is increasingly getting knowledge and capital intensive. New technological tools especially through genetic engineering need to be employed more aggressively to build tolerance to various abiotic and biotic stresses that inhibit crop yields."

**AGRICULTURE'S SIGNIFICANT ROLE FOR STABILITY, POVERTY ERADICATION**

Shri Pawar emphasized the importance of agriculture in mitigating poverty. He said, "In

my country studies have shown that one percent growth in agriculture sector is two times more effective in poverty eradication than growth in other sectors.”

Stressing that agriculture and food security are today occupying centre stage in the political economy of nations and in global interactions, Shri Pawar said, **“Countries are realizing that it is not just the growth in GDP, or the strength of their standing armies, or the reserves of mineral and oil wealth, but the ability to ensure food and nutrition security at affordable and stable prices in an ecologically sustainable paradigm that guarantees long term peace and stability to a nation.** And the best support that nations can give to each other is not assistance in food – but assistance in revamping farm economies and growing food, in sharing information about seeds, technologies, equipment, policies and institutional support measures to achieve the above objectives.”

He further elaborated: “One of the major challenges confronting agriculture in India as well as ASEAN countries is to achieve the goal of faster but inclusive economic growth in a sustainable manner. The principles of enhanced productivity, profitability, environmental and human safety remain at the core of the development. With enormous wealth of natural resources and expertise available in the region mutual cooperation between India and ASEAN States could play a significant role in the development process in the region and also ensure a faster progress.”

#### **GOOD PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST MEET**

Expressing satisfaction over the progress made in farm cooperation in the last one year, the Minister noted that the Conference of Heads of Agricultural Universities and Research Institutions of ASEAN and India held at New Delhi a few months back identified strategies on the modalities of cooperation and focused on the exchange of scientists, networking amongst the Institutions and fellowships for promoting higher agricultural education. The discussions were helpful in identifying key areas of mutual interest with the aim of enhancing agricultural productivity to meet challenges of food security as well as enhancing their accessibility to global market. The third meeting of the ASEAN-India Working Group on Agriculture and Forestry held in May, 2013 in India identified the research projects of mutual interest.

#### **INDIA OFFERS TO SHARE ITS VAST EXPERIENCE IN AGRICULTURE**

The Minister narrated the progress of Indian agriculture sector in the recent past and offered to share its experience with ASEAN nations. He said: “We have not only achieved self sufficiency in food, but have also done extremely well in horticulture dairying ,milk production, fisheries , post harvest management and development of cold chain infrastructure. We now produce over 260 MT of cereals, 160 MT of horticulture produce, 133 MT of milk, 350 lakh bales of cotton, 24 MT of sugar besides spices, etc. We have followed the Mission approach to address issues of production, productivity and post harvest management in many crops. Our Agriculture Research System in the form of Indian Council of Agriculture Research is one of the largest in the world. When you visit

India next year for the fourth Inter Ministerial, I hope that you and your delegation members can see for yourself the significant strides that have been achieved during the last few years. It is our belief that while economic growth is good, growth in agriculture is the best for it brings equity, equality and spread of resources to the largest sections of society.

“It is a matter of great satisfaction that the food basket of my country has been diversified with increasing share coming from relatively under developed regions. From Andaman Nicobar islands to Kashmir and Lakshadweep to North Eastern States, India have very diverse topography with rainfall ranging from as low as 50 mm per year to 12000 mm. Not only we have been able to meet the demand of 17% of global population residing in India, but have also exported nearly 20 million tonnes of food grains, thus, becoming a major contributor to the world food basket. Thanks to the liberal import-export policy, India could earn 40 billion dollars through the exports of agriculture produce. The satisfactory production of food grains helped us to roll out Food Security Act in September, 2013 which gives legal guarantee to more than 800 million populations of food grains at affordable prices. We take pride in mentioning that this is world’s largest social sector programme.

“I wish to see the present cooperation and collaboration between the ASEAN and India strengthen further, especially in the area of capacity building, collaborative research programmes and efficient management of resources for increased production and productivity in agriculture. We shall be happy to share our successes and experiences in the field of agriculture and forestry with ASEAN countries.”

Shri Pawar invited ASEAN agriculture ministers to India for the fourth Ministerial Meeting, to be held next year in New Delhi.