

India has one of the strongest national agricultural research systems in the world: Shri Radha Mohan Singh India taken up the initiative for the establishment of 150 Seed Hubs for pulses: Shri Singh

Shri Radha Mohan Singh addresses the representatives at the 5th Regional Coordination Meeting of ICARDA-South Asia & China Regional Program

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Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Shri Radha Mohan Singh expressed happiness about his participation in 5th Regional Coordination meeting of ICARDA's South Asia & China Regional Program on "Strategic Partnership towards enhancing Food and Nutritional Security in South Asia & China". The Representatives from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, Egypt, India, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sudan participated in this meeting where South-South cooperation in agricultural research for development was discussed. It is being organised at NASC Complex, Pusa, New Delhi.

Shri Singh said that this forum presents an invaluable opportunity for Member Countries to once again reaffirm their commitment towards ensuring food and nutritional security through alleviation of poverty and hunger, in the region, as well as globally.

India's strengths in agriculture are many and diverse. We boast of one of the strongest national agricultural research systems in the world. Geographically, we have the second-largest arable area, and as many as 127 diverse agro-climatic zones, thereby giving India global leadership in several crops. We are second globally, in terms of production of rice, wheat, fish, fruits and vegetables. India is also the world's biggest milk producer. Even our horticulture sector has shown an average growth of 5.5% annually over the last decade.

Despite all this, challenges persist in Indian agriculture. Farmers are our primary stakeholders, and keeping this in mind, we have launched many new initiatives to increase our farm yield and double our farmers' income by raising their socio-economic status.

Union Agriculture Minister said that India has taken up the initiative for the establishment of 150 Seed Hubs for pulses, ensuring timely availability of sufficient quantity of quality seeds. The establishment of seed hubs for other crops is also being undertaken.

Shri Singh said that Indian approach to partnership with African nations in agriculture is driven by the aim of South-South Cooperation through research for development, capacity building, access to Indian market, and support to Indian investments in agriculture in Africa. ICARDA has considerable experience of working closely with most African countries to deliver science-led technologies for the benefit of farmers, and can act as a catalyst in this endeavor under an India-Africa-ICARDA initiative.

Shri Singh said that some coordinating centres like the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) are being implemented to ensure food and nutritional security in the country. India envisages ICARDA's Food Legume Research Platform (FLRP) under this domain as well. India and ICARDA have had a long-standing collaboration in the field of agricultural research and development, which has only strengthened significantly over the years.

Union Agriculture Minister said that at present ICARDA collaborates with 8 ICAR institutions and 15 State Agricultural Universities, and has introduced several thousand landraces, wild species and newly developed breeding lines to India of the its mandated crops, and shared with its partners. Shri Singh further informed that India remains one of the biggest global importers of ICARDA germplasm for research.

Shri Singh said this year, India-ICARDA collaboration peaked another level when the Union Cabinet of India, chaired by the hon'ble Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi, approved granting an international status under the United Nations (Privileges and Immunities) Act, 1947, to ICARDA in India, and supported the establishment of Satellite Hubs in West Bengal (exclusively for pulses) and Rajasthan (for NRM research on forages including spineless cactus, management of rangelands and silvi-pasture, developing models for improving crop-water productivity and conservation agriculture).

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