

Address by Shri Kailash Choudhary, Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Govt. of India in the 5th ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture & Forestry in Brunei Darussalam; 16th October, 2019

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

“I, on behalf of the Government of India and on behalf my fellow countrymen, convey warm Greetings on the occasion of the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture & Forestry between India and one of the important and prestigious Economic, Political and Cultural organization ASEAN, and also thank the Government of Brunei for hosting this important event. Congratulations to each one present here for being the part of this historical moment and best wishes to all the Senior Officials and Representatives of ASEAN Member States and India. The presence of Agriculture Ministers from the ASEAN region reflects keen interest and strong political will of government to make agriculture as one of the major drivers of economic and social development. I am sure that the deliberations would lead to long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors for the food, nutrition, environment and livelihood in the Region.”

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

India is committed to the principle and objectives for ensuring the welfare and the quality of life in the ASEAN Region by ensuring strategic cooperation in the areas of agriculture and allied sectors. Given the importance of enabling climate resilience in agriculture and allied sectors for carbon mitigation, India will go all out to empower the mission as envisaged by

the ASEAN member states in sharing our knowledge and provide handholding with our technologies.

Agriculture and food security remain among the priority issues of the Government of India with the key objective of ensuring food and nutrition security at affordable price in an eco-friendly environment. Agriculture is particularly important in the context of our region as majority of the population of our country is still dependent upon it to earn their livelihood. In this direction, India has developed 35 biofortified crop varieties that are rich in vitamins, iron, zinc, etc. to address the problem of malnutrition and for all round development.

As such, the agriculture sector in India provides employment to more than 58% for rural people as means of livelihood besides providing entrepreneurship opportunity. India has made great strides in the field of agriculture and allied sectors. During the past decades, India has paved the way for self-sufficiency in food and milk production through Green Revolution and the White Revolution and along with this we have also done very well in horticulture, fisheries and pulse production, and are working towards improving post-harvest management and development of cold chain infrastructure. Thanks to our National Agricultural Research System led by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). For reducing the risk of farmers in the era of climate change, the Government of India has developed district level contingency plans to enable climate resilience in agriculture. Real-time necessary information and suggestions are being provided to all registered farmers through mobile services to reduce the production loss. I am delighted to bring to your kind information that India has so far made 151 villages climate-resilient and this successful model is being successfully upscaled in other areas.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Government of India is committed to fulfil the goal of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to double the farmer's income by 2022 and to make Indian agriculture profitable and prestigious to our farming communities by way of boosting agricultural growth and to increase productivity in agriculture, explore new horizons and stride fast in agricultural research. Our programmes and policies are targeted to develop agricultural technologies and package of practices ensuring food and nutrition to all citizens of our country and to ensure livelihood security among the farming community. Our areas of priority for the agriculture sector include, 'more crop per drop', safeguarding soil-health, promotion of mechanization of small farms, increase pulses and oilseeds production and integrating horticulture, dairy, poultry and fisheries enterprises with strong 'Lab-to-Land' focus and ICT linkages besides building infrastructure, minimising risks and creating better marketing opportunities.

The Government has also made special efforts to usher Second Green Revolution in the country with focus on Eastern India. The efforts are also being directed towards organic farming and sustainable utilisation of the land and water resources and also towards making agriculture more efficient and profitable.

Further, we all should work together and share innovate, appropriate and reliable technologies in order to make ASEAN countries food secure, while also enabling processes for environmental health. While doing so, we should also be vigilant and share information on trans-boundary issues including plant and animal diseases to protect our food safety-nets. In this direction, India is working on 6 proposals to be rolled out for capacity building and human resource development in agriculture and allied sectors, as has been discussed

in the 6th Working Group Meeting for Agricultural & Forestry held in July, 2019 in Bangkok. Taking essence of our relationships, India is in the considering to establish scholarship for the benefit of students from ASEAN nations for pursuing agricultural education in both post-graduate and doctoral level.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I would conclude by saying that the deepening relations between India and ASEAN have raised new expectations and aspirations, which holds significant promise and potential. I am sure we will use this opportunity to further build upon our collaborations in the areas of food safety and environmental security, agricultural and forestry technologies, food processing, value chains, agricultural marketing and capacity building and take them to newer heights. While we may take comfort and satisfaction from the road we have covered so far, the journey ahead offers limitless opportunities. With our collective will, determination, and sincere endeavour, we can achieve far greater heights in our relationship through proactive and concerted efforts and interim calls on our cooperation.

Only those reach the target who have power in their dreams,
Wings are not enough; we need courage to fly.

Thank you

Jai Hind.