

Delhi Declaration on MILLETS

5th NATIONAL CONVENTION ON MILLETS
Enhancement of millet area to realize a nutritionally secure India

November 29-30, 2016
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murthi Bhavan,
New Delhi

Organised by
Millet Network of India
In association with
Nehru Memorial Museum & Library
Deccan Development Society
FIAN India

Having met at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi on November 29th and 30th we the millet farmers, women and men, civil society groups, scientists, policy makers, activists, environmentalists and others have come to the following conclusions which we are presenting as the Declaration from 5th National Convention on Millets.

We divided the two days into a number of Listening Sessions to discuss the role of States, Science and Media for *promoting Millets' cultivation and consumption* in which we heard concerns of the people from Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Telangana and Tamil Nadu who vividly described the millet situation in their states and they made the following declaration.

- Even after three years of the National Food Security Act was made, no state except for Karnataka has implemented the act. While states such as Andhra Pradesh are attempting to introduce millets in food programs in some districts, most of the states remain completely disinterested in even talking about the issues of malnutrition among the poor. MINI strongly feels that the spirit of the Act is still not being realized because of the failure of Food Corporation of India and State government to procure and supply millets in PDS.
- In the context, a representation from **Millet Sisters National Network** with about 5000 women millet farmers from nine states met the Union Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, **Shri Ram Vilas Paswan** and urged him to take a serious view of this lapse. A memorandum along with more than two lakh signatures and over 10000 post cards from across the country endorsing the following demands were submitted to him.
- The Convention reiterates the demand made in previous conventions to provide income support to millet farmers for their contribution to climate change, water conservation and nutrition bonus.

- Millets are important today not just for nutrition, but because it also represents the value of diversity that is central to our civilisational ethos. Hence we have to go back and reclaim our local food systems within the framework of food sovereignty and agroecological systems.
- Seed banking efforts being undertaken in various parts of the country should be documented and replicated.
- In the context of global trade and especially the negotiations at the WTO there is a danger of loss of control over intellectual property of millets. These crops are likely to be targeted as they are seen as super foods, and we need to be prepared for the fight. We urge the government to pursue vigorously a permanent solution on the public stock holding issue to safeguard the interest of small and marginal farmers in the country.
- The convention strongly urged the Minister for Women and Child Development, Govt of India, Smt. Maneka Gandhi, who was present at the Convention to abandon the centralized procurement of packaged foods for the supplementary nutrition programme of the ICDS. Instead the take home ration for children under the age of 3 as well as the hot cooked meal for the age groups of 3-6 years as well as all pregnant and nursing mothers a adolescent girls should comprise largely of millets and millet based products which are produced by local women Self Help Groups and farmer producers organisation.
- ***Millets came as silver lining at the time of distress during the phase of climate change, monocropping and with problems for soils and farmer suicides.*** Hence, we also suggest that it is important to reduce the cost of production and to ease the harvesting process of millets. And for this both civil supplies and agriculture departments can work hand in hand to frame policies that will help small farmers to cultivate millets in dry land regions which will eventually enhance the millet area.
- The convention has heard a large number of farmers' experiences from across the country that celebrate millet based ecological agriculture. These experiences could be woven into a policy matrix and ensure that India is food, farming and climate secure and we urge science and research community to recognize millet farmers' knowledge as science.

Endorsements from

1. Mr. Biraj Patnaik, **Principal Advisor to the Supreme Court Commissioners on Right to Food**, New Delhi.
2. Dr. Vilas Tonapi, **Director**, Indian Institute of Millets Research, Hyderabad.
3. Mr P V Satheesh, **National Convenor**, Millet Network of India
4. Dr. TN Prakash, **Chairman**, Agriculture Price Commission, Karnataka.
5. Dr. B. Suresh Reddy, **Associate Professor**, CESS, Hyderabad, Telangana.

6. Dr. P. Janaki Srinath, **Consultant Nutritionist Member**, National Executive Council, Indian Diabetic Association, Hyderabad.
7. Mr. T. Srinivas Rao, **Research Associate**, Delhi University, New Delhi.
8. Mr. Sanjay K Rai, **Director**, Asian Institute of Management, New Delhi.
9. Ms. Shalini Bhutani, **Legal Researcher and Policy Analyst**, New Delhi.
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