

Cabinet Secretary Arun K Seth to kick off 'Food for all' meet

Eminent panelists to deliberate strategy at The Club of Rome meet October 30-31

New Delhi, October 21, 2014

Eminent agricultural scientists, well known economists, environmentalists, bureaucrats, political leaders and members of civil society will converge here later this month to develop a strategy to ensure 'Food for All'.

The 2014 annual conference of the Indian chapter of The Club of Rome, a global think tank focused on a international economic, social and political issues, will be kicked off with an opening address by India's top bureaucrat Ajit Kumar Seth.

The Union Cabinet Secretary's presence signifies the immense importance of 'Food for All' at the policy and implementation levels.

The Chairman of National Commission on Farmers Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, well-known for his role in using scientific research to boost India's agricultural growth, will explain the paradox that a nation, which has sufficient availability of food grains for all citizens, also suffers from malnutrition. .

"In India nearly five million new born babies are affected by malnutrition every year. The Club of Rome conference will act as a global catalyst for change for this crucial problem facing humanity," says Dr. Ashok Khosla, former President of the Club of Rome and Chairman, Development Alternatives.

Mr. S. Ramadorai, Chairman, Indian National Association for the Club of Rome and National Skills Development Corporation and National Skills Development Agency says, **"Increase in population is rapidly depleting soil quality, water availability and energy supplies. Several other factors of crop production, especially environment, continue to decline."**

"It is only appropriate that we get India's best minds from scientific, economic and diplomatic community and political leadership at the State, National and Global level put their heads together to address the challenges facing the 21st century inter-dependent world," adds Mr. Ramadorai.

The conference will explore and identify proven methods that can bring about large scale, sustainable and scalable solutions for enhancing availability of food and nutrition.

Mr. Ramadorai firmly believes that application of innovative technologies, cutting edge science and partnerships is the way to develop affordable machines and devices that can help improve agriculture.

Former top Indian diplomat and member, National Security Advisory Board Mr. Shyam Saran and Mr. Harsh Mander, Honorary Director, Centre for Equity Studies will bring in their global experience in building bridges between the between haves and have nots and create inter linkages to bring in equity among nations and people.

Eminent economists and planners – Prof. Y. K. Alagh, Chancellor, The Central University of Gujarat and Dr. Ashok Gulati, Chairman, CACP will be part of a session on Systems, Inter-linkages and Coherence where Jairam Ramesh will bring in his first-hand experience of managing environment in a rapidly growing economy. Mr. Nitin Desai, the United Nation's

former

Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs and Member, Indian National Association for the Club of Rome leads a session on environment and resources issues.

Mr. Suresh P. Prabhu, Chairperson, Council on Energy, Environment and Water will bring in his perspectives of striking a balance between State and local politics for coherence in food policies when he debates the issue with Agriculture Ministers of large food producing states like Punjab, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana with those representing North Eastern states.

HSBC's India Head Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai and Fortis Hospital's Chairman Emeritus Mr. Harpal Singh will present their strategy to deal with the economic and social issues of food security.

An open forum on October 31 will see Former Union Cabinet Secretary Mr. K. M. Chandrasekhar, now Vice-Chairman, Kerala State Planning Board and political leaders such as **Ms. Supriya Sule, Mr. Jairam Ramesh and Dr. Ajay Vir Jakhar** share thoughts on the fundamentals of a food-secure future.

Senior leaders from Indian Council for Agricultural Research, National Dairy Development Board, Department of Bio-Technology and Gene Campaign will share their India experiences as also learn from those of global organisations like Borlaug Institute for South Asia, National Geographic Society, The Nature Conservancy and the World Future Council.

As a nation, India has many goals to fulfil for making a better future for its people. Among all these, perhaps none is of higher priority than enabling secure access to food for every citizen. Some of the impediments to achieving food and nutrition security lies in the policies within the agriculture sector and others relate to the inconsistencies of policies in seemingly unrelated sectors.. The interplay of food-land-water-energy-climate change policies present instances where overall outcomes can run counter to some of the intended goals.

For advocates of particular solutions, whether on the supply or the demand side, the different viewpoints are generally the result of fundamental differences in the premises or perceptions on which they are based.

The most important ones relate to different aspects of the fundamental issue of equity and the commitment, or the lack thereof, to a world that is fair, and to the sectoral balance needed for a healthy economy. A balanced economy clearly is a necessary condition for sustainability.

The conference will identify policies that facilitate or hinder the nutrition security goals and what needs to be done to bring it into alignment with that overarching goal.

Other key speakers include Prof Norman Uphoff, former director of the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture, and Development; Dr. Anders Wijkman - Co-President of the Club of Rome, Former member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chairman of the Tällberg Foundation; Mr. David Bennett VP National geographic, Mr. William Ginn of the Nature Conservancy, Lorena Fischer of World Future Council, policy makers and members from civil society.

About the Club of Rome

Founded in 1968 at Rome, Italy, the organization is a gathering of eminent thought leaders including current and former heads of state, UN bureaucrats, high-level politicians and government officials, diplomats, scientists, economists and business leaders from around the globe. The Club's mission is "to act as a global catalyst for change through the identification and analysis of the crucial problems facing humanity and the communication of such problems to the most important public and private decision makers as well as to the general public".

The spokespersons for the Indian Chapter of the Club of Rome are:

Mr. S. Ramadorai, Vice Chairman of Tata Consultancy Services and Chairman of National Skill Development Agency and National Skill Development Corporation is the Chairman of the National Association for the Club of Rome.

Mr. Ranjit Barthakur, Founder and Chairman of the Globally Managed Services is the founding Secretary General of the Club of Rome's India Chapter. He is the Chief Architect of the thought process at GMS of developing the theme of Naturenomics - A Differentiated Approach to Capital Formation, and has co-founded several initiatives under this theme that promote community based agriculture and bio-diversity initiatives.

Dr. Ashok Khosla is one of the world's leading experts on the environment and sustainable development. He was President of the Club of Rome (2005-12) and is Chairman, Development Alternatives. He is a winner of The UN Sasakawa Environment Prize and of the Zayed International Environment Prize.

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