

## THE NEW DELHI CHARTER - 2012

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, in collaboration with the National Council for Climate Change & Sustainable Development (NCCSD) Ahmedabad, Gujarat organized the International Conference on Climate Change, Sustainable Agriculture and Public Leadership over 7 – 9 February, 2012 at the National Agriculture Science Complex, New Delhi, India.

Deliberations at the conference were enriched with the participation of technical experts, decision makers in the government, financial institutions, and practitioners from several countries, in addition to students, researchers and industry. This included such International agencies as the IFAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the ICARDA and the ICRISAT. Representatives from the embassies of Indonesia, Vietnam, Germany, China and Kenya too were present. Civil society organizations and farmers too lent their perspectives on these aspects. The conference was supported by the ICRISAT, the Planning Commission of the Government of India, Vigyan Prasar of the department of Science and Technology, Government of India and the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development, India.

The Conference took note of the fact that agriculture world over and India in particular is growing significantly. However, this growth may be influenced by the impacts of global warming and climate change.

- Several policies, plans, programmes and initiatives are being developed in response to this perceived call for action.
- It is, therefore, timely and appropriate to consider this context and the call as an opportunity to develop and implement mutually reinforcing plans, programmes and projects directly relevant at the local level.
- This will also help foster leadership at all levels involving elected and non-elected members of public governance system to guide well informed action centered on agriculture.
- It is only logical that ecologically sound agriculture will deliver such multiple benefits as enhanced productivity, improved management of water, soil and bio resources.

This perspective has enormous implications for a robust public policy to promote expansive agriculture, optimize conservation and productivity gains and minimize externalities simultaneously.

We, the participants of the International Conference on Climate Change, Sustainable Agriculture and Public Leadership:

**RECOGNIZE** that agriculture is growing significantly and evolved in ways that can effectively target and help tackle persistent challenges inter-alia poverty, ill health, malnutrition and hunger, issues pertaining to energy security, land degradation, loss of

bio diversity and climate change with its cross cutting impacts. In this context it is important to re-emphasize the unique capacity of agriculture to absorb Co2 and reduce its level in the atmosphere and simultaneously release oxygen through photosynthesis. This is central to provide food security and sustainable livelihood to growing hungry millions. This also has enormous implications for agriculture based mitigation and adaptation interventions.

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the contribution of agricultural scientists, farmer communities, policy makers and the civil society and the challenges faced by small and marginal farmers and landless farm workers in particular,

Are **CONSCIOUS** of the need to assist rapid integration of sustainable and innovative climate resilient agriculture practices keeping in view small and marginal farmers

Are **AWARE** of wide-ranging farm innovations being tested and validated in many parts of the world

Are **ENCOURAGED** by the progress made in modern agriculture particularly in the field of biotechnology, nanotechnology, bio-informatics, agro-forestry, natural resources management and development of human and institutional capacity and the mutually reinforcing formal and informal learning systems at various stages of development and implementation around the world to impart education on recent developments in these and related areas

Are **INSPIRED** by recent policy developments at global and national levels that recognize the need to enable climate resilient agriculture and initiatives

And **APPEAL** to the international funding mechanisms, governments, communities and leadership to recognize the need to mainstream Agriculture as a key economic activity and support locally relevant mitigation and adaptation action duly considering the national, regional and global significance of climate change and its impact on different ecosystems including agriculture and back this with an integrated policy and programme framework.

We, therefore, unanimously through New Delhi Charter invite parliamentarians, decision makers, financial institutions, academicians and experts in fields related to agriculture and environment to join in and recognize the specific role everyone concerned can play as part of this process. This initiative further recognizes and proposes the need for concerted action to:

- Develop cross-sectoral policies and institutional frameworks to support climate resilient agriculture including agro-forestry, fishery and livestock-based farming

systems at the national level considering developmental imperatives and aligned with regional and multi-lateral environmental agreements

- Evolve system-specific market tools/mechanisms that reward farmers and communities for their carbon - efficient action
- Improve farming practices to reduce impacts on the quality and quantity of resources considering the relative contribution of such action to the overall profile of greenhouse gases implicated in global warming and climate change
- Develop agro-meteorological warning systems accessible to the farmers and build their capacities to protect crops from inclement climate related phenomena and impacts including insect infestations, pest dynamics, diseases, etc with implications also at the post – harvest stage to plan appropriate preventive / remediation strategies in the future
- Enhance research on the identification of species for salinity / drought stress tolerance and productivity enhancement, maximum Co<sub>2</sub> absorption, judicious use of biotic and a biotic resources and value addition to products at all levels and ensure that productivity enhance is institutionalized all across the country.
- Consolidate learnings into a well structured body of knowledge particularly for the benefit of the farming communities; relating successes, limitations of experiences and practices to strengthen livelihood options and enrich perspectives to enable local level decisions / actions.
- Reinforce outreach using diverse ICT tools, and build capacities through value added contents to enable timely interventions duly recognizing the rich and significant knowledge and experience communities have to tackle adversities and integrate with the expertise of scientists and initiatives of the government and NGOs. This can be strengthened on the principles of knowledge economy to optimize knowledge output and applications that are locally relevant.
- Introduce a dynamic extension approach to reach out to farmers at their doorstep prior to sowing operations, along with information related to market demand, market price, access to quality inputs and equipment and insurance/safe guards against spurious supply of seeds/ fertilizer/pesticide/equipment
- Popularize development of climate resilient agriculture through an integrated, interdisciplinary, multi-institutional and multi-stakeholders and concerted approach
- Strategically position Climate Resilient Integrated Farming Systems as an important area of investment for small and marginal farming community, land rehabilitation, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation and improved food and nutritional security.
- Enhance public and private investment on value addition to agricultural products, innovations and initiatives including research, education and development of Wasteland, Wetlands and degraded areas, river basin projects and such unique systems that can strengthen resilience.
- Promote agro-ecology and biodiversity including locally adapted vegetation to optimize productivity. This has to be complemented with integrated waste treatment

systems for value added energy benefits (Community Biogas systems). Equal important has to be on promoting locally adapted original breeds of animals/livestock/fisheries.

- Prevent back sliding of the already sub-optimal growth of agriculture and of the condition of small farmers. The latter should be protected from sliding further below the poverty line, because of the implications on social turmoil and quality of life. It is essential to therefore strengthen such community centered democratic systems as the Panchayat Raj in India and other comparable institutions in countries with similar contexts of development and institutional mechanisms.
- Foster and strengthen leadership traits of elected and non-elected leaders in communities and youth in particular to play well informed and goal oriented roles to address challenges related to food security, development, natural resource management and climate change together, as interlinked issues, through a “Farmers First” framework
- Lobby to prioritize and mainstream agriculture and the interests of farmers in all policies, plans, programmes and projects for implementation of the above stated
- Expand choices available to women, landless farm workers and other vulnerable groups to further increase their access to land and crop / tree-based products and services.
- Coalesce at the local level and develop an International Consortium for collective action to mainstream agriculture as the integrated mitigation and adaptation tool for sustainable development and to tackle the present and emerging challenges posed by climate change, duly recognizing the diverse initiatives already in progress
- Introduce scientific agriculture practices based on soil health and moisture analyses and provide appropriate information in a timely manner on a crop-specific basis so that farmers can act in a well informed manner considering their specific requirements.
- Introduce special measures to promote Agriculture in urban areas/industrial estates for enhanced vegetation cover etc.

The distinguished participants at the International Conference on Climate Change, Sustainable Agriculture and Public Leadership unanimously resolved to take steps aligned with the New Delhi Charter.

Importantly we recognize the fact that, sustainable agriculture signifies the means and the end in this process in the context of climate change.

The New Delhi Charter on Climate Change, Sustainable Agriculture and Public Leadership has been unanimously adopted.

Resolved that this should be widely circulated to all the national and international organizations and esteemed member states of the FAO of the United Nations with a request to accept and implement the recommendations to achieve the goals of sustainable agriculture, relevant for the whole of human civilization.

Resolved that International negotiations on Climate Change may take note of the urgent need to mainstream / strengthen agriculture as a integrated tool to mitigate impacts of Global Warming and suitably adapt through appropriate and sustainable livelihood and food security measures.

Further resolved that each one will act spontaneously in furtherance of the above stated, jointly and individually and not wait for the other to initiate.

New Delhi, India  
February 9, 2012

Adopted unanimously