



भारतीय कृषि एवं खाद्य परिषद्  
INDIAN COUNCIL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**2015**

## Report on 1st Meeting of the Board of Directors, ICFA



**20 November 2015**

**Indian International Centre, New Delhi**



## Indian Council of Food and Agriculture

### 1st Meeting of the Board of Directors

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Board of Directors of ICFA was held on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2015 at the Indian International Centre, New Delhi. Following are the minutes of the meeting:

**Dr. MJ Khan, Chairman, ICFA**, convened this meeting and welcomed all the Board of Directors. He emphasised the importance of this first ever board meeting of ICFA to discuss and finalise various operational aspects. He pointed out that initial activities have already started and few recruitments being done including one Executive Director. He also highlighted the future aim of forming Institutional collaboration and creation of National Councils, and State and District chapters for expanding the reach of ICFA. International offices in the initial years may be cost prohibitive but ICFA can always go for Joint Business Councils with different foreign bodies.

**Mr. Alok Sinha, IAS (1973 Batch), former Chairman, FCI and Secretary General, ICFA**, in his briefing to the participants of the meeting highlighted the agenda of the meeting. He opined that ICFA should do a combination of advocacy as well as facilitation. The body shall take project management wherever and whenever possible. For best results in advocacy, facilitation and project management, ICFA will do continuous research, forecasting based on assessment and intelligence analysis, and preparation, updating and propagation of Best Practices Manuals. Each working group may co-opt other Working Group Heads as well as a select set of stakeholders and experts. Each group may have farmers to have direct interface with ground situation. He also advised each working group to identify a few urgent issues affecting agri-sector and initiate outline of a draft policy paper to be taken up with Govt as well domestic and international stakeholders. He also discussed criteria and layers of membership of ICFA.

**Dr. Rita Sharma, IAS (1974 Batch) former Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development and Chairperson of the Policy Group of ICFA** discussed two national issues. She talked about renaming of Ministry of Agriculture to Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and how is it going to translate to actual delivery on field, and what are the implications of various schemes and programs which are currently operational. She discussed climate change and climate Justice and its impact on resource-poor vulnerable rural communities. She stressed on the need to focus on adaptation rather than mitigation, as it directly impacts small and marginal farmers, especially in areas which are rainfed. She pointed out that earlier our focus has been on increasing production, training farmers and disseminating technologies. Farmer welfare should now be part of the equation, and we should look at ensuring food and nutrition security, providing social security, managing natural disasters, insurance coverage, coping/adaptation strategies for climate change, building resilience and



**भारतीय कृषि एवं खाद्य परिषद्**  
**INDIAN COUNCIL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

reducing vulnerability. It should also focus on sourcing quality inputs to farmers, skilling youths of rural areas and accessing remunerative markets to them. She suggested that as a outcome of these, the group can send recommendations to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare translating the concept of "Farmers' Welfare" into new schemes or modifying the existing ongoing schemes to build in component of farmers' welfare, and its implications on research and extension services. Dr. Sharma suggested that it may require strengthening and modifying delivery mechanism and implementing agencies like ATMA. She stressed the need for convergence and coordination with related government and non-government agencies to bring the concept of Farmers' welfare. She felt the need for having more representatives from ATMA KVKs, DRDAs, experts, agriculture scientist, development professionals, NGOs, CGIAR Institutes, multilateral and bilateral agencies, financial institutions, farmers' representatives and FPOs.

**Dr. Ajit Kumar, IAS (1976 Batch), VC, NIFTEM** believed that to make the working groups more involved, more effective and vibrant, the working group itself should be given the task under and overall guidance of the board to implement and try to supplement the efforts of government. Discussing about manpower requirement and skill gaps in agri sector, Dr. Kumar proposed strategy to overcome the skill gap in agriculture and food processing industry. He suggested establishment of National institute for skill development exclusively for Agriculture & Food Processing (FP) Sector in the PPP mode driven by industry and farmer bodies. This will aim at identifying skill gap in agriculture sector and FP sector; Development of Job roles, course curriculum, learning materials and Multimedia aids; and launching skill development program on PAN India basis for agriculture & FP sectors by involving TPs and by utilizing the infrastructure of KVKs, ITIs, EDIs and Agriculture universities.

**Dr. Anis Ansari, former Additional Chief Secretary and APC of UP and Chairman, Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development** pointed out one major role that should be played by the member of working group would be to help farmers in crisis and representing farmers' interest at local level. "Whereas, CII is a very good model but they address horizontal problems and don't address fluctuation and problems of farmers life", said Dr. Ansari. He also recommended taking measures to make farming remunerative for the farmers.

**Dr. RB Singh, Chancellor, Central Agriculture University** expressed his opinion that board should be a strong advocacy body based on judicious thinking, judicious research analysis and database. "It is very important is to have knowledge database which will enrich the members of working group to undertake advocacy role and also to put farmers at the centre stage. The group should identify immediate issues to work like renaming of

Ministry of Agriculture and implementation of National Commission on Farmer", advised Dr. Singh. He suggested taking holistic approach and aligning ICFA with the global sentiments. He asked the working group to work on issues of reducing hunger, malnourishment in the children and climate smart agriculture. "Convergence, conclude and connect should be the acting words for ICFA", added Dr. Singh.

**Mr. Pawanexh Kohli, CEO, NCCD** suggested that as a think tank ICFA should regularly come up with a knowledge paper which deals with the leadership, economy, business, policy and regulatory aspects. Mr. Kohli



**भारतीय कृषि एवं खाद्य परिषद्**  
**INDIAN COUNCIL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

pointed out that "convergences of schemes" is the missing link in the food and agriculture industry. Mr. Kohli opined that food loss and waste is going to be a major concern for the country. The definition of farming should not only define productivity but gainful productivity. Connectivity and cold chain will lead to second green revolution by maximizing the yield and reaching the market. He also emphasised the need for having national level institute to moderate food loss and waste. According to Mr. Kohli, the council can support in implementation of existing programmes, on the basis of which we will develop better convergence programme, find bottlenecks and focus on agriculture economy. Food and agriculture both can sustain only when bottlenecks are cleared and urban cities and farms are connected together, said Mr. Kohli.

**Dr. SK Goel, IAS (1982 Batch), Chairman of Working Group on State Affairs** said that agriculture sector is fragmented and ministry is sub divided. ICFA can act as a partnership platform and facilitator to work together for farmers. Dr. Goel opined that government, farmers' organization and corporate players should come together under public, private partnership. The partnership will be among these three pillars but ICFA can act as a facilitating agency. Dr. Goel said, "Our short term endeavour would be to have state forum created, where the state can interact with each other. We should bring out the best practices which are adopted by various states. There needs to be interaction among the states to share their success story and to understand the concerns. ICFA can bring together various stakeholders for coordination, partnership, collaboration, sharing success, convergence, development and common concerns. Through this arrangement, all government programs can come in a convergence mode rather than acting as parallel lines. ICFA can create small and big value chains in the coming year and can associate million of farmers as very large farmers are still struggling to get connected to the market."

**Mr. Raju Kapoor, Director, Dow Agro Sciences** said that ICFA should stand for unleashing the potential of agriculture. He emphasised on the need for converting farmers into entrepreneurs and connecting farmers to the market. He emphasised the need to reduce crop loss and promote among the farmers and users the idea of safer use of crop protection. He advised to make food chain safer by introduction of newer technology. He also suggested promoting and integrating women farming.

**Mr. Atul Chaturvedi, CEO, Adani Agrifresh Ltd.** said that ICFA should focus on short and long term goal for achieving it. "Farmers need to produce according to the market demand and we should try to break the wheat-rice cycle in Punjab; instead we need cotton, pulses and mustard-corn cycle in place. India lacks edible oil and its productivity is seriously threatened. India imports 14 million tonnes of edible oil. India's dependency on edible oil in the world market is 70 percent. One thing which government has been lacking is "Commercial Intelligence", said Mr. Chaturvedi.

**Dr. Islam Siddiqui, Sr. Adviser, Global Food Security Project, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington** represented ICFA Working Group on Global Trade and Strategic Issues. Dr. Siddiqui emphasised on the need to bring farmers, allied industry, exporters and importers to one platform. He said that ICFA will closely monitor, review and analyze international agricultural trade data and its impact on exports and imports



**भारतीय कृषि एवं खाद्य परिषद्**  
**INDIAN COUNCIL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

of Indian food and agricultural products. He added that ICFA will also monitor the progress of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations in the WTO. Dr. Siddiqui emphasized the importance of food safety in the global economy. He said that ICFA will monitor and interact with the Codex Alimentarius officials regarding food safety regulations affecting exports of Indian food and agricultural products. Dr. Siddiqui said that he will serve as a source of information on international agricultural trade for the ICFA Board and working groups.

**Dr. KL Chaddha, Pioneer of Horticulture Revolution** talked about the idea of floating membership for ICFA. Dr. Chaddha said that implementation of projects will not be possible in initial stage keeping in mind the large size of the country. He suggested to identify the issues for the various groups. He opined that working groups should not work as permanent tenure, rather they should work as a task force, and the board members should serve reasonable tenure of 2 years. Some of the members can be co-opted according to the subject or theme to be taken up. “We don't need to replicate the government. The council need to focus on new issues like skill development, cold chain, market development and models of marketing”, said Dr, Chaddha.

**Mr. PL Thanga, IAS (1974 Batch), Vice Chairman, Mizoram State Planning Board and Chairman of Working Group on North East Development** suggested names of the members - VC of Assam Agriculture University, Jorhat; VC Central Agriculture University, Imphal; Director, ICAR, Barapani, Meghalaya; Adviser, Agriculture, North Eastern Council, Shillong; MD, North East Region Agriculture Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC); Ministry of DoNER, Guwahati and Agriculture Production Commissioner of NE States for the North East Development Working Group. He planned to take up activities like land & water management; soil Health; quality input production; streamlining of production system; linkage between production and marketing; promotion of marketing and processing system; capacity building; and land tenure system. Mr. Thanga said that consultation meeting may be organized at Guwahati or any suitable location in the NE to get opinion and suggestions from the members. “The group need to identify strength and advantages, formulate action plan on identified strength and advantages and should work on capacity building. ICFA should do coordination with existing Central and State institutions for production, marketing and processing”, he recommended.

**Dr. Maharaj Muthoo, President of the Roman Forum** talked about the scope for agri food certification in India and said that ICFA should become national agriculture and food certification body. “We need to develop national standards for the food products, having economic, social and cultural dimensions as part of certification criteria. The focus should be on agri food security and sustainable agriculture”, he said. He added that there is a need for national policy mechanism for agribusiness promotion and partnerships. He pointed out that government involvement should be as third party in the certification process. He emphasised the need for certification as it will ensure trade of organic and traditional products of India at higher prices. It will take couple of years for developing standards for certification, said Dr. Muthoo.



**Mr. MJ Saxena, MD, Ayurved Limited** observed that all the chairmen of the group are experts in their areas. There are three key words that the council should be known for i.e. Knowledge, science and technology for generation remunerative farming. He suggested that each group chairman should identify the issues and all those points should be compiled in the Agriculture Year Book of 2016. The group should define topics which should add value to the community and create economic sustainability, said Mr. Saxena.

**Dr. Rajaram Tripathi, President, Herbal and Medicinal Plants Growers Federation** emphasised the need for having farmers' association at regional and state level, and suggested creation of National Farmers' Alliance, as part of ICFA. Dr. Tripathi said that farmers associations largely don't want to come out of political agenda. He suggested that every working group of ICFA should have farmer members and every group need to be aware of grass root realities. He added that for making farming more remunerative for farmers, ICFA can act as focal body and help in representing various boards and marketing of various profitable medicinal plants and other crops.

**Mr. RPS Gandhi, Chairman, GVS Biotech P. Ltd.** said that ICFA as a team can give suggestions to the government. ICFA can act as 'setu' between farmers and consumers and farmers and industry. Mr. Gandhi pointed out that in India 99 percent of the farming is by inheritance and the fact that no one selects farming as a profession is a major concern which needs to be addressed. ICFA can work towards making farming more remunerative profession.

**Mr. S. Narayanan, Director, Greenstars Fertilizers Limited** discussed about reducing food wastage and moderating the price in the market. Talking of demand and supply situation, Mr. Narayanan pointed that price of whole sale market can be stabilized by moderating the production at farm level based on annualise data of demand. Unplanned production can cause fluctuations in the market, added Mr. Narayanan.

**Dr. M. Moni, former DG NIC and Professor, Shobhit University** emphasised the need for promoting ICT in agriculture. He suggested that ICFA should take up training of agriculture graduates and allied sector, and programme on ecommerce. Under ICFA, we can promote 3-4 weeks training programme. He added that skill development in agriculture and food processing sector is needed. ICFA can train 25,000 agriculture graduates coming out of agriculture colleges every year. This will be a big contribution of ICFA to the agriculture sector, said Dr. Moni.

### **Specific suggestions emerged**

1. ICFA is to be known in the food and agriculture sectors as an organisation for
  - a. Policy, research and advocacy
  - b. Business and trade facilitation



**भारतीय कृषि एवं खाद्य परिषद्**  
**INDIAN COUNCIL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

c. Platform for partnership

2. ICFA shall be in pursuit of protecting the interest of the farmers and the consumers. Food certification shall be included to add value to both the stakeholders.

3. Initially, two regional Working Groups in the form of the 1. WG on North East Development (under Mr. PL Thanga, IAS 1974 batch, Vice Chairman, Mizoram State Planning Board) and WG on Uttar Pradesh (under Dr. Anis Ansari, IAS 1973 batch, Chairman, Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development) will be launched besides other functional Working Groups.

4. First of the events that ICFA is going to organise shall be by the Policy WG under Dr. Rita Sharma on the recent renaming of the Ministry of Agriculture by Govt. of India. It's planned to be organised around last fortnight of December or first fortnight of Jan 2016.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX