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**SAARC AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS DISCUSS WAYS TO ADDRESS IMPACT OF
CLIMATE CHANGE ON AGRICULTURE**

THREE-DAY REGIONAL CONFERENCE INAUGURATED IN HYDERABAD

New Delhi, April 17, 2018

Agricultural experts from SAARC nations will present a position paper on ways and means of addressing impact of climate change on agriculture and discuss adaptation measures for climate resilient agrarian systems at the three-day SAARC regional Conference on “Climate Resilient Agricultural Policies, Strategies and Programmes”. The regional Conference was inaugurated by Chief Secretary of Telangana, Dr. Shailendra Kumar Joshi, at ICAR-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) in Hyderabad today. More than 80 senior officers and agricultural experts from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka attended the inaugural session of the Conference. The consultation will not only strengthen partnership amongst SAARC countries on climate resilient agricultural systems, but also cover research, economics and innovative policy towards climate smart agriculture in South Asia. A discussion on the UNFCCC decision on agriculture will also be held during the Conference.

Speaking at the inauguration, Telangana Chief Secretary said that there is a unique opportunity to shape and strengthen the process, as well as global attention and action to support climate resilient agricultural systems and dependent communities. “We in South Asia have many things in common in agricultural practices, food systems and therefore, there is a great opportunity to share our experiences towards effective adaptation to climate change”, Dr. Joshi said.

In his opening remarks, Adviser, MoEF&CC and APN National Focal Point of India, Dr. J.R Bhatt said, “It is only through combined strength that we can address the looming threat of climate change. The regional consultation provides such a common platform for South Asian countries to learn, share and reflect on the impact of climate change on agriculture. The regional consultation is also opportune because Parties to the UNFCCC at CoP23 had put in place for the first time a joint work programme on climate change and agriculture, the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture.”

Delivering the keynote address Dr. Kirit Parikh emphasised on the need to undertake district-level analysis to develop climate resilient agrarian solutions.

Among the dignitaries present at the inaugural session were Chairman, IRADe, Dr. Kirit Parikh, Director, NAARM, Dr Srinivasa Rao, Director General, India Meteorological Department, Dr. K J Ramesh, Vice Chancellor, University of Hyderabad, Dr. P Appa Rao and Mr Yukihiro Imanari representing APN Secretariat and Dr. WART Wickramaarachchi SAARC Agriculture Centre respectively. The regional consultation has been jointly organized by SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), India, Bangladesh, Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), Japan, and ICAR-NAARM.



Agricultural experts and officers from SAARC nations at the three-day Conference in Hyderabad

SAARC accounts for one-fourth of the global population and around 67 per cent of its population lives in rural areas (as per 2014 statistics). Almost half of the workforce is employed in the agriculture sector and around 42 per cent of South Asia's landmass is under agricultural operation. Much of the agricultural production in the region is undertaken by small holders and an average range of landholding in SAARC countries varies between 0.3 to 1.4 hectares. Agriculture plays a central role in South Asian economies, lives and livelihoods. Crops grown in the region are important, both for regional and global food security.

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