

Mr Pranab Mukherjee: PPPs will steer us to second green revolution

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"Given the critical linkage between agriculture and poverty alleviation, a faster agricultural growth to deliver inclusive development led by the second green revolution is urgently needed." These remarks were made by the president of India, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, while addressing the "National Conference on Ushering Second Green Revolution in Indian Agriculture through Public-Private Partnership", organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) with support from Ministry of agriculture on December 11, 2012 at New Delhi.

Highlighting the challenges faced by the agricultural sector, Mr Mukherjee emphasized on the need to improve the seed replacement rate, promote adoption of hybrid seeds, incentivize balanced use of fertilizers and ensure efficient water management. He pointed out the need to render the second green revolution more holistic and widespread in developing the agricultural sector compared to the first green revolution and public private partnerships will play a key role.

Complementing CII, Mr Mukherjee remarked that this is the right time for organizing such conference as agriculture is undergoing transformational growth and the policy environment is also conducive for initiating and scaling public private partnerships. On the very occasion, Mr Mukherjee launched the CII - Jubilant Bhartia Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE).

The conference was attended by key government officials, think tanks, industry stalwarts from agri input, irrigation, farm mechanization, food processing, and retail as well as farmer groups. More than 1000 participants attended the conference as well as the CII - ICAR technology exhibition.

Few insights during the event

Speaking at the conference, Mr Tariq Anwar, minister of state, Agriculture and Food Processing, government of India highlighted the achievements of the agricultural sector in achieving record in production of grains and horticulture produce.

He remarked that the key challenges that continue to threaten sustainable growth can be adequately addressed through effective public private partnerships.

Mr Bhupinder Singh Hooda, chief minister of Haryana, stated that PPP in second green revolution will play an important role in translating the policies and programs into action on the ground. Mr Hooda also highlighted the four PPP initiatives of government of Haryana under Haryana State Agriculture Marketing Board (HSAMB) in agriculture.

Mr Adi B Godrej, president, CII, in his special address stressed on an immediate need for chalking out a plan that enables multi stakeholder partnerships to improve storage, market linkages, procurement practices, technology, research and extension. He further stated that a coherent policy framework and well-targeted public investments are essential for mobilizing private participation in agriculture.

Introducing FACE, Mr Ajay Shriram, vice president, CII, and chairman and senior managing director, DCM Shriram Consolidated mentioned that, "FACE is charged with the mission of improving competitiveness of Indian agriculture sector by catalyzing innovation, building capacity and enhancing productivity across the agriculture and food value chain. With this objective, FACE aims at working closely with industry, farmers, developmental institutions and the government to build capacity while leveraging technology and innovation to improve productivity and the environmental footprint of agriculture."

Mr Hari S Bhartia, former president, CII and co-chairman and managing director Jubilant Bhartia Group said, "FACE with its broad objectives is completely in sync with the national agenda of agriculture development and inclusive growth. FACE has already launched a series of initiatives on value chain assessments, supply chain management, and public private alliances with focus on improving market access and providing innovative business models that are scalable and replicable across geographies."

Mr Rakesh Bharti Mittal, chairman, CII, National Council on Agriculture and vice chairman and managing director, Bharti Enterprises highlighted some of the successful interventions by the agribusiness companies and stressed the need for scaling these partnerships across the value chain.

Mr S Gopalakrishnan, president designate, CII and executive co-chairman, Infosys remarked that PPP is vital for delivering inclusive and sustainable growth, but it needs to adhere to some key principles, such as focusing on local food markets, working with producer organisations and respecting the rights of small-scale producers, workers and communities.