



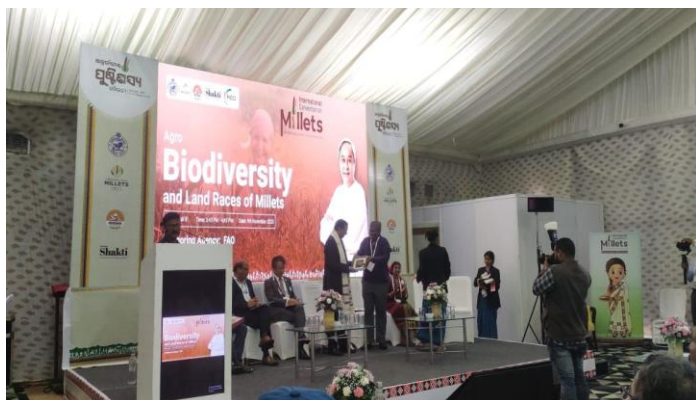
Participation in the International Convention on Millets, November 09-10, 2023 at Bhubaneswar



The “International Convention on Millets” was organized during November 09-10, 2023 at Janta Maidan, Bhubaneswar, by the Govt of Odisha under the overall guidance of the Principal Secretary Agriculture and Farmers Development, Dr. Arabinda Kumar Padhee. It was inaugurated by Sh. Naveen Patnaik, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Odisha. Foreign country delegates, Scientists and Researchers from ICAR, SAUs/CAUs, Universities, Government departments, private sector and thousands of farmers, community and SHG members participated during the two-day programme. Key activities included: Technical sessions on Agro-biodiversity; Nutrition, Production and Productivity; Machinery and Technology Demonstration; Start Up Challenges; Policy Round Tables; Business Meet and Millet Food Cooking Festival.



A plenary session on *Agro-biodiversity and Landraces of Millets* was held on 9th November, 2023 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Chairperson, PPV&FRA, New Delhi. Apart from custodian farmers, Mr. Takayuki Hagiwara, FAO Country Representative (India); Dr Israel Olivier King, Director (Biodiversity), MSSRF; Dr. JC Rana, Country Coordinator, Bioversity International graced the occasion. At the outset, Mr. Susanta Sekhar Choudhury (Moderator of the Session), welcomed all the dignitaries and the delegates. Millet Farmers, policy makers, researchers, representatives from civil society and students participated in the deliberations.



Dr. KS Varaprasad, Former Director, ICAR-IIOR presented “Standard Operating Procedure and Seed System for Landraces”. He highlighted the Seed Act, 1966, the mechanism of varietal notification and release and plant variety registration under PPV&FRA Act, 2001. The importance of Standard Operating Protocol in Odisha Millets Mission for seed system of Farmer’s Variety of Millets were presented. Risk factors for large scale seed production and its mitigation, quality seed production and its promotion through institutional mechanism were also presented. Dr. JC Rana, Country Co-Ordinator (India), Biodiversity International, New Delhi presented on ‘*Agro-biodiversity and food security*’. Dr. Rana highlighted promotion of overall agro-biodiversity, discussed about their efforts on creating value chain and branded products from traditional varieties in rice and millets involving local communities in Chhattisgarh, Assam and other states.



Dr. Arshiya Noorani, Agricultural Officer, FAO, Rome, Italy made a presentation on ‘*Conservation and sustainable use of farmers’ varieties and landraces*’. She showcased the importance of voluntary guidelines for conservation and sustainable use of farmers’ varieties. Dr. Olivier King, Director (Biodiversity), MSSRF, presented the experience of MSSRF in documenting agro-biodiversity and its conservation especially in Millets.

Custodian farmers, Mrs. Subasha Mohanta, Mrs. Raimati Ghiuria and Mr. Siba Shankar Gomanga shared their experience in millet cultivation, described the importance of traditional varieties and highlighted enhanced income generation through millet cultivation.



Dr. T. Mohapatra, Chairman of the session while giving his concluding remarks appreciated the contributors in the session for highlighting important points. He spoke about the plant variety registration under PPV&FR Act, 2001 and trait based germplasm registration at ICAR-NBPGR. He encouraged the farmers for millet cultivation and congratulated Odisha Millet Mission,

Govt. of Odisha and Govt. of India for their support for cultivation, consumption and promotion of millets. He pointed out that Odisha took a lead in registration of farmers' varieties by painstakingly documenting rice land races across different districts and getting 787 farmer varieties in rice registered, which is about 31% of the total of 2537 farmers' varieties registered with the PPVFR Authority in different crops till date. Given the diversity of millets in districts like Koraput, Nayagarh, Rayagada, Sundargarh etc, there has to be more efforts for registration of farmers varieties of millets from Odisha, Dr. Mohapatra emphasized. The chairman also suggested creation of value chains and special brands using farmers varieties for more income generation for farmers.

A Round Table session on “Seed Conservation and Exchange” was anchored by FAO (India) Office on Nov 10, which was chaired by Dr Kuldeep Singh, Former Director ICAR-NBPGR and Present Head, Gene Bank, ICRISAT. Padmashri Ms. Sabarmatee Ji, Co-chair of the session, highlighted the need for organic agriculture, and conservation of traditional varieties. She also shared her experience of transforming a degraded land into a self sustaining food forest at Nayagarh, Odisha.



Sh. Dipal Roy Choudhury, Joint Registrar, PPV&FRA highlighted enabling provisions of farmers' rights under *PPV&FR Act, 2001*, PGSC Award and plant variety registration. Dr. KN Ganapathy and Dr. Dipti Ranjan Pani from ICAR talked about quality seed production, varietal evaluation in millets and seed conservation strategies. Custodian farmers, Sh. Siba Prasad Sahoo, PGSC Awardee; Mr. Saroj Kumar Mohanty and Ms. Subhasa Mohanta also shared their experiences about millet conservation and cultivation. Sh. Dipal Roy Choudhury, JR also attended other sessions, namely “Linkages between Millet and Health”, “Forgotten Food Round Table”, “Farmer Cultivation Practices”, “Circular Economy and Sustainability” etc during these two days.

