

MEDIA RELEASE

Build on International Year of Millets momentum for ‘the crop of the future’ say millet stakeholders

- ***Reliance Foundation organises conference on ‘Shaping Perspectives on Practise and Policy for Millets in India’***
- ***Publication on ‘Fostering Resilience for Sustainability: Reliance Foundation’s Millet Experiences’, learnings from millet interventions released on the occasion***

New Delhi, December 19, 2023: Diverse stakeholders from across India’s millet landscape emphasized that challenges of food security, farm livelihoods and nutrition diversity can be resolved in a climate-resilient manner, by building on the momentum generated during the International Year of Millets (IYOM). They were sharing experiences at a multi-stakeholder conference ‘Shaping Perspectives on Practise and Policy for Millets in India’, organised by Reliance Foundation here today.

Policymakers, farmer representatives, development sector stakeholders, researchers and industry representatives echoed the need for greater collaboration, increased farmer-focused efforts, and deliberated successes and challenges from both practice and policy within India’s millet landscape.

Delivering the keynote address at the conference, **Ms. Shubha Thakur, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, detailed Government of India’s efforts to take the millets agenda ahead. She said, “We have created six task forces, in Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of health, one in the nutrition sector to continue the journey of millets. Millets are a crop for the future.”

She added “It is heartening to see Reliance Foundation working with farmers. A multi-stakeholder approach is very important if millets are to succeed. To help increase farmers’ incomes, there needs to be value addition through branding, export potential and more.”

Mr. Jagannatha Kumar, CEO, Reliance Foundation, said, “This decade has been historic for the global food systems dialogue, and transformational for millets. We are witnessing the discourse change to millets being sought after and India has led this change from the front. The strong momentum generated so far should enable us to leapfrog into an era when millets are coming of age in providing food security and diversity amidst climate change. This will also help balance natural resources through climate resilient farming practices while securing better livelihoods for small and marginal farmers through a value chain approach. It is essential to build on this momentum, with shared development goals. At Reliance Foundation, we are deeply committed to diversifying food and farming systems with millets and we will continue build on discussions such as today’s along with other opportunities to share our learnings with stakeholders across the ecosystem.”



A publication, '[Fostering Resilience for Sustainability: Reliance Foundation's Millet Experiences](#)', that documents learnings from millet interventions in different states was released on the occasion. *Fostering Resilience for Sustainability* showcases end to end interventions that include making quality seed accessible to farmers, providing continued technical support, strengthening market linkages, empowering women's agency and building awareness of millets.

Speakers at the discussions included Raman Wadhwa, Director, NRLM; Dr Neelam Patel, Senior Advisor, NITI Aayog; Priyanka Singh, Chief of Rural Transformation, Reliance Foundation; Prof. Ruth DeFries, Columbia University; Prasoon Bhardwaj, Head of Staples, Reliance Retail; K P Kavitha, CEO, Kazhani Farmers Producer Co, TN (FPO); R K Tiwari, Asst Director, Dept. of Women and Child Development, Madhya Pradesh; Savitaben Vasava, millets farmer from Narmada, Gujarat. Senior policymakers, researchers, practitioners and agriculture experts participated in the event.

Since 2010, Reliance Foundation has been focusing on sustainable agriculture and strengthening of food systems through a collaborative approach with various stakeholders. The work with millet small and marginal farmers is another step to build resilience in the face of changing climate while enhancing the nutritional status of communities.

Having observed 2018 as its 'National Year of Millets', India presented the proposal for the 'International Year of Millets' (IYOM) in the United Nations. At the 75th General Assembly session of the UN in March 2021, the year 2023 was declared IYOM to increase global awareness of the benefits of consuming and growing millets.

India is world's largest millet producer and its average production of 16.93 million metric tons during 2019-22 was about 11% higher than the production during 2014-18. Though area under millet cultivation has reduced, productivity has markedly increased over the years.

About Reliance Foundation

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of over 71 million people across India, in over 54,800 villages and urban locations. More on www.reliancefoundation.org

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Registered Office:

9th Floor, Maker Chamber IV,
222 Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021,
Maharashtra, India

Toll Free Number:

1800 419 8800

Email:

contactus@reliancefoundation.org

Internet:

www.reliancefoundation.org