



## **TAAS – IFPRI National Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: Preparedness and Role of Indian Agriculture**

### **Context:**

Globally, poverty and hunger are still twin challenges before human civilization despite specific temporal and spatial efforts. Though extreme poverty has been reduced by more than half since 1992, yet more than 1 billion people live on less than \$ 1 a day. And roughly, half of the world's population lives below \$ 2.50 a day. Besides, 1 in 9 people are undernourished. Poor nutrition cause nearly half (45%) of deaths in children under the age of below five years; nearly 3.1 million children per year. Unfortunately, every 3.5 seconds a child dies from poverty. Therefore, it is necessary to produce affordable, nutritive, safe and healthy food more efficiently and sustainably. In the contrary, agriculture is facing bigger threat now than ever before on account of degradation of natural resources, especially land and water, besides the adverse impact of global climate change. Hence, combating climate change, reducing emission and conserving natural resources, without compromising economic development, would require new set of policies, institutional reforms and additional investments in agriculture sector.

To address these concerns, global leaders had revisited recently the Millennium Development Goals to have a new action plan. It was a unique joint effort by national leaders to combat poverty, hunger, undernourishment and other issues concerning the planet. It is a matter of great satisfaction that most of the developing countries made substantial impact in achieving various goals, especially poverty. Most of the countries achieved the goal of reducing poverty by half between 1990 and 2010. Across countries, the decline in poverty was uneven. In Asia, there were about 740 million poor people in 1990-92, which declined to 565 million in 2010-12. China has done remarkably well, where poverty declined by 60 percent in 1990 to less than 10 percent in 2008. Other East-Asian and Pacific countries have also done remarkably well.

Within Asia, South Asia has largest concentration of poor, which is still housing nearly 304 million poor. In South Asia, India is the hub of poor and food insecure population. As high as 71 percent of the poor in South Asia, live in India. Like other countries, India met most of the MDGs well before 2015, but the pace was too slow as compared to China and many countries in Southeast Asia. Also the progress in some of the development goals had been rather inconsistent. The official estimates reveal that while India achieved the target of poverty reduction, it fell short in reducing hunger.

To continue the global collective efforts more vigorously, as post-2015 agenda, countries adopted renewed set of goals to end poverty and protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The resolution adopted by the United Nations (UN) has much broader intergovernmental agreement which, while acting as the Post-2015 Development Agenda, builds on the Resolution, popularly known as “The Future We Want”. There are 17 aspirational “Global Goals” with 169 targets under SDGs. Among these, there are three goals which have direct relevance to agriculture. These are: ‘No Poverty’, ‘Zero Hunger’, and ‘Climate Action’. In addition, the one on ‘Life on Land’ also relates to it.

Agriculture in India plays an important role for the livelihood of poor especially in rural areas. However, agriculture sector is currently facing numerous challenges such as: decline in the size of land holdings, natural resources (especially soil and water), adverse impact of climate change, factor productivity decline, costly inputs, fluctuating markets, decline in income are all making agriculture more risky. The question obviously before us now is: How can agriculture contribute towards achieving SDGs? What should be the strategy to promote agriculture for achieving SDGs? What lessons other developing countries, especially South Asia, can learn from India or vice-versa?

Role of improved varieties/hybrids and management practices have immense potential in achieving the SDGs. It is encouraging that National Agricultural Research System (NARS) has developed several technologies that promise to increase incomes, reduce production cost, conserve natural resources, improve food quality and nutrition and minimize various kinds of risks. The need is to create an enabling environment to scale out useful and efficient technologies/innovations for greater adoption and large scale impact on increased production and higher income of smallholder farmers.

Indian government is already giving high priority to agriculture sector to make it more efficient, competitive, sustainable and resilient. Doubling farmers’ income by 2022 is the latest policy initiative of the Government of India. In this context, there are several programs which aim to increase farmers’ income, conserve soil and water resources, improve resilience and reduce risks. These programs include Prime Minister Irrigation Program, Prime Minister Agricultural Insurance Scheme, National Food Security Mission, National Horticulture Mission, National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, National Agricultural Development Plans, National Livestock Mission etc. There are initiatives to connect farmers with remunerative markets through e-NAM (One Nation-One Market) and consolidate farmers to derive benefits of economies-of-scale through Farmer Producer Organizations/Companies. All these efforts demonstrate India’s commitment to accomplish the SDGs that relate to agriculture. There is, however, an urgent need to ensure reorientation of on-going efforts towards higher efficiency and effectiveness of various initiatives by developing a Road Map by which we are able to achieve the goals well before 2030. The proposed national conference is an attempt in this direction.

**Objectives:**

The specific objectives of this conference are:

1. Document existing state of poverty, hunger, malnourishment, natural resource degradation and climate risks.
2. Explore potential of improved technologies (including varieties/hybrids and efficient management practices, farm mechanization etc.) to achieve SDGs.
3. Develop an inventory of various programs, policies and institutions that have direct and/or indirect bearing in achieving one or more SDGs and to have an effective implementation.
4. Explore the best practices/innovations adopted by other developing countries for achieving the SDGs, and assess their relevance/feasibility of adapting in India and other South Asian countries.
5. Develop a Road Map for agriculture sector to end hunger and poverty, control degradation of land and water resources and manage existing risks on account of weather uncertainties and climate change.

**Outputs:**

1. A policy paper giving a Road Map to achieve SDGs through agriculture

**Dates:**

11-12 May 2017 (Thursday and Friday)

**Venue:**

National Agriculture Science Centre,  
Pusa, New Delhi 110 012, India

**Organizers**

The Conference is jointly organized by the Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

**Participants:**

The conference will be attended by about 150-200 delegates consisting of policy makers, policy advisors, government officials, professionals, agricultural scientists, and representatives of development agencies, private sector, donors, civil society organizations and farmers.

# **TAAS - IFPRI National Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: India's Preparedness and Role of Agriculture**

**11-12 May 2017  
New Delhi, India**

## **Broad structure of the program**

- I. Inaugural Session**
- II. Status of Indicators of SDGs**
  - Poverty and hunger
  - Land and water degradation
  - Climate risks
- III. Technologies to Accomplish SDG**
  - Genetic enhancement
  - Natural resource management
  - Farm mechanization
- IV. Breakout sessions on technologies to accomplishment SDG**
  - Crop sector
  - Horticulture sector
  - Livestock sector
  - Fish sector
  - Farm machinery and processing
- V. Role of Policies and Institutions**
  - Backend service system
  - Agricultural marketing and food retailing
  - Agriculture-nutrition linkages
- VI. Best Practices in Developing Countries**
  - South Asia
  - Southeast Asia
  - Africa
- VII. Strategies to accomplish SDGs**
- VIII. Panel discussion**
- IX. Concluding Session and Delhi Declaration**