

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 406
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26/04/2016

MEETING OF SAARC AGRICULTURE MINISTERS

406. SHRI R. GOPALAKRISHNAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has urged the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations to join hands for the betterment of agriculture and farmers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of other issues discussed and the resolutions adopted in the meeting of SAARC Agriculture Ministers held recently?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री
(DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. It was mentioned that “let us once pledge again to work together in a cooperative manner to help each other for strengthening farming, farmers and food, nutritional, livelihood and environmental security in the region.”

(c) Matters related to multi-stakeholders dialogues on Management of soil/land towards sustainable agriculture in South Asia, and Pulses research and development in SAARC region: Challenges and way forward, progress made on the Second Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the SAARC Agriculture Ministers (New Delhi, 05 November 2008), Technical Committee on Agriculture & Rural Development, SAARC Agriculture Centre, Seed Bank, SAARC Food Bank, Technical cooperation in agricultural research and extension, identification of regional and sub-regional projects and cooperation with international organizations such as FAO, ADB, OIE, IFAD etc. were discussed. SAARC Agriculture Ministers meeting adopted the 12 point resolution as the Dhaka Statement on Agriculture and Rural Development. A copy of the Dhaka Statement on Agriculture and Rural Development is given at Annexure.

Dhaka Statement on Agriculture and Rural Development

1. Cooperation among SAARC Member States in Agriculture and Rural Development to be further strengthened and sustained.
2. Time-befitting rural development projects are to be undertaken with financing from the SAARC Development Fund and if additionally required, from other multi-lateral financial institutions. In relevant cases, co-financing options are to be explored to implement projects that generate mass employment in rural areas.
3. The barriers to agriculture trade at the regional level are to be identified and addressed. A joint consultative meeting between SAFTA Committee of Experts and Technical Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (TCARD) is to ascertain and recommend what agricultural items currently on the SAFTA sensitive list could be delisted.
4. The non-tariff barriers in agricultural trade are to be properly looked into. Capacity of the South Asian Regional Standards Organization (SARSO) to be enhanced so that it can fast resolve any standard related issues in agricultural trade.
5. The ongoing partnership of SAARC with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) on livestock matters is to continue. The activities of the Regional Support Unit and Regional Epidemiology Centre (REC) on livestock are to be sustained.
6. Partnership with UN specialized agencies, regional and international institutions to continue and further strengthened.
7. The Member States to provide all possible support to turn the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) into a 'centre of excellence' so that it can contribute to making important scientific breakthrough in agriculture and rural development. The SAC is to carry out need based training and capacity building activities. FAO's support to be welcomed in broadening the capacity of SAARC Agriculture Centre.
8. More action research to be implemented by the SAARC Agriculture Centre and a consortium of agricultural scientists in the Member States. The outcome of the action research to be spread across the region.
9. Considering South Asia's vast plant and animal genetic resources, the SAARC Seed Bank and Livestock Gene Bank (as directed by the 18th Summit) to facilitate the exchange of high quality germplasm among the Member States.
10. Barriers hindering the operationalization of SAARC Food Bank are to be address on a priority basis. With support from international specialized bodies such as UNESCAP a comprehensive guideline is to be developed covering issues such as pricing, transportation, threshold, grain quality, storage facility and location.
11. SAARC Secretariat to partner with relevant regional and international specialized bodies and organizations and harness expertise and capacities available in the region to commission studies on the scope of agro-processing in South Asia and potential markets both within and beyond.
12. With contributions from the SAARC Member States, SAC to facilitate exchange at the levels of scientists, farmers and extension workers in the SAARC region.