

**6<sup>th</sup> INDIAN HORTICULTURE CONGRESS**  
**6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014, Coimbatore**

**Inaugural Address by The Chief Guest**  
**His Excellency The Governor of Tamil Nadu**

Welcome to Tamil Nadu, the land of rich traditions, cultural and spiritual heritage.

Padma Bhushan Prof. M.S.Swaminathan, Honourable Former Member of Parliament, Padma Shri Dr. K.L.Chadha, President, the Horticultural Society of India, Thiru. Ashish Bahuguna, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India, Dr. Gurbachan Singh, Chairman, Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board, Dr. R.R. Hanchinal, Chairman, Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Authority, Thiru. D.K. Jain, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India, Dr.N.K.Krishna Kumar, Deputy Director General (Horticulture), Dr. Alok K. Sikka, Deputy Director General (Natural Resource Management), Dr. Ramesh Chand, Deputy Director General (Education), ICAR, New Delhi, Dr. K. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, dignitaries off the dais, scientific fraternity from across the country, students, farmers, ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be a part of the inaugural function of the 6<sup>th</sup> Indian Horticulture Congress entitled '**Horticulture for Inclusive Growth**' being organized by the Horticultural Society of India in association with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University from 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 at Coimbatore.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Indian economy providing livelihood to nearly 60 % of our population. The agriculture sector passed through a turbulent past in terms of famines, and other natural calamities, malnutrition, insect pests and diseases, insurgence leading to food shortages during yester years. I recall those days when regular meals were not available during nights in hotels in the erstwhile Madras State. Green Revolution led by Bharat Ratna Thiru. C. Subramaniam, Former Union Minister for Finance, Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Dr.B.P.Pal,

Former Director General, ICAR and others laid the foundation for a self reliant India. From a state of “ship-to-mouth” existence to possessing export surplus, the journey of Indian Agriculture has been phenomenal.

Horticulture, an integral part of agriculture can play a pivotal role in overcoming the perennial malnutrition among the Indian population. Indian horticulture has made stupendous progress over the years to surpass the food grain production (262 million tonnes) during 2012-13 for the first time in the history of Indian agriculture with a record production of 268 million tonnes. Today, India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world after China and has many distinctions to quote, for instance, it is the largest producer of mango (41.1%), banana (25.6%), papaya (42.6%) and okra (72.9%). It is also the largest producer, consumer and exporter of cashew and tea.

India has also achieved the highest productivity in grapes (21.1 t/ha) and is the fourth largest producer of oranges, fifth largest producer of apples (2.5%) and sixth largest producer of pineapple (6.7%) in the world.

Along with a massive growth in production of fruits and vegetables, India’s Floriculture industry has attained the status of a **‘huge opportunity sector’** and is growing rapidly with a growth rate of 24% per annum. Indian flower export markets are estimated at 11 billion US dollars at present and expected to grow up to 20 billion US dollars by 2020.

Ladies and Gentlemen, these spectacular achievements, I strongly believe, are primarily due to the efforts made by all the stakeholders. Research by the scientific community in terms of evolution of improved varieties, standardization of advanced crop management practices, efficient input management strategies, effective pest management practices besides scientific post harvest management techniques have played a pivotal role in improving the production. The proactive policies adopted by the Government of India resulted in allocation of adequate funds to the sector through the implementation of focused Central sector schemes like the National Horticulture Mission,

Technology Mission for the North Eastern States, National Bamboo Mission, National Mission on Micro Irrigation which resulted in phenomenal expansion in area, increase in production and productivity of a number of horticultural crops. The financial institutions made loans more affordable to the farm families to infuse more capital. The ultimate role was played by the farmers who have toiled day and night. By adopting the latest technologies from the National Agricultural Research System, they have enabled increase in the production and net profitability.

Tamil Nadu holds an advantageous position in Horticulture development due to its diverse agro-climatic conditions which enable cultivation of multifarious horticultural crops. Its contribution to India's horticultural production is about 8.2% of fruits, 4.9% of vegetables and 18.10% of flowers. It ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in fruits with a total area of 3.09 lakh hectares and 6.6 million tonnes production. Mango, banana, guava, acid lime and grapes are some of the major fruit crops predominantly cultivated in Tamil Nadu.

The total area under vegetables is 2.77 lakh hectares with a production of 7.8 million tonnes, the major crops being grown are tomato, potato, brinjal, cucurbits, cabbage, cauliflower, onion, etc.

Tamil Nadu remains as one of the states with all the favourable features to produce cut flowers and loose flowers to meet the national and international standards. It is the largest producer of loose flowers in India with a production of 3.12 million tonnes.

These successes shall not make us complacent as the challenges that are emerging are more formidable. Some of the major challenges the horticulture sector would be facing in the next decade include increasing demand for more production, India's vulnerability to climate change, labour shortage and shrinking land resources. Increasing the productivity holds the key to mitigate these challenges.

I am happy to note that this four day deliberations during the 6<sup>th</sup> Indian Horticulture Congress would address some of the future challenges by way of invited,

plenary and special lectures and poster papers. I am glad that special sessions are scheduled for Students, Entrepreneurs and the Farmers to discuss issues related to education, enterprise management and problems encountered by the farmers. I sincerely hope that useful recommendation shall emerge from informative lectures to be delivered by experts from across the country and abroad.

**I wish the 6<sup>th</sup> Indian Horticulture Congress a grand success!**