

Robust regulatory system for evaluation of GM crops necessary says Anwar

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The minister of state for agriculture and food processing industries, Mr Tariq Anwar on November 05, 2013 stated that use of better technologies can help us to achieve our primary goal of food security even if availability of land and water is kept constant. "We just need to use these resources more judiciously," he emphasised.

Mr Anwar was speaking at the inauguration of World Agriculture Congress at Hyderabad on November 05, 2013. The topic for this occasion is "Congress on Reshaping Agriculture for a Sustainable Future". Inauguration of the Congress was attended by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Shri N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, Minister for Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh, Shri K. Lakshmi Narayana, and Chairman of the WAF Advisory Board, Shri James Bolger. Scientists and businessmen were also participated in the Congress.

Stating that Bio-technology is expected to play a major role in improving productivity, the minister said "what is needed is Robust Regulatory System which has scientifically established mechanism for evaluation of GM Crops so that all the issues raised on this matter can be put to rest. On this issue he reiterated the request made by Hon'ble President wherein he had exhorted the Scientific Community and ICAR to contribute to the public discourse and provide clarity on this sensitive issue".

Anwar further said that "contract farming and value addition of Indian food through food processing would play a major role in improving agricultural productivity as well as providing economic return for agricultural produce. Contract farming can provide the close hand holding regarding seed selection, seed treatment, soil testing, fertilizers, pest management and income support through procurement which Government programme cannot possibly provide".

The minister also said that Indian agriculture faces a number of serious challenges like shrinking land, depleting water resources & inefficient water use, adverse impact of climate change, ineffective management of energy resources, shortage of farm labour, poor and inefficient market infrastructure, lack of access to appropriate technology, increasing cost and uncertainties of domestic and international markets and the biggest challenge which the country would be facing in the

coming years shall be how to ensure food security in face of constantly growing population.

Underlining measures to tackle impact of climate change on Indian agriculture, minister said that steps are being taken to mitigate the impact of climate change. Among the various areas in which interventions are being planned include improved crop seeds, livestock and fish culture, water efficiency, pesticides management, nutrient management, agriculture insurance, market access and livelihood diversification. Anwar further informed that Indian Council for Agriculture Research(ICAR) has initiated a network project "National Initiative on Climate Resilient Agriculture"(NICRA) aiming at enhancing resilience of Indian agriculture through Strategic Research, Technology Demonstration and Capacity Building.