



# Bhubaneswar Declaration on Millets

A Policy Transformation for Promotion of Millets Beyond  
International Year of Millets 2023

## Preamble

Millets have formed a substantial part of our dietary patterns since ages. In Odisha, they've primarily been grown by our tribal communities, who have made sure that these precious grains are around even today. These humble grains bring quite a few exceptional health advantages to us. Being truly climate resilient, they can grow across all climates and terrains, which greatly helps the small and marginalized farmers. Due to their low water and carbon footprint, they're planet friendly as well. We believe that promotion of millets is not just a matter of good agriculture policy, but it is a matter of equity and justice to small holder farmers. A whole of government and whole of society approach is the need of the hour.

Odisha organized an International Convention on Millets (ICM) on 9th & 10th November 2023 to explore how ancient grains can address modern challenges. The ICM brought Farmers, WSHGs, FPOs, Policy makers, MSMEs, Startups, Research Organizations, Education Institutions, Health Institutions, Hotels and others together into one platform for deliberations with an objective to revive millets in farms and plates.

The ICM hosted farmer-scientist interactions and learning activities, postcard exchange programs, display emerging technologies and machineries, experience centers, technical sessions, policy roundtables, B2B meetings, startup challenge, postcard exchange initiatives, seed diversity display, storytelling activities, farmers song and culture, International food festival, Quiz and cooking competitions, etc. Technical sessions focussed on improving productivity, farmer cultivation practices, linkages between millets and health, socio-cultural aspects of millets and tribal communities, forgotten foods, Agrobiodiversity of millets, scaling up FPOs through millet service centres, and many others.

Based on the insights and suggestions received from Government of India, United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation, World Food Program, CGIAR institutions, experts, civil society organizations, farmer representatives, Women Self Help Groups, Government of Odisha re-affirms our vision to revive millets in farms and plates with following:-

## Sustainable Livelihoods and Income Support



- Promotion of the millets is about the equity and justice to vulnerable rainfed farmers. We commit to provide income support to the millet farmers through direct benefit support.
- We commit to increase the area under millets with specific focus on non-ragi minor millets. We shall focus on millets of different duration and include them in integrated farming systems/intercropping systems and crop diversification programs.
- We commit to promote natural/ organic/ agroecological approaches for cultivation of millets. Millets shall also be taken up in rice fallows, Rabi and Zaid with focus on non ragi millets.
- We commit to support sustainable intensification and entrepreneurship for better livelihoods with special focus on women self help groups and farmer collectives.
- We commit to support infrastructure development and value chain enhancement will be key focuses of the mission, with special attention given to promoting the nutritional value and enhancing food security through the cultivation and utilization of millets.



## Agrobiodiversity and Indigenous Communities

- We recognize and commit to support tribal communities of Odisha in practicing their millet cropping systems with full respect for their identity, traditions, forms of social organization and cultural values.
- We commit to valorise and promote production of millet and other forgotten food crops in farms and homesteads and consume culturally appropriate recipes.
- We commit to support the tribal custodian farmers and support them in conservation and sustainable use of landraces/traditional varieties/plant genetic resources. We aim to empower tribal women collectively in sustainable seed production through agroecological approaches. We will support in situ and ex situ approaches, systematic surveying and inventorying involving communities, and ensure access benefit sharing as per the rules and acts enshrined in the law of the land.
- We commit to give special emphasis on documentation of the ethnic food recipes of PVTGs communities.
- We commit to document and promote the cultural aspects related to millets of tribal communities.
- We commit to give special emphasis to promote millet based entrepreneurship among tribal youth.
- We commit to promote Integrated storage systems both traditional and scientific will be promoted in the Community seed banks for safe storage of seeds of different crops.
- We commit to emphasis on the development of a scientific millet seed ecosystem, prioritizing both farmers' seeds and improved varieties to ensure sustainable agriculture.

## Gender

- We commit to promote the millets through women farmers, women self help groups and other women collectives on mission mode. Special emphasis shall be given to Single women/Single Women headed households.
- We commit to re-orient the program design of Odisha Millets Mission to ensure full and equal participation in every aspect. Qualitative gender empowerment indicators shall be incorporated into the program design, review and reporting processes.
- We commit to undertake participatory machinery development with ensure every agriculture implements/machines promoted by government
- We commit to engage with banking and financial institutions for improving access to credit to women/women groups.
- We commit to engage with women farmers/women self groups in the extension activities of Odisha Millets Mission.
- We commit to undertake orientation and sensitisation of the government officials and extension works on gender for better gender integration.





- We commit to supporting participatory research in collaboration with community, civil society and market players.
- We commit to supporting research initiatives of OUAT, ICAR, ICMR, CSIR, CGIAR and other national and international agencies/universities on millets especially crop development, inclusion of artificial intelligence, land use technologies, digital applications and others.
- We commit to supporting research on logistics operations, gender, nutrition, agrobiodiversity conservation, processing, value addition and other relevant areas.
- We commit to support research and development of technologies for improved food processing, preservation, storage, post-harvest and nutrition retention, etc.
- We commit to encourage all relevant research on millets such as market surveys, value chain analysis, sustainability approaches, social and cultural studies.
- We commit to develop and promote online platforms or forums where scientists, researchers, and farmers can regularly share experiences, best practices, and success stories related to scientific approaches in millet production.
- We commit to leverage digital technologies for Capacity building for empowerment of farmers and stakeholders with necessary skills and knowledge.

## Environment

- We commit to encourage millets to reduce the fertilizer and pesticide usage for the betterment of the environment. Wherever feasible, organic millet cultivation shall be encouraged.
- We commit to leaving no stone unturned to diversify from mainstream cereals to millets appropriately.
- We commit to promote millets in post monsoon and summer seasons to improve the groundwater table and manage the water resources effectively.
- We commit to promote millets through a cropping system approach with focus on pulses and oilseeds.



## Value Chain

- We commit to encourage our communities and collective to adopt low-cost technologies, clean energy technologies, organic millet value chain and innovative practices.
- We commit to promote circular economy models and innovative marketing strategies with millet based cropping systems with focus to meet food, fuel, fodder and feed needs.
- We commit to formulate strategies to promote millet service centers to address value chain challenges.
- We commit to develop special initiatives to encourage stakeholders for transforming millet value chain into clean energy led value chain.

- We will undertake special interventions to build capacities of the WSHGs, FPOs, Startups, MSMEs and others on export related processes. Building capacity of stakeholders on quality standards, certification and policies related to exports of key markets will be a priority.
- We shall create digital platforms for knowledge transfer where experts and scientists can share insights on market dynamics, consumer trends, and technological innovations on regular basis.
- We commit to engage with FMCG companies/FSSAI/Others to spread awareness on quality standards for creating trust among consumers.
- We commit to develop a policy for supporting hotels and restaurants for undertaking the millet specific interventions.

## Nutrition Profiling and Labeling

- We will undertake nutritional profiling of different millet landraces and screen them based on agronomic and nutritional performance in different agro-ecologies.
- We will build capacities of WSHG, FPOs and entrepreneurs to ensure proper nutrition labeling with appropriate branding for all millet products.
- We will promote a special millet product category with integrating “Handmade, Heritage and Healthy”.
- We commit to support the research institutions/ organisations/ companies for bringing demographic specific research/ products such as Millets for first 1000 days of birth, etc.

## Sustainability Finance

- We commit to explore Sustainability finance and Green Financing options for millet value chain players. Carbon credit frameworks shall be explored for millet farmers of the state.



## Consumer Awareness



- We commit to undertake the bottom-up approach to awareness generation on millets, especially involving millet mothers, WSHGs, FPOs, Panchayat Raj institutions, Schools, Sportspersons and so on and so forth.
- A mission mode approach to awareness generation shall be taken up with Chefs, Hotels, Influencers, Food bloggers, Youth clubs, etc.
- We commit to collaborate with nutritionists, dieticians, health professionals, hospitals, Chefs, hotels, restaurants to create awareness on the importance of millets.

- We commit to promote Storytelling, postcard exchange and other creative engagements for spreading awareness on millets. Support shall also be provided for promotion of farmer songs related to millet crop cycle.
- We commit to working with sportspersons to promote millets and include create awareness
- We commit to intensify the engagement with millet-based cooking competition at District and state level which provide a unique opportunity of learning and a chance to showcase millet-based recipes.
- We commit to promote millets through different media platforms. Partnership shall be explored with food bloggers, influencers, celebrities to take it forward.

## Collaboration and Long Term Approach

- We commit to collaborate with all stakeholders especially, community collectives, think tanks, research agencies, academia, civil society organizations and many others. We will adopt a Whole of Government and Whole of Society approach for mainstreaming millets.
- We commit to decadal South South engagement for promotion of millets.
- We commit to develop a detailed strategic roadmap till 2036 and action plans till 2030.
- We aim to become a globally significant millet player by 2030 and develop a follow up action plan.

