

Coops most credible institutions to tackle Climate Change : Suresh Prabhu

Pointing out that the damage of climate change on the environment is more than the danger posed by corona pandemic, Suresh Prabhu, India's Sherpa to G20/G7, Member of Parliament and a Veteran Cooperator today called upon cooperatives to join hands with others in combating adverse impact of climate change. He said that cooperatives are the most credible institutions at the grass-root levels and they are the big vehicles to fight the threat of climate change. He was speaking as **Chief Guest** during a webinar organized by NCUI and ICA AP on the occasion of this year's International Cooperative Day celebrations. 'Cooperatives for Climate Action' is the theme of this year's International Day of Cooperatives to address the SDG Goal 13 on 'Climate Action'-one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations Transforming the World by 2030

Shri Prabhu further said that due to adverse impact of climate change, we have lost biodiversity, and our water resources have depleted, besides there being other forms of negative impact on the environment. He called for formulating strong mitigation and adaptation strategies to tackle climate change. He said that developing and developed countries should come together to fight the menace of climate change. Pointing out the good work of IFFCO in environment protection and sustainable development, he said that cooperatives must devise effective strategies to tackle the impact of climate change on their members. He said that all the cooperative organizations and cooperators should take a pledge to protect our planet.

Dr. U S Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO as a Key-note speaker speaking on the occasion said that cooperative principles and values can be the best foundation to tackle climate change. Emphasizing on the need to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals, he said that most affected by climate change are poor, so they must be well protected. He said that along with social responsibility, social accountability is also important in combating climate change. Highlighting the work of IFFCO in environment protection so as to address negative impact of climate change, he pointed out highlights of various steps taken by IFFCO in this regard like 'save the soil' campaign, sustainable watershed management and forestation by Rural women through IFFDC, adoption of nano-based technology fertilizers, use of bio-fertilizers, etc. He said that let all the cooperatives take a pledge to save our environment to leave 'greener legacy for our future generation'.

Shri Satish Marathe, central Board of Director of the Reserve Bank of India speaking on the occasion said that cooperatives have a key role to play in achievement of the government policy of creating a 5 trillion dollar economy. He pointed out that impact of climate change is felt in the rural and urban areas, and in the rural areas, crop yield and agricultural production

has declined. He made an important observation that in the rural areas, people have no knowledge of climate change and its impact, and here cooperatives with their huge network and reach can play an important role in creating right awareness at all levels in the society.

Mr Tomio Shichiri, FAO Country Director of India, speaking on the occasion said that agricultural cooperatives in the region should play an important role in tackling adverse impact of climate change, and they can be the important driving forces in the fight against corona pandemic in the region by strengthening the Food system transformation and supply chain. He said that FAO is committed to create appropriate legal environment for development of agricultural cooperatives in the region.

Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP speaking on the occasion said that climate change and Covid-19 affect every strata of society, and Asia-Pacific region is the largest vulnerable and disaster-prone region. Referring the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India's clarion call for 'Self reliant India' and emphasis on 'Vocal for local', he said that Cooperatives are the most suitable mechanism to achieve it. He said that as cooperatives work with the most vulnerable section of the population, they have to be pro-active in tackling the problem of climate change. He listed out few important areas of work where cooperatives can step up their efforts in this direction like protecting cooperative identity, creating cooperative awareness, reduce carbon footprint, work towards greener environment through greater involvement of youth, creating a disaster management fund at Asia-Pacific region level, follow-up and taking a stock of the measures undertaken at regular intervals, etc.

Dr Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, President, NCUI whose video was released on the occasion, pointed out the importance of International Cooperative Day celebrations, and the role the cooperatives can play in this regard. He said that the Pandemic taught us to care the environment and nurture the mother earth for the welfare of human being, through small behavioral changes in our day to day life. He said that climate change is no more an environmental concern, but major developmental challenge for the planet – its people and their livelihood and the major concern areas in the wake of Climate Change are Sustain agricultural production, Food security of the nation, Agricultural dependent livelihoods. He stressed that during the United Nation's 'Decade of Ecosystem Restoration Campaign for 2021 - 2030', we need to dedicate ourselves to enhance food security, sustainable water supply as well as biodiversity. On occasion of International Day of Cooperatives, he appealed to all Cooperatives and Co-operators to conserve a part of their surplus to spend on Climate Action and work together through mutual consultation for building a better world.

In his welcome address Mr. N Satya Naarayana, Chief Executive, NCUI said that cooperatives in general and agricultural cooperatives in particular have been educating farmers about various climate mitigation and adoption measures. He also threw light on the historical background of International Cooperative Day celebrations. He said that Climate change has become an important area of concern for India to ensure food and nutritional security for growing

population. Referring the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) adopted by the Government of India for ecologically sustainable development which aims at several inter related domain such as energy, industry, agriculture, water, forest, urban space and the fragile mountain movement. Referring 7-points strategy of the government towards double farmers' income by 2022, he said that the first point itself focused on climate action through improved water use efficient accessories aimed at 'Per Drop More Crop'. Referring the solar energy cooperatives, he said that these are the example of cost effective and sustainable solution for water and electricity needs of farmers in rural areas in a very sustainable way.

At the end of the webinar, Dr K, N Sinha, Executive Director, International Relations, NCUI expressed vote of thanks. The webinar was moderated by Ritesh Dey, Director, International Relations, NCUI. More than 400 participants logged in the Webinar including top Co-operators, Governing Council members of NCUI, key representatives of cooperatives and other related organizations.