A Concept for Discussion during the Year 2012:

Agriculture At the Center of Indian Economic Development

P. Chengal Reddy, Secretary General,
Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations (CIFA),
8/32, South Patel Nagar,
New Delhi - 110 008
Ph.: 011-25842111; Fax: 011-25842123
E-mail: cifa@indianfarmers.org
Web: www.indianfarmers.org

Submitted

to Agri Tech

11-02-12

Ms. Nelle
Index of events:

1. **Lopsided Indian Economic and Social Development:**

   India is now considered as an Economic Power. As a member of BRICS it aims to influence the world politics. The paradox of India is that there are 400 million Middle class Indians with capacity to have the best education, health and other facilities, at the same time India has 400 million mal nutritioned children, women and old people.

   After 60 years of Independence, the Urban and Rural disparities (organized and Unorganized sectors) have increased 5 fold. It used to be 1:1.8 in 1960s. In 2000 it has become 1:7. The huge Economic growth 8% in Service and Industrial Sector has not percolated to the Rural People (farmers – unorganized sectors).

   India is having a record production of wheat, rice, sugar, cotton and vegetables. But, the farmers are not getting profitable price. The Government of India, Banking Sector and the Private sector has huge resources at their disposal but the farmers are not getting sufficient credit or processing industries or an efficient infrastructure.

   The Government has built many institutions for Agriculture research, price fixation, procurement and distribution. But their functioning leaves much to be desired.

   The Government of India has removed controls and restrictions and totally liberalized Industrial and Service Sectors. They are allowed to get technologies, investments and management skills.

   On the contrary, the Indian Agriculture is totally controlled from production, processing, marketing, storing and exports. Farmers are not given access to technologies or markets either internally or externally. There are serious restrictions on processing, value addition and especially on exports.

2. **Challenges before CIFA:**

   It is at this juncture, CIFA a unique farmers organization totally apolitical, technology oriented, farmer centric with membership from various states of India has been leading for a change in Indian farmers conditions.
CIFA has its origin from Federation of Farmers Association, Andhra Pradesh, a State Level Body which was consolidated with the assistance extended by Agriterra - The Netherlands since 2000.

CIFA has commenced networking State Level organizations under common umbrella with unified objectives is now recognized by Government of India, Planning Commission, Indian Industrial Organizations (CII, FAPCCI) Research Organizations (ICAR, ICRISAT) International Development Organizations (World Bank, World Economic Forum, World Rural Forum) is now involved in bringing about considerable change in the policies of Institutions and attitude of policy makers.

a. **Issue – 1:** The main task is to bring about Economic and Social parity between the organized (service and industry) and unorganized (Agriculture) sectors.
b. **Issue – 2:** How to make small farming (illiterate & resource poor) not only sustainable but globally competitive?
c. **Issue – 3:** what are the strategies to be adopted to network the highly caste, communal and linguistically divided 600 million small farmers under the common umbrella of CIFA.
d. **Issue–4:** How to get technologies reach farmers?
e. **Issue–5:** How to link the small and fragmented farmers with the markets?

3. **CIFA Activities:**

In the past few years, CIFA has considerably strengthened and diversified its activities as detailed below:

a. **Consolidating Commodity Interest Groups:** CIFA's concepts adopted from the guidance provided by Agriterra/LTO model of Netherlands is to network the farmers through Commodity (Producer) Groups, which have been highly successful.

**The following crops producing farmers issues are taken up by CIFA:**

During 2010-11, CIFA brought together State level Sugarcane Growers associations and Sugar Industry and established National Coordination to liberalize the sector from Controls. The demands includes, remove levy, release mechanism, price fixation, option to produce ethanol and free exports.

In regard to Paddy (Rice)/wheat, CIFA brought together Rice Millers and Rice exporters and persuaded Government to allow export.

India has become second largest producer of Cotton due to introduction of BT Cotton (GMO). However, the Government has been imposing restrictions on exports. CIFA has successfully persuaded Government to allow export of Cotton.

CIFA organized Producer Groups and arranged for supply of mango to Coca Cola which is first of its kind in India.

The Government of India imposed restrictions on Onions and CIFA successfully persuaded the Government to allow exports. CIFA also persuaded government to procure turmeric from the distressed farmers. In regard to Aqua farmers, CIFA lobbied for establishing a National Fisheries Development Corporation.

4. **CIFA Lobbying Activities:**

CIFA is now an invitee to meeting of Governors organized by President of India, who has constituted a special committee for development of Agriculture. CIFA has meetings with Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister, Shri. Sharad Pawar, Agriculture Minister, Shri. Anand Sharma, Commerce Minister, Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Vice Chairman, Planning Commission, Prof. Abhijit Sen, Member, Agriculture Planning Commission, Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council, Dr. Ashok Gulati, Chairman, CACP, Mr. PK Basu, I.A.S., Secretary Agriculture and others.

5. **Political Mobilization for Policy lobbying:**

During the year 2011, CIFA made representations for convening Special Parliament Session to discuss various committees’ reports and also liberalization policies including FDI in retail. It met Mr. Deve Gouda, Former Prime Minister of India, Mr. Chandra Babu Naidu, Ex-Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Sharad Yadav, Chairman, National Alliance and others seeking support.
During 2011, Mr. P. Chengal Reddy met Shri. Rahul Gandhi, General Secretary, All India Congress Party to keep him informed of the Farmers Issues. Shri. Anil Shastry, General Secretary, AICC was also appraised of the farmers problems.

CIFA has been regularly meeting the Members of Parliament from different political parties to seek their support on policy issues, resource allocation and administrative changes.

6. Consolidation Activities:

CIFA organized the 7th Annual Conference at Hyderabad in the month of March, 2011. Shri. Satnam Singh Behru was elected as the new President of CIFA. The 8th Annual Conference was held at Patiala on 18th November, 2011 (details available at www.indianfarmers.rog).

During 2011, State Level Conference were organized in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The Regional conferences were held in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Pondicherry and Haryana. Similarly, many commodity meetings were held across the country.

Mr. Satnam Singh Behru, President, Mr. P. Chengal Reddy, Secretary General, Mr. Raghunath R Patil, Mr. Basavaraj Ingin and other EC Members participated in conferences.

7. Participation in Partnership programs:

8. **Recognition by Government of India:**

The planning Commission, Government of India has appointed Mr. P. Chengal Reddy as a Member of the 12th Plan Committee on Agriculture and Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Panchayat Raj. The report was submitted in July, 2011.

In the Pre-Budget meeting held by Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, Union Finance Minister, Government of India, Mr. P. Chengal Reddy was invited to submit his suggestions in the month of November, 2011 at New Delhi.

Mr. P. Chengal Reddy is appointed as a member of the Bureau of Indian Standards.

9. **Legal Activism:**

CIFA filed a case in The Supreme Court of India demanded implementation of National Commission on Farmers (Prof. M. S. Swaminathan Committee), Mr. Arjun Sen Gupta and other Committee reports. The case was admitted and now under the process in the Court.

10. **Way forward – CIFA’s activities for the year 2012:**

Building Consensus on Policy changes: a concept Note “Agriculture At the Center of Indian Economic Development” prepared by CIFA is circulated for discussions amongst various stakeholders throughout the country and also amongst international experts. The key issues are as follows.

1. How to restore Economic Equity to Agriculture and Social recognition to farmers.
2. Liberalizing Indian Agriculture from controls and restrictions (Processing, Commodity Trading, Storage and Exports).
3. To encourage and incentivize Private Sector including FDI investments in Agriculture Sector (Research, Extension, Service Centers).
4. Solving Food Security, low productivity and Mal-Nutrition by accessing modern technologies including GMOs to farmers.
5. To incentivize Private Sector Investments/FDI in Mechanization and Irrigation Sector.
7. To empower farmers by democratizing institutions (Panchayats, Co-operatives, Water Users, Market Yards).
8. To have separate Agriculture Budget in the Union and State Governments.
9. To include Agriculture and Irrigation under concurrent list.
Activities Profile:

1. Inequalities increasing in India, leading to serious social problems.
2. Death is the only option to farmers due to various reasons.
3. Increasing suicides in India.
4. Farmers rejecting support price fixed by GOI.
5. While the production looks up, the farmer looks up.
6. Paddy farmers' losses due to restrictive trade policies.
7. Labor shortage in India.
8. Rice bowl turns bare in West Bengal.
10. The need for GMOs in India.
11. Private-Public partnership for success of Indian Agriculture.
12. Farm Mechanization is the way out for Indian Agriculture.
13. Identity crises in the Indian political economic and social sector.
14. CIFA demands separate union budget.
16. CIFA propagates commodity committees.
17. CIFA Mr. Chengal Reddy meeting Union Finance Minister for pre-budget meeting.
18. CIFA holding meeting with Union commerce minister.
19. CIFA meeting details with Dr. Manmohan Singh, PM of India.
20. “ “ “
21. 8th National farmers' convention.
22. “ “
23. CIFA meeting with National Political parties with common Agenda.
24. CIFA files case in Supreme court for constitutional right
25. Mr. Chengal Reddy at Indian Economic Forum, Mumbai, on Nov.2011
26. Presentation by MR.PCR at committee of Governors meeting at Rashtrapati Bhavan new Delhi, Farmers perspective on Farmer-Industry partnership
27. PCR presentation on 2012-13 Pre-budget discussion by Union Commerce Minister.
28. PCR presentation on reforms in Agriculture for achieving 4% GDP ion agriculture.
29. PCR presentation on Food security problems in India at Indian economic summit.
30. PCR presentation at Dubai on Farmers perspective on Sugar growth in 21st century.
31. Proceedings of the Committee on Governors on Agriculture.
32. CIFA representation to the Prime Minister of India.
33. CIFA representation to the Union Ministers for demanding special parliament session on Agriculture.
34. Issues for discussions on special parliament session.
35. Benefits of FDI in retail-Note by CIFA
36. MOU between Indian sugar cane farmers and Indian sugar mills associations.

***