

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF 'HORTI INDIA 2017' ON 9TH FEBRUARY, 2017 AT HORTICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY PARK, GREATER NOIDA, UTTAR PRADESH

Dr. K.L. Chadha, Chairman Institute of Horticulture Technology,
Shri Sanjay Sudan, Co-Chairman,
Members of Parliament,
Shri S.K. Pattanayak, Secretary, Agriculture, Government of India,
Senior Officials and other dignitaries on dais,
Members of Media,
Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to have this opportunity of inaugurating 'Horti India 2017' and I am indeed very happy to be here in the company of technocrats, policy makers and particularly farmers in the field of Horticulture. The event is aimed to acquaint the participants about emerging innovative production technologies and their capacity building with a view to enhance horticultural productivity and profitability. It will also serve to bring different stakeholders in horticulture production and management to a common platform.

As you are well aware, the country has made rapid strides in the past decades in the field of Horticulture as a result of relentless research and adoption of advanced and appropriate technologies. The importance of Horticulture is being realised at all levels, be it a small or a large farmer, the corporate sector or the policy planners. In fact, the share of horticulture in agriculture GDP is now more than 33 percent and horticultural crops provide gainful employment for small farmers and agricultural labour throughout the year. I am confident that during this Workshop cum Exhibition, interaction with National and International Horticulture Experts and meeting of farmers and other stakeholders will have a very positive impact for further development of horticulture in the country. It is also heartening that the session will deliberate and introduce the growers to alternative production

technologies such as drip fertigation systems, protected cultivation and high density plantations. This will lead to enhanced horticultural productivity and profitability and more importantly, without leaving environmental foot prints which is a major concern anywhere in the world.

In the fast developing horticulture industry in the country, I believe that the Institute of Horticulture Technology has a lot to contribute in the field of capacity building for a technology driven horticulture. I am pleased to see that a very elaborate infrastructure has been created by the Institute along with a very competent faculty. It has been providing 'hands-on-training' to farmers and officials from public and private organisations as well as from different states in the country. It provides comprehensive training in the fields of crop improvement, crop production, natural resource management, crop protection, post harvest technology and extension education. The role of extension services, especially in technology is most crucial for the farmers to realize the gains from technological interventions. Further, the extension mechanism provides an opportunity for the researchers to access and refine the technologies. It is encouraging to know that the Institute of Horticulture Technology has opened up its gates to the foreign trainees also and the Institute is presently conducting training programme covering more than 10 countries. I am sure this activity will get a further boost after the utility of such training programmes is established outside the country also.

Manipur is considered a hotspot of bio-diversity and it is gifted with diverse agro-climatic conditions suitable for growing various cash crops, fruits and vegetables. It has a huge potential in the horticulture sector and if tapped with appropriate technology could hold the key to a quantum leap forward for the economy of the state. The poor economy of the state is characterised by a high rate of unemployment, low capital formation, inadequate infrastructure, communication bottlenecks, lack of industry and so on. Though Agriculture has continued to be the mainstay of the state's economy with more than 70% of the population depending on it for livelihood, Horticulture alongwith Agriculture could be exploited to break the

backbone of the state's poverty for placing the people as a whole on the parabola of progress. For this, it is imperative to promote modern technologies in cultivation, provide extension support to farmers, to raise productivity. Manipur comprises of 90% of area in the hills. The soils in the hills are conducive for plantation of a variety of fruits, medicinal plants, tea or coffee. Horticulture plantation could also progressively help in phasing out the jhum practice and generate alternative local means of livelihood. Various economic activities such as food processing could also be taken up in the state. The challenge posed by unemployment could be counter balanced to a large extent by providing the unemployed with gainful activities in the horticulture sector. The caveat, however, is that the youths need to be skilled. It is with this objective that I initiated recently a Skill Development Seminar with the active participation of the Central as well the State Government. I also intend to invite big business houses like Dabur, Humdard to the state as their presence will give a tremendous boost to the economic activities in the state. It is good that now the Institute of Horticulture Technology has opened their North-East Campus recently in Guwahati, Assam to give training to North-East farmers. I would like the Institute of Horticulture Technology to extend their training programmes to Manipur state in right earnest and your service will certainly be of immense benefit to the people of the state.

While extending my greetings to you all present here at this session of Horti India, 2017, I thank the organizers for inviting me to this function. I shall be glad if another chance of attending a function of this type comes my way in future.

I wish Horti India, 2017 a grand success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.