

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Millets Food Festival to commemorate International Year of Millets 2023**

The High Commission of India in association with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Zambia organized 'Millets Food Festival' on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 at Hotel Neelkanth Sarovar to commemorate the International Year of Millets 2023.

2. Hon'ble Reuben Mtolo Phiri, Minister of Agriculture, Government of the Republic of Zambia graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. Ms Beatrice Mutali, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zambia, Ms Suze-Percy Filippini, FAO Country Representative, diplomats, senior government officials and members of the Indian Community attended the event.

3. Pursuant to India's proposal, the United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session in March 2021 declared 2023 the International Year of Millets (IYM) to raise awareness and direct policy attention to the nutritional and health benefits of millets and their suitability for cultivation under adverse and changing climatic conditions.

4. Hon'ble Reuben Mtolo Phiri, gave an overview of Millets production in Zambia. He highlighted that global agrifood systems face challenges to feed an ever-growing global population, therefore resilient cereals like millets provide an affordable and nutritious option. He revealed that about 40,000 metric tonnes of millets were produced in Zambia in 2021-22.



5. Hon'ble Minister expressed government of Zambia's support to collaborate and work with the government of India and other like-minded countries to push forward the millets agenda. He also praised India's millets value chain and expressed need to draw lessons from India.

6. High Commissioner Mr. Ashok Kumar highlighted Hon'ble Prime Minister India, Mr. Narendra Modi called Millets as "Shree Anna" meaning "Mother of All Grains". He stressed that a global movement to grow millets would be an important step to meet the food security. High Commissioner remarked that "Millets are good for the consumer, cultivator and climate." The 'International Year of Millets' stands to provide a unique opportunity to increase global production, ensure efficient processing and consumption of millets.



7. High Commissioner touched upon raising awareness to create 'Millet Mindfulness' and highlighted the tremendous role that institutions and individuals could play to popularise millets. He added that while institutional mechanisms can encourage the production of millets and make it profitable via policy initiatives, individuals can make health-conscious and planet-friendly choices by making millets a part of their diet. High Commissioner also expressed increased cooperation between India and Zambia not only in Millets but in overall Agriculture and its allied sectors.



8. Speaking on the occasion H.E. Ms Beatrice Mutali, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Zambia noted that International Year of Millets 2023 stands to provide a unique opportunity to increase production, ensure efficient processing and consumption, promote better utilization of crop rotations, and encourage better connectivity throughout food systems to promote millets as a key component of the food basket. She expressed commitment of United Nations to support the Government of Zambia in its food security.



9. Ms Suze-Percy Filippini, FAO Country Representative in her statement highlighted that IYM 2023 aims to contribute to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals).



10. A short film by Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi Ji (on the launch of International Year of Millets) was screened. Hon'ble Prime Minister congratulated the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organisation for marking 2023 as the International Year of Millets and expressed appreciation to the UN member nations for their support in marking the International Year of Millets.



11. Hon'ble Reuben Mtolo Phiri, Minister of Agriculture inaugurated the Millets Food Festival and an exhibition of Millets and its products. Indian, Zambian and International cuisines made of millets were served to the guests. High Commissioner Shri Ashok Kumar urged to remember millets and make collective efforts globally to showcase their rich potential.



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