

# Smart Food takes the Millet Revolution to South Asia

*"We need to diversify staples with more Smart Food: food that is good for you, the planet and the farmer."*

HYDERABAD, INDIA, June 26, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The virtues of [millets](#) and the progress made in India in bringing millets back into popularity was highlighted at Bangkok this week at a roundtable organized by the World Bank-administered South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI). A range of experts shared with industry, governments and researchers the critical need for diversity on farm and in our diets. A strong bid to revolutionize millets, sorghum and legumes and bring these super crops back to the plate was made at the event by Ms. Joanna Kane-Potaka, Assistant Director-General, External Relations, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT).



Ms. Joanna Kane-Potaka, Assistant Director-General, External Relations, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

Further spreading of the message of the millet revolution occurred the week before, when [Smart Food](#) was presented at the Innovation Workshop organized by the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) that brought representatives from Korea through to India. Recommendations were drafted for policy makers and researchers on how to bring in more innovative solutions for healthier and more sustainable food.

The Smart Food initiative, launched by ICRISAT in 2013, is a global initiative to diversify the staples. It stemmed from the strategic thinking around the need for food that fulfills the criteria of being good for the consumer (nutritious and healthy), good for the planet (environmentally sustainable) and good for the farmer (profitable and sustainable). A major objective under the initiative is to diversify staples with millets and sorghum and legumes which can have a major impact on nutrition, the environment, and farmer welfare.

This year, the SAFANSI round-table discussion centered on High Impact and Underrepresented Nutrition Sensitive Food Systems in South Asia. The discussions were aimed at drawing on the latest evidence and experiences from current nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific programs and exploring the implications of promoting high impact and underrepresented nutrition-sensitive food systems including fish agrifood systems and solutions, other animal-sourced foods, and new and old heritage crops.

The event which explored the advantages of leveraging public-private partnerships and

technologies to encourage high impact nutrition-sensitive food systems, witnessed the participation of civil society and nutrition-focused organizations (SNV, Nutrition International, GAIN, etc.); donor organizations (DFID, EC, DFAT, USAID, etc.); relevant UN organizations (UNICEF, WFP, WHO, FAO, UNDP), international and regional NGOs (SUN, GFAR, SAARC, etc.), research institutions (WorldFish, ICRISAT, IFPRI, etc.), and others.

Addressing a gathering at the round-table discussion, [Ms. Kane-Potaka](#) said, "We need to diversify staples with more Smart Food: food that is good for you, the planet and the farmer. This also opens up opportunities for creating new and large businesses. The Smart Food initiative achieves a long-lasting and major impact on some of the big global issues of nutrition, environment, climate change, and farmer welfare. I envision Smart Food becoming a part of regular diets and the food system in the near future."

Other topics of significance like food security, nutrition, globalization, meeting the SDGs, and science, technology, and innovation were also discussed by others who joined in as the forefront panelists at the round-table discussions.

#### About Smart Food:

Smart Food is a global initiative led by Asia and Africa. The Smart Food Vision is a world where food is 'Smart' – good for you, the planet and the farmer. The Executive Council includes the: Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and ICRISAT.

[www.smartfood.org/](http://www.smartfood.org/)

#### About SAFANSI:

SAFANSI is a multi-donor program that seeks to advance the food and nutrition security agenda and foster intersectoral action in South Asia. Since its inception in 2010, SAFANSI has supported over 95 initiatives across South Asia. The strategic approach fostered by SAFANSI is to increase the commitment of governments and development partners in South Asia region (SAR) for Food and Nutrition Security-related policies and programs that will lead to measurable improvements in Food and Nutrition Security.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/safansi>

#### About APAARI:

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) is a unique voluntary, membership-based, self-mandated, apolitical and multi-stakeholder organization in the Asia-Pacific region. It promotes and strengthens agriculture and agri-food research and innovation systems through partnerships and collaboration, capacity development and advocacy for sustainable agricultural development in the region. The ultimate aim of APAARI is to help realizing sustainable development goals in Asia and the Pacific.

[www.apaari.org](http://www.apaari.org)

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