

# Welcome and Introductory Remarks

**Rajesh Chadha**

**International Workshop**

## **Achieving Food Security in India:**

*Improving Competition, Markets and the Efficiency of Supply Chains*

**24 November 2009**

His Excellency Mr. Peter Varghese, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: A very Good Morning to all of you!

On behalf of the Director General NCAER and our research partners, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our Honourable Guests on the podium as well as to this august gathering of distinguished participants to this Workshop. The title of the Workshop is “*Achieving Food Security in India: Improving Competition, Markets and the Efficiency of Supply Chains*”. This Workshop is one of the milestones of the Research Project on *Facilitating Efficient Agricultural Markets in India: An Assessment of Competition and Regulatory Reform Requirements*. The Project is sponsored by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). The Research Partners include:

- a) National Council of Applied Economic Research, India;
- b) the Australian Institutes: i) Industry & Investment New South Wales; ii) the Australia and New Zealand School of Government; iii) La Trobe University; iv) the University of Melbourne; and
- c) the Exeter University, United Kingdom

Mr. Suman Bery, Director General, NCAER and His Excellency Mr. Peter Varghese, the Australian High Commissioner to India are the Co-Chairs for this Session.

Mr. Peter Varghese took up his position as Australian High Commissioner to India in August 2009. Prior to this posting he was for five-and-half years the Director General of the Office of National Assessments (ONA) in Canberra. This is a Secretary-level statutory office reporting directly to the Australian Prime Minister. Mr Varghese is a career officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which he joined in 1979. He has served in as diplomat in many countries around the world including his position as High Commissioner to Malaysia.

Mr. Suman Bery has held the position of Director-General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi since January 2001. Prior to this, Mr. Bery was with the World Bank in Washington DC. His areas of focus include the macro-economy; financial markets; public debt management; and he has a focus on Latin America. During 1992-1994 he worked as Special Consultant to the Reserve Bank of India. Mr. Bery has served as an independent (non-Executive Director) on the Board of State Bank of India, India's largest commercial bank. Recently, Mr. Bery has been appointed as member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

Dr. Simon Hearn is the Senior Advisor for the Agricultural Development Policy Programme at the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research in Canberra and is the Programme Manager for this Project. Dr. Hearn has a BSc (Hons) in Agriculture and Economics from Reading University and a PhD in Agricultural Economics from London University. He has worked in agricultural and mining policy development and economic analysis both nationally and internationally.

Mr. Scott Davenport is the Chief Economist, Industry and Investment, New South Wales in Australia. He and I are Co-Project Leaders of this ongoing work. He is a Member of the Senior Executive Service of the NSW Government with extensive public sector experience in the development of primary industry and natural resource management policy and programmes.

Prof. Allan Fels is the Dean of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, Melbourne in Australia. He is our Keynote Speaker and will speak on "The Role of Competitive Markets in Achieving Food Security in India".

Prof. Ramesh Chand is National Professor, National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research in New Delhi and Chief Guest of our Workshop.

A very warm welcome to you, Sirs, for sparing your valuable time to be with us today morning!

I would request the Co-Chairs to introduce Professor Allan Fels and Professor Ramesh Chand before we request them to speak.

All the Gentlemen on the podium are eminent personalities with great professional achievements. Please note that brief CV profiles of the speakers in this Workshop have been circulated in the Reference Material in your bags.

Now we propose to invite Dr. Simon Hearn to deliver his welcome and project-related remarks followed by Mr. Scott Davenport to outline the Project Backdrop. This would then be followed by the Keynote Speech by Prof. Allan Fels; and, the Chief-Guest Speech by Prof. Ramesh Chand.

I would now handover the proceedings to the Co-Chairs of this Session.