Science for contemporary challenges*

The COVID-19 pandemic has been estimated to result in over 140 million people falling into extreme poverty. Higher food insecurity could also increase negative health effects and migration. The pandemic has also disrupted access to fresh and nutritious food at affordable prices, made worse by weak infrastructure and poor institutional support. Urgent reconfiguring of food, nutrition, health, and social protection systems is required for food and nutrition security for all.

In the context of these disruptions and need to rethink at solutions, a conference was organized to focus on insights to overcome these concerns. The three-day virtual conference included sessions on agrobiodiversity, gender, climate change, value chains and policy with eminent speakers from across the globe. The conference included two special lectures and five technical sessions.

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change, value additions and special lectures.

- Need for science, technology, evidence-based and diversity-based sustainable food system approach for restoration of agroecosystem health and diversity of diets.
- Need to conserve local landraces, vital agrobiodiversity resources, and mainstream into food production along with need-based farmer-centred approach in plant breeding.
- A sustainable breeding approach that is farmer and ecosystem specific and strengthens network between gene banks, community seed banks and cooperatives needed.
- Farmers empowerment to cope with climate change through biodiversity in agriculture and local knowledge systems to strengthen health of ecosystems.
- Integrating agrobiodiversity with an interdisciplinary approach for greater integration of biodiversity and traditional/local knowledge into production.
- Applying gender lens in policies on conservation, food production, fish processing, women’s participation and control over resources to resolve gender inequality.
- Making nutrition-related quality standards mandatory in processed foods.
- Ensuring environmentally sustainable industrial functioning including circular value-chain based planning for using agro-wastes.
- Support small holders in increasing negotiating skills, access to resources, support for building institutions and right sizing to make them a sustainable model to smallholders.
- Study context and design of Farmer–Producer Organizations embedding organizational and financial sustainability dimensions.


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