

Food Security for the nation is a major concern for the Policy makers & the Ministry of Agriculture. The DAC is therefore, engaged in increasing productivity to sustain food security for a growing population. We certainly do not want to revert back to begging for food & aid like PL480. It is equally, important to protect what we produce and hence the need for crop protection chemicals.

Consumers are more concerned about the safety of the food they eat and hence, the need for producing more but safe food. Deptt of PP&Q evaluate safety data of each CP compound before approving its use on farm. Such safety data are generated in accordance with the protocols developed in '70s by Dr Gaitonde Committee.

We salute him for evolving such a protocol which is being followed for >40 yrs. Science & testing facility in India in the meantime, has progressed significantly. The Industry has been seeking a review of the protocol since 1996. It needed a determined push from the architect of the winning DAC – none other than Sri Prabir K Basu who is known for promoting science for the benefit of the farmer, to set the ball & score. We are privileged to have him with us to inaugurate this WS, notwithstanding competing demand on his time. I welcome him.

The architect of the 'history in the making' is one of the most experienced 'Regulatory Toxicologist', Dr D Kanungo duly supported by renowned Toxicology experts, Dr S Kulshrestha, Dr S Khurana, Dr Sarita Bhalla, Dr Balakrishnamurthy, Dr Shalini Chawla, Dr Mithyantha, Dr JC Majumdar, & of course a bunch of young experts from the Industry ably led by Mr Rajesh Dhawan evolved a set of recommendation to replace GCR. I welcome each one of them. I also welcome those who have worked hard behind the scene to help in evolving these recommendations to be presented today to debate and assimilate what is best for the country.

This Workshop could not have happened at a better time. Just a month ago, India has accepted the invitation of OECD Council to be fully adherent to the Council Act.

Full adherence to OECD System implies that our test facilities today produce safety data of comparable rigour & quality as the test facilities throughout OECD. OECD Countries will now accept our data for registration. Equally, non-members will accept Data from OECD as per the conditions for 'Mutual Acceptance of Data'. This removes a potential trade barrier between India & OECD Countries for marketing Chemicals that could have been caused by different standards and verification procedures.

The Key person who helped India achieve this recognition is fortunately present with us Dr Vinita Sharma, Advisor to the Ministry of S&T. I welcome her to speak for herself the benefits of this development.

I welcome the Global experts who have travelled all the way, notwithstanding the hostile summer to help us create & adopt the 'KCR'. I welcome Dr Richard W Lewis, Dr Richard Billington, Dr Eric Debruyne, Dr Ricky Ho, Dr Yong C. Hahn, Dr Liza, Dr Ramachandran & of course our own Dr Vasant Patil.

I welcome all the experts from the Directorate of PPQ and other Govt Departments, my colleagues from the Industry and of course the sponsors without whose support we could not have organised this Workshop. Mr Pankaj Kumar under whose umbrella we exist, I welcome him and finally I welcome the head of our organising team - Mr Sudhir Rahate whose guidance and unflinching support enabled us to share best practices and knowledge across the world.

I am sure with free exchange of ideas and experiences all of us will leave this Hall at the end of the day, more knowledgeable and confident about the changes required, and thus be part of achieving a big mile stone if not a historic KCR to guide us for years to come!

I welcome you all.