



DRYLAND CONGRESS 2026

Transforming Dryland Agriculture with South–South Cooperation

..... Celebrating 50 years of ICRISAT-ICAR Collaboration & Commemorating UN Day for South–South Cooperation

Date: 10-12 September, 2026

**Venue: National Agricultural Science Center Complex,
New Delhi, India**

Organised by



Drylands cover about 47% of the earth's land surface and are inhabited by more than 2 billion people who rank among the poorest of the poor globally. Dryland regions account for over 40 percent of the world's cultivated land and support more than 2.3 billion people, predominantly in Asia, Africa, and parts of Latin America. These regions face recurring droughts, soil degradation, climate variability, low productivity, market constraints, and fragile livelihoods. In many developing economies, dryland ecosystems are hotspots of poverty, malnutrition, and ecological degradation. There is an urgent need to bring together global expertise, share successful models, and develop collaborative strategies to transform dryland agriculture.

To address this need, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) are jointly organising the Dryland Congress 2026 aimed at Transforming Dryland Agriculture with South–South Cooperation, scheduled from 10th to 12th September 2026.

The conference dates align with the United Nations Day for South–South Cooperation (12 September), underscoring the importance of peer-to-peer learning, shared innovation pathways, and strengthened partnerships across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific.

Through this global event, ICRISAT and ICAR aim to foster agricultural cooperation among Global South nations, bringing together senior officials, policymakers, scientists, and development partners worldwide. The conference will catalyse knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and policy dialogue to transform dryland agriculture into a resilient, productive system. Aligned with the United Nations' declaration of 2026 as the International Year of Women Farmers, the conference will serve as a timely opportunity to recognize, advocate for, and amplify women's contributions to agricultural research, innovation, and global food and nutrition security.

<https://drylandcongress.icrisat.org>



Conference Patrons



Dr Himanshu Pathak
Director General,
International Crops Research
Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics



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Conference Co-Chairs



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Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics



Dr Devendra Kumar Yadava
DDG-Crop Sciences, ICAR,
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare,
Govt. of India

Objectives of the Congress

- 1 Showcase high impact scalable innovations, technologies, and institutional models benefiting dryland farmers and stakeholders
- 2 Institutionalize South–South peer learning and technical cooperation
- 3 Catalyse actionable partnerships and investment pathways by convening governments, research institutions, financial institutions, private sector stakeholders, and farmer organizations
- 4 Develop a Global South Action Framework for dryland transformation
- 5 Strengthen national and regional capacities in innovation governance, technology transfer, and systems-based dryland research
- 6 Embed gender-responsive and youth-inclusive frameworks within dryland innovation and scaling pathways
- 7 Leverage the ICRISSAT Center of Excellence for South–South Cooperation in Agriculture (ISSCA) as the implementation anchor for South–South dryland transformation



ISSCA Awards

Showcase your scalable, field-ready agricultural innovations and gain recognition across the Global South. The ISSCA Awards recognises impactful technology solutions that drive real change on the ground and promotes their adoption through strong South–South cooperation.

Join a growing community of innovators accelerating technology transfer and largescale impact across diverse agroecologies.

Apply by: **30 June 2026**
contact.issca@icrisat.org

Themes and Sub-Themes

1. Breeding for Tomorrow: Accelerating Genetic Gains in Dryland Crops

- Pre-Breeding & Genetic Diversity Platforms for Dryland Crops
- Breeding for Climate Resilient and Nutrition Rich Varieties/hybrids
- Frontier Technologies to Accelerate Genetic Gains and Plant Health Management

2. Climate Resilient Dryland Landscapes

- Soil Health and Ecosystem Functioning in Dryland Landscapes
- Water Resource Assessment and Landscape Hydrology
- Nature-Based Solutions and Regenerative Landscapes

3. Better Diets and Nutrition through Markets & Policies

- Mainstreaming Nutri-Sensitive Dryland Food Systems
- Building Demand-Driven, Inclusive and Resilient Value Chains
- Enabling Policy Ecosystems For Dryland Transformation

4. Reimagining Resilient Dryland Farming Systems

- Climate Resilient Farming Systems and Regenerative Agriculture
- Sustainable Intensification and Livelihood Enhancement
- Scaling Innovations and Best Management Practices

5. Transforming Seed Systems in the Global South

- Climate Responsive Seed Supply and Resilient PPP Delivery Models
- Strengthening Seed Systems in Africa
- Harmonising Seed Systems: Potential and Policy Needs

6. Gender and Youth-centred Transformation

- Empowerment and Transformative Change in Dryland Agri-Food Systems
- Strengthening Inclusive Solutions for Resilient and Nutri-Smart Drylands
- Youth at the Centre: Thriving Pathways for Innovation, Enterprise and Leadership

ICAR–ICRISAT 50 Years Celebration

ICRISAT and ICAR mark 50 years of impactful collaboration, advancing agricultural research and innovation across India in 2026. This enduring partnership has delivered climate-resilient crop varieties, strengthened seed systems, and improved productivity for smallholder farmers. The conference will showcase key outcomes of this collaboration and chart a forward-looking, science-led pathway toward the Government of India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

ISSCA – South–South Cooperation

The ICRISAT Center of Excellence for South–South Cooperation in Agriculture (ISSCA) serves as a global platform to share and scale proven agricultural innovations across the Global South. It brings together governments, researchers, and development partners to co-create sustainable, climate-smart solutions that strengthen food systems and improve rural livelihoods across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and beyond. The conference will highlight knowledge exchange and collaboration opportunities through ISSCA.

<https://drylandcongress.icrisat.org>



Sponsorship

Sponsorship Category	Contribution		Key Entitlements
	INR	USD	
Diamond Sponsor	20,00,000	22,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent branding as Title Sponsor on all conference materials, website, stage backdrop and media releases • Opportunity to deliver keynote/inaugural address • Premium exhibition space • Logo on delegate kits and conference proceedings. • Five registrations
Gold Sponsor	10,00,000	11, 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logo placement on conference website, banners and program booklet • Opportunity to sponsor a plenary or thematic session • Exhibition stall • Acknowledgment during inaugural and valedictory sessions. • Three registrations
Silver Sponsor	5,00,000	5,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding during selected technical sessions • Logo on website and conference publications • Exhibition stall • Two registrations

For sponsorship opportunities, speaker engagements, side events, partnerships, and exhibition opportunities, please write to

● **Contact:** dryland-congress@icrisat.org ●



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