



REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR RICHARD R. VERMA AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FEED THE FUTURE INDIA-TRIANGULAR TRAINING PROGRAM

Monday, July 25, 2016

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Secretary Pattanayak, fellow Ambassadors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you all for joining me here today to celebrate the launch of the Feed the Future India, Triangular Training Program.

This exciting new program marks not only a significant step forward for the U.S.-India bilateral partnership, but reinforces our commitment to work together as global partners.

I would like to thank the Government of India for its dedication and leadership in moving this initiative forward as well as our partner nations in Africa and Asia.

I also appreciate the National Agriculture Science Complex (NASC) for hosting us here today at their beautiful campus. And lastly I want to thank many of the people in this room, including my colleagues from USAID, whose dedication and hard work made this program possible.

"Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world." These are the immortal words of Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, the great American humanitarian and scientist who pioneered the Green Revolution. As many of you know, in the mid-1960s, Dr. Borlaug teamed up with Dr. M.S. Swaminathan to drastically increase wheat yields in India, helping this country become self-sufficient in food. Some of my family members, who hail from Punjab, still remember the dramatic impact of the Green Revolution.

Last week, I visited the statue of Dr. Borlaug, which is just behind the hall where we are meeting today. It was a powerful reminder of the legacy of this extraordinary human being, who saved tens of millions of lives in the 20th century. I think Dr. Borlaug would be very pleased with the cooperation we are undertaking today.

Even before the Green Revolution, agriculture was an important pillar of U.S.-India cooperation. In the 1950s, USAID helped establish specialized agriculture universities across nine states in India, in partnership with six American land grant universities. This network of agricultural institutions collaboratively researched and discovered new technologies, including more productive and resilient hybrid seed varieties. The work of these universities greatly contributed to the Green Revolution.

Today, American and Indian universities continue to work side-by-side to continue sowing the seeds of this new agricultural era. There are now more than 40 state agricultural universities operating across India—driving the adoption of new seed varieties and cutting-edge technologies.

Since the Green Revolution, India has made considerable progress in increasing its agricultural production, becoming one of the world's largest producers of staple crops, fruits, horticulture, and dairy products. This increase has improved India's food and nutritional security, and has helped reduce malnutrition rates of children three years and younger from 40 percent to 29 percent over the last 10 years.

The program we're launching today enables us to share these innovations worldwide, helping other countries revolutionize their agriculture practices and bringing solutions to aid farmers in their production, harvesting and marketing of goods. Ultimately, by sharing best practices and enhancing farming techniques, we are benefitting the wider world by improving nutrition levels.

Given the importance of food security in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and hunger, the U.S. government announced the Feed the Future Initiative in 2010 with the belief that global hunger is solvable and that we can work hand-in-hand with partner countries to develop their agriculture sectors. Not only does this approach transform lives, but it also promotes global prosperity and stability. As a testament to Feed the Future's success, the U.S. Congress passed the 2016 Global Food Security Act earlier this month.

At the White House Summit on Global Development last week, President Obama said, "Children cannot flourish if they're going hungry. We can't ask a child to feed her mind when she can barely feed her stomach. So with our alliance between government and private sector and NGOs, we need to keep empowering farmers with new seeds and new technologies and new techniques that are scaled appropriately and sustainable."

That is exactly what has brought us here today to launch the second phase of our Feed the Future India Triangular Training Program.

Led by India's premiere National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management or MANAGE, this program will train 1,500 agricultural professionals from 17 countries across Africa and Asia on specialized practices that can improve food security and nutrition. The first phase trained more than 200 professionals from Kenya, Liberia and Malawi. These professionals have empowered thousands of farmers, who have successfully adopted and are now implementing new and improved farming practices that are increasing their productivity and income.

Following the success in these three countries, India wanted to further expand its partnership with the U.S. in this area. The second phase, launched today, will help increase the agricultural productivity in these 17 respective countries through trainings that will include everything from agricultural marketing, dairy management and food processing to sharing best practices on how to prevent post-harvest losses. By harnessing the expertise and innovation of our two great countries, we are unlocking new opportunities to address global development challenges, bringing us closer to our shared objective of eliminating global poverty and hunger.

Let me close by reiterating the vision laid out by President Obama and Prime Minister Modi last month. They called on the U.S. and India to work together for the global good to combat climate change, promote global health and food security, and ensure continued regional integration and stability in Africa and Asia. This new triangular initiative marks a major step toward realizing our leaders' vision.

As Prime Minister Modi said in his recent address to the U.S. Congress, *"A strong India-U.S. partnership can anchor peace, prosperity and stability from Asia to Africa and from Indian Ocean to the Pacific."* We couldn't agree more. Our shared goal for a better world is strong. Let us continue our work together and honor the legacy of Dr. Norman Borlaug.

Thank you.

New Delhi

Issuing Country

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Last updated: July 27, 2016

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