

Millet Sisters welcome the International Year of Millets

December 15, 2017



We at DDS are so delighted about the government's proposal to the United Nations, that 2018 should be observed as the International Year of Millets. In this context, DDS has taken its first step by organising a meeting with the women millet farmers on Friday December 15 at Pastapur village. Through this meeting the significance of this move by the government of India was discussed and the small farmers expressed their own concerns over millets gaining popularity. Following

is the pledge adopted by the Millet Sisters Network, Zaheerabad on December 15 2017.

Millets are our heritage crops. From the time of our ancestors they have been providing all the food and fodder for our families. Apart from this, millets also ensure fertility of our soil and health for our children.

Millet based farming, that we follow, needs neither irrigation nor electricity. Therefore, these crops save water and power for the nation.

Nor do our millet crops demand any chemical fertilizers. We don't use a drop of pesticide in our farms.

The knowledge needed to cultivate these crops is plentiful in both our families and communities. Because of this we are able to farm our crops in a truly independent and autonomous fashion for several centuries. This is our heritage.

Now we hear that the Government of India is asking for millets to be celebrated as international heritage. We are very happy about this.

But one note of caution. The proposed International Year of Millets should not be allowed to slip away from the control of small farmers and women. This is government's responsibility.



As soon as the organic farming, which we have been practicing for generations, gained market acceptability it has been captured by corporate houses and big companies. In a similar fashion, if millets also become a form of corporate farming, it will be a severe blow to our agriculture heritage.

In this background we feel that it is better if this year is known as the Year of Small Farmers rather than the Year of Small Grains (Millets). Considering this, government must take every possible action to declare that millets are the property of small farmers.