

**Embassy of India**

**Tokyo**

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**Remarks by Mr. Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan**  
**at the Event on 'Harvesting the Potential: A Millet Celebration'**

**February 22, 2023**

**H.E. Mr Takaaki Katsumata, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Government of Japan**

**Mr Yutaka Arima, Director General, Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan**

**Dr. Madhaiyaan Angamuthu, Chairman, Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), India**

**Ms. Eriko Hibi, Director, Liaison Office of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Tokyo**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am delighted to welcome you all to today's event celebrating the International Year of Millets 2023.

2. At the initiative of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, 2023 has been declared the 'International Year of Millets' by the United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations Resolution on this was adopted with support from more than 70 countries.

3. The objective of dedicating this year to millets is to raise awareness throughout the world about their important role in promoting sustainable agriculture and benefits as a smart and superfood.

4. The International Year of Millets provides an opportunity to increase global production and consumption of millets and encourage their greater integration in food systems with the objective of making millets the food of choice for countries around the world.

5. Millets have a rich history, being among the earliest crops domesticated for food, and they have remained an essential source of nutrition for people worldwide. Their balanced nutritional profile, coupled with their environmentally-friendly production methods, make them an essential part of sustainable agriculture. Moreover, they are easy to grow, climate-resilient, and drought-resistant. In the face of the many challenges posed to food security by climate change, pandemics, and global conflicts, millets offer a promising solution to this important issue.

6. India is the global hub for millets with a production of over than 17 million tonnes which makes for more than 80 % of the millets produced in Asia. Millets have been an integral part of the Indian diet for centuries, with several different varieties of millets grown across the country. Not only are they nutritious, but they are also versatile, used in a range of dishes from breakfast to dinner, and even snacks. By promoting millets, India is not only preserving its rich culinary heritage, but also providing a sustainable solution for food security, particularly for smallholder farmers.

7. Through the International Year of Millets, India aims to spread the word about the versatility and adaptability of millets, encouraging farmers, consumers, and policymakers alike to incorporate them into their diets and agricultural practices.

8. While millets have been a staple in India for centuries, they are also gaining popularity around the world as a nutritious and sustainable food. In countries such as Japan, where rice has traditionally been the primary grain, millets can provide a welcome alternative, as they have a similar texture and can be used in a range of dishes.

9. By promoting millets in Japan and other countries, we can diversify the world's food basket, creating more resilient food systems that are better equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century.

10. The International Year of Millets 2023 is a call to action for us all to recognize the value of millets and work towards promoting sustainable agriculture and food systems. Let us work together to ensure that millets become an integral part of our food basket, benefiting consumers, cultivators, and the environment alike.

Thank you.

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