

21 June 2011

Mr. Sharad Pawar  
Hon'ble Union Minister for Agriculture  
Government of India  
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi

*Cc: Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, G20 Sherpa & Dy. Chair of the Planning Commission, India*

**“India must take lead to ensure the G20 acts decisively to end hunger and deprivation”**

Dear Mr. Sharad Pawar,

The G20 Agricultural Ministers' Meeting of 22-23 June in Paris (France) is being watched across the world with the expectation that it will make decisive proposals to change the reality of hunger faced by 925 million people globally, and address the threat of extreme poverty, undernourishment and deprivation being faced by millions of others.

India as an emerging economy and global power has a crucial role to play on the agenda of food security given that it is home to the largest number of people affected by hunger and malnutrition in world - estimated at 237.7 million people by the United Nations (FAO) in 2010. The worst affected are women, children, dalits, adivasis and other traditionally excluded communities. With 1.83 million children under the age of five dying every year, and 50% of these deaths being due to malnutrition related causes, action now is critical to save lives!

We welcome the focus on Agriculture within the agenda of the G20 this year. This provides an important opportunity for the international community to commit itself to long-term food production, public financing for agriculture and the stability of food prices. Your decisions will enable the difference between hunger and well being, deprivation and life for one-fifth of India's population and for one in seven people around the world. We call on you therefore to recognize and reinforce the following priorities in your discussion with the G20 Agriculture Ministers:

**1/ Fulfilment of existing global commitments to increase public investment in agriculture**

Donors must deliver on the financial commitments of the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) and provide clear and transparent accounting for the US\$22 billion committed as part of this agreement over a period of three years. The international community must also deliver on the non-financial commitments made as part of the AFSI. We call on you to prioritise the creation of social protection measures for communities who have limited access to food and nutrition, including those affected by conflict and natural disaster; while joining hands to immediately upscale and modernise the management of national and regional food reserves.

**2/ Emphasis on public financing of agriculture and regulation of private sector**

India must urge its counterparts in the G20 to focus on long-term solutions for sustainable agriculture, which require improvements in agricultural productivity and greater public financing to the sector. The G20 should agree on innovative financing mechanisms to strengthen investment in food security and agriculture, such as the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) as an option that could generate greater financial resources to meet international development commitments, while promoting greater equity and stability of the global financial system by reducing speculation and excessive liquidity.

The increased emphasis on private sector investment in land and agriculture needs to be reviewed from the interest of small and marginal farmers whose livelihoods are threatened by corporate agriculture, particularly in regions that do not offer a high margin of profitability. Policies to enable private sector participation must also create opportunities for local

community and cooperative arrangements among small farmers, with emphasis on financial and technological support for women engaged in agriculture.

The G20 must take cognisance of commodity markets that promote speculation in agriculture related investment. Trading must be strictly regulated and require that the G20 countries agree on standards to address 1) volumes of speculation relative to conventional hedging; 2) increased capital deposit requirements on futures transactions; 3) position limits for individual investors including “index funds”; and 4) transparency, including ensuring that all derivatives not related to conventional hedging are traded on formal exchanges.

### **3/ Monitoring India’s investments in land and agriculture in Africa**

The Indian government must lead by example and monitor the footprint of Indian companies investing in land and agriculture across Africa. All engagements by the private sector must be transparent, respect the rights of local communities and enable African civil society to track the impact of their activities. India must take the lead in ensuring a strong regulatory framework - organized in keeping with established principles of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) - is put in place to ensure that such investments are necessarily mindful the rights of local communities in relation to land and food produce.

India must work in partnership with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) to ensure that its interventions in the region are oriented towards ensuring the objective of increased public sector spending on agriculture and the promise of food security for the people of Africa.

### **4/ Reinforcing global negotiations on trade and agriculture**

India had traditionally played a key role in the WTO negotiations on agriculture – and with a focus on food security and the protection of livelihoods. It is important for India to reinforce the central role of the WTO and reject the idea of bilateral Free Trade Agreements as an alternative to the Doha Round of negotiations.

India must reinforce the debate on food security and agriculture in the international climate change negotiations, and partner with key countries including South Africa and Brazil to ensure that women and climate affected communities are the centre of the deliberations that will be held in Durban (2011) and Rio (2012).

We look forward to your leadership in ensuring that the G20 this year will take decisive action the all-important agenda of food security and agriculture – and will continue to rally the support of the international community to achieve the global targets on hunger and extreme poverty outlined in UN Millennium Development Goals.

#### **Signed:**

- Centre for Budget & Governance Accountability (CBGA)
- Ekta Parishad
- JAGORI
- National Conference of Dalit Organisations (NACDOR)
- National Social Watch Coalition
- Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI)
- Wada Na Todo Abhiyan
- Christian Aid India
- OneWorld South Asia
- Oxfam India
- Save the Children India
- World Vision India
- Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)