

ICRISAT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE (ISSCA) – SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NEWS: **ICRISAT and RIS** launched **ISSCA** to boost **South-South agricultural innovation** and signed an MoU with **DAKSHIN** to enhance collaboration and scalable agri-solutions in dryland regions.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

DAKSHIN: Development and Knowledge Sharing Initiative

- **DAKSHIN** is a Government of India-led digital platform launched in **2023** to promote **South-South Cooperation (SSC)**, particularly in **agriculture and rural development**.
- It aims to share **scalable, sustainable, and replicable** development practices across the Global South, especially among developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** is the **nodal ministry**, while institutions like **RIS (Research and Information System for Developing Countries)** provide operational and technical support.

Objectives and Features of DAKSHIN

- Acts as a **digital knowledge-sharing portal**, enabling real-time access to India's tested development models and technological solutions.
- Facilitates **peer learning, capacity building, and institutional partnerships** among Global South countries.
- Supports **customized developmental cooperation** that is demand-driven and rooted in local priorities, rather than one-size-fits-all models.

ICRISAT Centre of Excellence for South-South Cooperation in Agriculture (ISSCA)

- The **ISSCA** was launched under DAKSHIN as a dedicated hub for agriculture-related cooperation.
- **Location:** Based at **ICRISAT headquarters in Hyderabad, India**.
- **Purpose:** Translates agricultural research into **field-level, scalable innovations** for developing countries.
- Aims to **democratize agricultural knowledge** and **generate policy recommendations** through collaborative learning.
- Supports countries in developing their **private seed industries** and enhancing **agricultural productivity** through access to Indian expertise.

About ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics)

- Established in **1972**, ICRISAT is an **international, nonprofit research organization** and a member of the **CGIAR** consortium.
- **Headquartered in Hyderabad**, it serves as a **global leader in dryland agricultural research**.
- Works with over **60 countries**, regional bodies, and development agencies to enhance food security and resilience.
- Focuses on **climate-resilient crops** such as **millets, sorghum, chickpea, pigeon pea**, and others suitable for semi-arid regions.
- Promotes **scientific research, technology transfer, and farmer-centric innovations** to tackle hunger and poverty in drylands.

About RIS (Research and Information System for Developing Countries)

- An **autonomous policy think tank** under the MEA, headquartered in **New Delhi**.
- Established in **1983**, following a recommendation from the **Seventh NAM Summit**, to serve as a policy research arm for South-South Cooperation.
- Key objectives include:
 - Promoting **regional and international economic cooperation**.
 - Supporting **South-South knowledge exchanges and development dialogue**.
 - Providing research on **technology, trade, connectivity, and governance** relevant to developing nations.

FAO's Role in South-South Cooperation

- The **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** plays a central role as a **facilitator of global SSC programs** in agriculture.
- Supports over **100 countries** through technical assistance, institutional building, and policy support.
- **Key Programmes:**
 - **FAO-China SSC Programme:** One of the largest global initiatives supporting technology transfer, agricultural experts, and demonstration farms.

- **FAO-Brazil Programme:** Focuses on **hunger eradication, school feeding programs**, and social inclusion in Latin America and Africa.
- **FAO-India Triangular Partnership:** Supports **digital agriculture** and **climate-smart farming** in African and Asian nations, scaling low-cost Indian innovations globally.
- These programs help spread **climate-resilient, farmer-friendly, and cost-effective technologies** across the Global South.

Challenges Faced by the Global South in Agriculture

- **Climate Vulnerability:** Increasing frequency of **droughts, unpredictable rainfall**, and **rising temperatures** impacts agricultural productivity.
- **Resource Deficiencies:** Many countries face limited **access to finance, farm inputs, infrastructure**, and **modern technologies**.
- **Food Security Gaps:** Continued **undernutrition and hunger**, especially in low-income and rural areas, due to poor food production and distribution systems.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** Weak extension services and fragmented research systems **hinder dissemination** of best practices and innovation uptake.

India's Global Leadership in Agricultural Innovation

- **Strategic Platforms:** Through DAKSHIN and institutions like ICRISAT, India shares **developmental experiences** tailored for similar agro-ecological and socio-economic contexts.
- **Institutional Ecosystem:** Bodies like **ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research)** and **DARE (Department of Agricultural Research and Education)** engage in **collaborative R&D** and **technology transfer** with other nations.
- **Digital Agri-Tech Leadership:** India pioneers in low-cost **digital platforms, mobile advisory services**, and **climate-smart tools** customized for **smallholder farmers** globally.
- Supports **capacity building, knowledge dissemination, and local adaptation** of innovations in African, Latin American, and Southeast Asian countries.

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