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## WEB SPECIAL

## AGRICULTURE

# India needs a second green revolution

Need for more policy responses

BY **Harsimran Shergill**  
Delhi

India needs another green revolution if it wants to position itself as one of the world's major food exporters and not merely content feeding 17 per cent of the global population on only 3 per cent of the world's arable land.

Speakers at the Indian Economic Summit (IES) of the World Economic Forum (WEF) here on Monday sought new investment that would trigger - in some ways - the second green revolution.

"India is starting to look like in a vulnerable position. We need more policy responses," said eminent agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan, who pioneered the country's first green revolution way back in the 70s.

The first green revolution helped India achieve a major agricultural transformation—quadrupling its foodgrain production between 1950 and 2000 and saved millions from a famine, laying the foundation for today's economic growth.



MS Swaminathan

"But then, it provided uneven benefits to India's land and people. The next one will have to be green in terms of environmental sustainability. In short, it means you need to reach the poor and remote regions where people's needs are the greatest."

Swaminathan was joined by Haryana's Chief Minister, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, who felt one of the key risks for India is high commodity price that are expected to surge high. "It is a big challenge for the nation, for the Reserve Bank of India. There is rising demand in emerging markets because of water scarcity and changing diets. Hence, the real issue is to increase investment in agriculture."

Hooda said in the long run, food price inflation will hurt other parts of the economy. "I think it's a shame that India's post-harvest losses stand at over Rs 50,000 crore. Can this be checked at the earliest?"

Agreed Ashok Gulati, Director, Asia of the International Food Policy Research Institute, saying there is also a very important element to this issue of raising interest rates to deal with this structural problem of food price inflation. "You need increased agricultural supplies. That is the best long-term solution."

Gulati said a well-nourished workforce is both productive and capable and it was important for India to develop adequate food nutrition—from rural villagers to city dwellers. "But see the reality. Our agricultural yields for key commodities are all stagnating and nearly half of India's children are malnourished."

Many agreed. With more than 70 percent of India's population depending on agriculture for its livelihood, the agricultural sector is key to realising the nation's "inclusive growth" agenda. The faster it happens, the better for the country's food security strategy.

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