

AEPSA Stakeholders Meeting: A Milestone for Agricultural Extension in South Asia (June 6-7, 2025, in Kathmandu, Nepal)

Kathmandu, Nepal – The Agricultural Extension Platform for South Asia (AEPSA) – a Programme of Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), marked a significant milestone with its Stakeholders Meeting held on June 6-7, 2025, in Kathmandu, Nepal. This event celebrated AEPSA's first anniversary and laid out a clear vision for strengthening and sustaining this important regional extension platform.

Dr R S Paroda, Chairman of TAAS and the AEPSA Advisory Committee, New Delhi, India, chaired the Inaugural Session which was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Hon'ble Minister Mr Ram Nath Adhikari, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Government of Nepal. Other dignitaries present as Guests of Honour were Mr Govinda Prasad Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Government of Nepal; Mr Sanjay Agarwal, ADG, ICRISAT & Former Secretary, Agriculture, GOI, India; Dr Daniel Gustafson, Special Representative of the FAODG; Prof. Karim Maredia, Director, International Progs, MSU, USA; Dr V V Sadamate, Chief Coordinator, AEPSA, New Delhi, India; and Yogendra Kumar Karki, Chairman NFAC, Nepal.



The meeting witnessed extensive participation from senior representatives of partner countries across South Asia, alongside officials from prominent international organizations including FAO, various UN agencies, Michigan State University, IARI, ICAR, and CGIAR institutes like ICRISAT. The Nepalese Ministry of Agriculture, senior government secretaries, and representatives from agro-industries also actively contributed, joined by young entrepreneurs from Bangladesh and other regional stakeholders. The event was hosted by Dr Yogendra Karki and his dedicated team.



Dr R S Paroda, Chairman of TAAS and the AEPsA Advisory Committee, provided visionary leadership throughout the deliberations. Key contributions and insights were also shared by the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister of Nepal, Dr Gustafson (FAO), Dr Karim Maredia (Michigan State University) and Mr Sanjay Agarwal (ICRISAT).



Discussions during the meeting focused on three core themes: a review of Country Extension Profiles to share innovative practices; exploring convergence and linkage perspectives among stakeholders; and strategies for strengthening and ensuring the long-term sustainability of AEPsA.



A highlight of the event was the celebration of AEPsA's first anniversary marked by a cake-cutting ceremony led by the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister of Nepal and Dr Paroda. This was followed by a vibrant cultural evening. The meeting also announced the official launch of the AEPsA website, now accessible via the TAAS portal, significantly enhancing the platform's outreach and knowledge dissemination capabilities.

The meeting successfully concluded with the unanimous adoption of the **"Kathmandu Resolution,"** outlining key indicative actions to advance AEPsA's mission.

- Sourcing available information on extension innovations and reforms in South Asia and explore cross learning possibilities through success stories and innovative initiatives
- Exploring the linkage options within the South Asia region and with other regional, international extension networks and some similar platforms.
- Capacity building and networking of AEPsA partners and stakeholders
- Strengthening functional capacities of AEPsA through membership knowledge partnership and funding support.

The prioritization of AEPSA's formal registration as a legal entity was also emphasized, aligning with Dr. Paroda's guidance. Key recommendations and proceedings will be circulated to all stakeholders for implementation.



Looking ahead, Bhutan has offered to host the next AEPSA event, a proposal the Advisory Committee will consider as the membership drive progresses. There is strong optimism and clarity among participants that AEPSA will continue to champion innovative extension strategies. The platform extends an open call for broader membership from all extension stakeholders, including NGOs, corporates, universities, the private sector, professionals, scholars, entrepreneurs, and farmers across the region and beyond.

The participants of this meeting reaffirmed the collective commitment to making AEPSA a unique and impactful knowledge provider for agricultural extension in South Asia.

Sincere gratitude goes Hon'ble Minister Mr Ram Nath Adhikari, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Government of Nepal for his kind presence during the meeting, to Dr Paroda for his exceptional leadership, to Dr Karki and his organizing team for their excellent hospitality, and to all Nepal government officials, participants from all countries, supporters, and contributors for making this event a resounding success.


