SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE (SLIAg)

Formerly Sri Lanka Organization of Agriculture Professionals (SLOAP) Established in 2005 A Member of the Organization of Professional Associations (OPASL) since 2006

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HE Gotabaya Rajapaksa
President of Sri Lanka
Presidential Secretariat
Colombo.

Proposal to be urgently implemented to revitalize the agriculture sector in Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lanka Institute of Agriculture (SLIAg) is a member organization of the Organization of Professional organization (OPA) of the country, and the only organization in the country that consists of agriculture professional from Government, Private and Including University academies representing all related disciplines. Considering the developing food crisis situation in the country, the Governing Council of the SLIAg, decided to submit short-term solutions for your urgent attention.

The country was in a very good state in terms of Agriculture in 2020 with the revival of food production program. Unfortunately, implementation of impractical nonscientific policy on banning chemical fertilizer and other agro chemicals ignoring professional advice, it is reported that crop yield has reduced over 40 % which led to present crisis of severe shortages, compelling the importation of essential food items where the quality is not assured. Thus, to arrest the further aggravation of food crisis we the SLIAg propose the following immediate actions.

Urgent policy interventions

1. Immediately repel the Gazette notifications issued establishing Task Forces for green agriculture and organic agriculture to facilitate activities of the mandated institutes for agriculture in Sri Lanka.
2. Director Generals/Commissioner Generals/Chief Executive Officers mandated for development of crops/animal production sectors shall be accountable for the recommendations made for implementation by farmers
3. Only the mandated institutes for agriculture shall make recommendations for implementation by the farming community and should be only based on credible research outputs.
4. All agriculture related projects should be operated in concurrence with the mandated institutes for agriculture in Sri Lanka, and aligned with the national agriculture policy.

A. Immediate priority:

1. Provide fuel for harvesting and threshing of late cultivators of the *Maha* season 2021/2022 and land preparation for the *Yala* season 2022 in the case of paddy and other food crop production, and for transportation of poultry (egg and meat) and dairy (milk) products and farm inputs (feed and veterinary)
2. Ensure the availability of quality Seeds to the growers, sourced either locally or imported.
    a. Vegetable seeds – Upcountry vegetables, Onions and other crops
    b. Maize seeds for the *Yala* season of 2022, and especially for the *Maha* season 2022/2023
    c. Local legume and oil seeds for the *Yala* season of 2022
    d. Commercial seed purchasing and distribution program for paddy and Other Field Crops
3. Provide the required synthetic fertilizers and promote use of organic matter
    a. Urea, Phosphatic fertilizer and Muriate of Potash at recommended levels for all crops, including fodder
    b. Specialty fertilizer for hi-tech agriculture
    c. Provide technical knowhow for farmers to use organic matter in a sustainable manner in conjunction with the synthetic fertilizers
4. Make required pesticides and veterinary drugs available in the market
    a. Import all recommended pesticides (weedicides, insecticides and fungicides) and veterinary drugs
    b. Develop a prescription-based pesticide issuance system
5. Strictly follow quality standards of all imported agricultural inputs while encouraging and supporting the local innovations and input development.
6. Develop a mechanism to promote and commercialize local technologies and innovations with the recommendation of the mandated state institutions through scientific research
7. Popularize and expand Good Agriculture Practices (GAP)-certification program at the National level
    a. Increase the GAP-certified cultivation area
    b. Strengthen the GAP-certification program with trained manpower
    c. Develop market linkages for GAP-certified products
    d. Increase awareness on GAP towards producers and consumers
    e. Develop and implement a road map to make GAP-certification a mandatory requirement for selected crop production systems
8. Provide credit facilities and ensure easy access as and when required while introducing appropriate risk management system in the food system.
9. Conduct a scientifically-just motivation campaign on production, productivity and efficient input usage with stakeholders supported by all media networks, under the leadership of the Department of Agriculture (DOA), Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka (MASL), Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDOA), Department of Animal Production & Health (DAPH), Provincial Department of Animal production &Health and Department of Agrarian Development (DAD).
10. Energize the Agriculture extension system on both crop and animal production sectors in Sri Lanka by bringing in national, provincial and private sector extension systems under one umbrella for operational work, without any changes made to the provisions granted by the Provincial Council Act of 1987.
11. Develop required standards for locally produced agricultural inputs (especially organic fertilizer) and ensure strict adherence, in consultation with the Sri Lanka Standards Institution.

12. Introduce simple and practical mechanism to reduce the postharvest losses in vegetables and fruits, through proper planning in conjunction with the cultivation planning.
13. Establish an efficient supply and distribution mechanism with effective monitoring system for all agricultural (both crop and livestock) produces within the food system.
14. Promote year-around adoption of precision farming at all levels through private-public partnership programs.
15. Further strengthen crop and livestock production forecast system and minimize gluts and lean periods throughout the year through the engagement of all stakeholders.
16. Promote home gardening and community gardening to ensure nutritional security.

We further emphasize that the medium and long-term programs implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Department of Animal Production & health, Department of Agrarian Development, Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, and the Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Animal production & Health, and the and private sector agencies in 2020, be reactivated for implementation of a sustainable agriculture system leading to a food secured Sri Lanka.

We the SLIAg is willing to render our fullest cooperation in realizing the above proposed activities.

Thanking you

Yours truly

Prof S P Nissanka
General Secretary

K E Karunatilake
President