

# TECHNICAL REPORT ON EXHIBITION AT THE INDIAN MILLET FESTIVAL, 2023



Summited by Mr. Thomas Najah, Senior Marketing Officer, 2023

## **Executive Summary**

It was a celebration of international year of millet 2023 and a life style for environment, along with the Indian Food Festival. Among the Dignitaries present were the Indian High Commissioner, the Minister for Food and Agriculture, Deputy Minister for Environment Science and Technology and Innovation (MESTI).

The United Nation General Assembly have declared 2023 as international year of millet. Millet provides affordable nutrients option which is easy to grow. The aim is to popularize millet in our foods.

Along with the Food Festival of India, there are variety of food items from different states of India, prepared from millet.

Besides, there was also ‘millet in my food’ competition in which the best five (5) dishes were awarded by panel of judges. The five dishes came from the following categories;

- 2 from snacks
- 2 from the main course meal
- 1 from dessert

CSIR- Food Research Institute was invited and it was represented by Mr. Thomas Najah, my good self.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session in March 2021 declared 2023 the **International Year of Millets (IYM 2023)**. FAO is the lead agency for celebrating the Year in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders. Millets can grow on arid lands with minimal inputs and are resilient to changes in climate. They are therefore an ideal solution for countries to increase self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on imported cereal grains.

Hundreds of activities and events are being organized worldwide to promote the International Year of Millets!

**IYM2023** will be an opportunity to raise awareness of, and direct policy attention to the nutritional and health benefits of millets and their suitability for cultivation under adverse and changing climatic conditions. The Year will also promote the sustainable production of millets, while highlighting their potential to provide new sustainable market opportunities for producers and consumers. Millets encompass a diverse group of small-grained, dryland cereals including foxtail, barnyard and fonio, among others. As whole grains, millets are a good source of essential nutrients.

Millets are primarily grown in Asia and Africa, with India being the top producer followed by Nigeria, Niger and China. They were among the first plants to be domesticated and still serve as a traditional staple crop in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana and Asia.

These crops, rooted in ancient cultures and ancestral traditions, have long survived harsh growing conditions. Their climate resilience and adaptability offer opportunities for strengthening food security and bolstering economic growth.

## **2.0 Five reasons millets should be celebrated**

### **2.1 Millets are there when others are not**

There is an ever-growing global population that needs sufficient and healthy foods amidst climate emergencies and depleting natural resources. Millet can be part of the solution. These grains can survive harsh climate conditions, offering solutions to food scarcity. Because they are often the only crop that can be harvested in the dry season. Millets can be a vital food source for population vulnerable to food insecurity.

### **2.2 Millets can contribute to a healthy diet.**

Millets provide antioxidants, minerals and protein. As whole grains, each millet variety also offers different types and amounts of fibre, which play a role in regulating bowel function, blood sugar and lipids.

Furthermore, millets are gluten-free with a low-glycaemic index making them a great food option for those with celiac disease or gluten intolerance, high-blood sugar or diabetes. They can also be a cost-effective source of iron. Incorporating millets in our diets can provide us with nutritious and healthy alternatives to the usual refined grains in the global market. Start exploring some millet recipes, such as this finger millet pancakes option, to revamp your diet!

### **2.3 Millets are climate-resilient.**

Millets are resistant to drought and tolerant to crop diseases and pests, allowing them to survive in adverse climatic conditions.

Because millets can be grown with minimal inputs and maintenance and can adapt to climate shocks, expanding production of millets can transform local agrifood systems to be more efficient, resilient and inclusive. The ability of millets to grow in poor, degraded soils can also provide land cover in arid areas, reducing soil degradation and supporting biodiversity.

## **2.4 Millets offer promising livelihood opportunities for small-scale farmers**

As other cereals have become widespread, dietary preferences have shifted and led to a decline in the production and demand for millets. By encouraging the consumption and production of these underutilized crops, we can help millets regain market share and create additional opportunities for small-scale farmers

## **2.5 Millets' trade can improve the diversity of the global food system**

Currently, millets account for less than three percent of the global grains trade. When sudden shocks affect the foodgrain market, millets can provide a valuable alternative to typically traded grains. This added diversity can improve the resilience of the global trade markets and mitigate our reliance on other grains.

## **2.6 Millets can be used in many innovative ways**

The genetic diversity of millets lends itself to many diverse and innovative applications of millets in areas such as therapeutics and pharmaceuticals. Used innovatively, millets offer even greater market opportunities for regional and international trade

## **3.0 Celebration of Millet Festival in Ghana**

It was a celebration of international year of millet 2023 and a life style for environment, along with the Indian Food Festival at the Indian High Commission, Accra. Among the Dignitaries present were the Indian High Commissioner, the Minister for Food and Agriculture, Deputy Minister for Environment Science and Technology and Innovation (MESTI).

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Besides, there was also ‘millet in my food’ competition in which the best five (5) dishes were awarded by panel of judges. The five dishes came from the following categories;

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**Fig.1.0: Indian High Commissioner with other dignitaries at the Festival**



### **3.1 Opening speech of the Indian High Commissioner to Ghana, Sugandh Rajaram**

Mr Sugandh Rajaram, Indian High Commissioner to Ghana, has called for the promotion of the consumption of millet globally for sustainable growth, good environment and healthy economy.

He said the promotion of the cultivation of millets, its consumption and export globally would make humanity healthy, the environment sustainable, raise the income of farmers from the developing countries and ensure food security.

Mr Rajaram made the call at the launch of the International Day of Millets 2023 (IYoM 2023) and the Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) Campaigns during the Indian Food Festival in Accra organised by the Indian High Commission.

The Indian Food Festival is intended to raise awareness of and direct policy attention to the nutrition and health benefits of millets.

As part of the Festival, a competition dubbed “Millets in my food competition” was held and awards presented to deserving participants.

In Ghana, millet is highly cultivated in the Northern Region.

The International Day of Millets Campaign is an Indian initiative launched by the United Nations (UN) and international communities this year, while the LiFE Campaign was launched in Glasgow, COP Summit and also recently launched in India with the participation of UN’s Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres.

LiFE advocates for people to change their lifestyle to suit the environment, including food habits, and IYom is to promote the adoption of an environmental friendly food lifestyle.

Mr Rajaram said millet, largely grown in the developing countries of the world, the Global South, formed a significant part of food and national economies since the large number of agricultural rural population depended on the cultivation, consumption and income from its sales.

He said millets were the most nutrient rich food commodities and most healthy food for humanity, which required less water and inputs in cultivation and were climate resilient making it an environment friendly crop.

### **3.2 Exhibitors at the Festival**

Other institutions were also invited to showcase their products at the festival. Among them were;

- i) Peasant farmers association
- ii) Ghana Tamil Association
- iii) GUJARATI Association of Ghana
- iv) CSIR-Savanna Agriculture Research Institute
- v) CSIR-Food Research Institute

#### **3.2.1 Peasant Farmers Association**

This is a farming association in Ghana comprising people of all walk of life. Their mission is to promote a conducive environment for the growth and development of farmers in Ghana, particularly those who are marginalized (women, youth and person with disability) through advocacy, organizational and technical capacity building information and knowledge management, strategic partnership building, entrepreneurship and business development, membership and network strengthening and creation of space of influence and engagement with policy makers



**Fig 2.0: Exhibition stand of Peasant Farmers Association**

### 3.2.2 Ghana Tamil Association

This is an association in Ghana comprising people of Indian descent, who hail from Tamil Nadu state in India. They brought together the traditional foods from India prepared with millets.



**Fig 3.0: Indigenes of Tamilnadu state of India Mounting their stand**



**Fig 4.0: Kemchho products being displayed**

### **3.2.3 CSIR-Savanna Agriculture Research Institute**

SARI is mandated to provide farmers in the five regions of Northern Ghana with appropriate innovations/technologies to increase their food production based on a sustainable production system, which maintains and/or increase soil fertility

Sari was represented by Dr. Peter Asunkgly, the millet Research Scientist. He took his time to explain the new varieties of millets i the market.

### 3.2.4 CSIR-Food Research Institute

CSIR-FRI is mandated to conduct applied market-oriented research into problems of food processing and preservation, food safety and storage, marketing, distribution and utilization, and national food and nutritional security in support of the food industry and also to advise government on its food policy.

CSIR-FRI was represented by Mr. Thomas Najah, the Senior Marketing Officer of the Institute. He took the general public through the Institute's businesses and opportunities. He was able to convince two women to join in coming chocolate training programme.



**Fig 5.0: CSIR-FRI exhibition stand of millet products**





**Fig 6.0: Senior Marketing officer explaining a point to clients**



**Fig 7.0: Indian Entrepreneurs showcasing their products**



**Fig 8.0: Children were not left out**





**Fig 9.0: Indian High Commissioner to Ghana, leads in lighting of festive candles**





**Fig 10.0: Indian culture was at display**

#### **4.0: Recommendation**

In Marketing, exhibition shows play key role in advertising products and services. It is recommended that CSIR-FRI should take advantage of this type of exhibitions to let people hear and see their products and services,

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

Indian Millet Festival was an educative program where people exchanged ideas especially on millet.