

(10 September 2026)

Dr R S Paroda Inaugurated the Dryland Congress 2026 as Chief Guest organized by ICRISAT

The Dryland Congress 2026 was organized on 10-12 September 2026 at NASC, New Delhi by ICRISAT and ICAR under the leadership of Dr H Pathak, DG, ICRISAT and Dr ML Jat, Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR.

Dr R S Paroda, Chairman, TAAS, inaugurated the Congress. In his inaugural address, Dr R S Paroda made a strong call for an urgent Dryland Revolution, emphasizing that dryland areas are rich in genetic wealth, livestock, and human potential, and contribute 45% of India's food security. He highlighted that while zero-tillage and conservation agriculture have achieved wonders in global drylands across Argentina, Brazil, the US, Canada, and



Australia, technology adoption in rainfed regions remains significantly lagging. In India, while zero-

tillage covers roughly 5 million hectares in irrigated rice ecosystems, 50% of the rainfed area is still waiting for uptake, requiring supportive policy environments and aggressive action from all stakeholders.

Dr Paroda stressed the need to scale up key innovations, including micro-irrigation, protected cultivation, and conservation agriculture, alongside urgent efforts to safeguard threatened species of plants, grasses, and trees impacted by climate change. To achieve sustainable prosperity, he advocated for building an enabling ecosystem connecting science, policy, industry, and farmers based on trust, co-creation, and shared responsibility. Concluding his address, he proposed institutionalizing the International Dryland Congress as a rolling event held every four years across Asia, Central Asia, or Africa, and adopting the Delhi Declaration for Drylands as a beacon of hope and a framework for action.

The event hosted international delegates and prominent leaders from across Africa, including representatives from regional bodies such as FARA and GFAR. Their presence highlighted a collective effort to foster South-South collaboration, exchange knowledge and policy experiences, and build long-term international partnerships.



Full Inaugural Speech can be accessed through: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xvnzXXg1mo>
