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African land, Arab capital, Indian innovation: Groupe MRPâ??s vision to redefine global agriculture

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In an exclusive interaction, Sumit Govind Sharma, Groupe MRP's Global MD and the President of the Indo-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry outlines Groupe MRPâ??s transformative vision to establish an agriculture corridor across 78 countries spanning Africa and the Arab world. Anchored in the â??LIFE â?? Longterm Integrated Farming Expertiseâ?• model, the initiative seeks to bridge Africaâ??s vast untapped arable potential with Indiaâ??s agri-innovation strengths, creating integrated, self-sustaining agribusiness clusters. Each cluster will combine food security, value addition, and climate-smart practicesâ??ranging from solar-powered irrigation and biogas generation to digital farm management tools and hydroponic fodder systems.



In an exclusive interaction, *Sumit Govind Sharma, Groupe MRP's Global MD and the President of the Indo-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry outlines Groupe MRPâ??s transformative vision to establish an agriculture corridor across 78 countries spanning Africa and the Arab world.* Anchored in the â??LIFE â?? Longterm Integrated Farming Expertiseâ?• model, the initiative seeks to bridge Africaâ??s vast untapped arable potential with Indiaâ??s agri-innovation strengths, creating integrated, self-sustaining agribusiness clusters. Each cluster will combine food security, value addition, and climate-smart practicesâ??ranging from solar-powered irrigation and biogas generation

to digital farm management tools and hydroponic fodder systems.

With 50 per cent of output dedicated to local nutrition and the rest fueling export-oriented processing, the model aims to reduce post-harvest losses and empower smallholders, women, and youth through skill development. By 2030, Sharma envisions a trilateral ecosystemâ??African land, Arab capital, and Indian technologyâ??driving inclusive growth, resilient supply chains, and food security across continents.

Groupe MRP aims to create a transformative agriculture corridor across 78 countries. What is the strategic vision for agriculture, and how does it align with Indiaâ??s strengths in agri-innovation and Africa/Arab market needs?

Our strategic vision is anchored in both opportunity and responsibility. Africa represents a paradox: approximately 80â??85 per cent of its arable land remains underdeveloped, yet the continent imports over $70 billion worth of processed food annually. Namibia, for instance, produces high-quality tomatoes, yet without local processing infrastructure, it continues to rely on imports, highlighting a persistent gap between raw production and value addition. Similarly, in East Africa, countries like Kenya and Uganda export raw fruits and vegetables while importing packaged goodsâ??a structural inefficiency we aim to address.

Groupe MRP seeks to bridge this gap by creating fully integrated agribusiness clusters.
Its flagship initiative, â??Longterm Integrated Farming Expertise (LIFE)â?• is founded on the belief that â??Food is LIFE,â?• representing the core of sustainable development and human well-being.

It embodies a holistic approach to agriculture that combines various farming components for sustainability and productivity. This promotes recycling of agricultural by-products and efficient resource utilization. It aims to provide regular income and year-round employment for farmers. â??The model enhances food and nutritional security while conserving natural resources.

Within these clusters, 50 per cent of output is earmarked for local food security, ensuring immediate nutritional and economic impact, while the remainder supports commercial processing, investment sustainability, and export-ready value chains.

To initiate this vision, the program will begin with the development of 100 hectares of land dedicated to implementing the LIFE model. This pilot phase will serve as a foundation for building scalable, self-sustaining agribusiness clusters that can be replicated across regions, fostering inclusive growth and long-term impact.

Infrastructure development is central to this strategy. We are establishing processing units, solar farms, and biogas generation facilities sourced from local cattle populations to create energy- and resource-resilient clusters. Beyond physical assets, human capital is a priority. Farmers receive training in modern agronomy, gender-inclusive skill development programs are implemented, and housing and healthcare support is provided for laborers.

Our â??Blessings From The Earthâ?• (BFTE) Kit is designed to advance nutritional security through homestead gardening and promote holistic farm management. The initiative encompasses seed distribution, kitchen gardens, mushroom cultivation, fruit and vegetable farming, and the development of neem-based fertilizers and bioinsecticides. By combining Indiaâ??s technological and agri-innovation expertise with Africaâ??s vast arable potential, the program aims to build a self-sustaining and scalable agricultural ecosystem that strengthens local livelihoods, food resilience, and global value chains.

Sustainability is at the forefront of global agriculture. How is the Division planning to introduce scalable, climate-smart, and resource-efficient practices in partner countries?

Our approach is multi-dimensional and intentionally integrated, designed to embed sustainability at every stage of agricultural development. Each cluster is structured around circular resource utilization, where rainwater harvesting, rotational cropping, and small-scale fisheries complement crop cultivation to diversify income streams and strengthen resilience against climatic variability. The integration of biogas systems from livestock waste, solar-powered irrigation, and sustainable nutrient management further minimizes dependence on fossil fuels, lowers emissions, and enhances ecological balance.

Every intervention is tailored to local agro-climatic conditions, ensuring replicability and scalability. Our goal is to create low-carbon, climate-resilient clusters that optimize water, energy, and soil resources. By embedding sustainability within productivity, we are demonstrating that environmentally conscious agriculture can be both commercially viable and socially transformative.

From hydroponics to digital farm tools, India has a rich agri-tech ecosystem. How will Groupe MRP transfer and localize technology to maximize productivity and profitability across Arab geographies?

The Arab region poses unique challenges: arid climates, scarce water resources, and extreme temperatures. Yet it offers significant opportunities in livestock and fodder production. While we are in the early exploration phase, we plan to introduce hydroponic fodder systems, IoT-enabled farm management tools, and precision irrigation models.

The key is localization: technology must adapt to local soil, climate, and socio-economic conditions. Indiaâ??s agri-tech solutionsâ??from water-efficient irrigation systems to digital crop monitoring platformsâ??will be adapted to maximize yield and profitability while reducing resource intensity. This ensures technology adoption is practical, scalable, and financially rewarding for regional farmers, while supporting broader sustainability objectives.

What strategies will the Division employ to strengthen supply chains, improve market access, and reduce post-harvest losses, particularly for smallholder farmers?

Integration across the value chain is fundamental. Fifty percent of cluster output is designated for government food security programs, while the remainder feeds commercial processing. We are establishing high-value processing units for mango pulp, cold-pressed juices, tomato paste, and packaged vegetables, directly addressing post-harvest loss, which in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 30â??40 per cent for perishable produce.

Organic residues are repurposed into cattle feed or bioenergy, creating near-zero loss systems. Cluster-level, pre-cooling units, and GPS-tracked logistics maintain product quality, extend shelf life, and improve market access. These measures stabilize farmer incomes, enhance product compliance for local and export markets, and establish resilient, export-ready supply chains.

How will the agriculture DiVision empower local communities, including women and youth, through training, capacity building, and knowledge transfer?

Community empowerment is central to our mission. Farmers receive hands-on training in regenerative agriculture, precision farming, and post-harvest management. Gender-sensitive programs ensure women actively participate in all operational levels, while youth gain marketable skills in agri-tech, digital farm management, and renewable energy applications.

By embedding knowledge transfer into daily operations, we create communities capable of sustaining high-productivity, climate-smart agriculture independently. Over time, these clusters become centers of skills development, inclusive growth, and social resilience.

Will Groupe MRP pursue publicâ??private partnerships, research collaborations, or joint ventures in these regions to accelerate agricultural innovation and adoption?

Collaboration is essential for systemic impact. We are partnering with local governments, private landowners, and agri-tech enterprises to co-develop infrastructure, research programs, and financing solutions. Publicâ??private partnerships enable risk sharing and accelerate the adoption of modern, sustainable practices.

Research collaborations and joint ventures allow us to localize technology while leveraging Indiaâ??s agri-innovation ecosystem. The aim is to create scalable, replicable models where knowledge, finance, and technology converge to maximize socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Looking ahead, how do you see this trilateral agriculture initiative contributing to food security, rural livelihoods, and Indiaâ??s strategic role in Africa and the Arab world by 2030?

This initiative creates a strategic triad: African land, Arab capital, and Indian technology converge to form productive, resilient clusters. By 2030, fully operational processing units and integrated supply chains will transform local economies, turning surplus produce into high-value exports such as mango pulp, tomato paste, and packaged foods for both African and Indian markets.

The model directly strengthens food security, stabilizes rural livelihoods, and reduces Africaâ??s dependence on imported processed foodâ??currently exceeding $70 billion annually. Strategically, it positions India as a preferred partner, demonstrating technological leadership and the ability to catalyze sustainable, inclusive agribusiness ecosystems.

Ultimately, this is about systemic change: climate-smart agriculture, empowered communities, resilient supply chains, and transcontinental trade linkagesâ??all embedded within an economically viable and environmentally sustainable framework.

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