

## ICRISAT and IOPEPC collaborate to boost India's Oilseed production and export

17 March 2023 | News

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The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Indian Oilseeds & Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on March 8, 2023, to enhance the production of quality oilseeds in India.

The MoU was signed by ICRISAT's Director General, Dr Jacqueline Hughes, and IOPEPC's Chairman, Mr Nilesh Vira, with the aim of strengthening long-term cooperation to increase the quantum and quality of oilseeds grown in India.

The collaboration will focus on expanding cultivated areas, deploying scientific technologies, and collaborating at all levels, including providing farmers with better quality certified seed and strengthening the supply chain of oilseeds.

In addition, the partnership will promote food safety principles, recommend policies and programs to the Government of India and to support the growth of the Indian oilseed sector.

During the discussions, Mr Vira stressed the importance of developing climate-resilient oilseed crops, given the unpredictable weather patterns affecting India's agriculture. He cited the challenge faced by farmers in growing aflatoxin-free groundnuts, a crop that is increasingly in demand in the export market.

ICRISAT's Director General, Dr Hughes, highlighted the need to eliminate intermediaries in the export value chain, thereby increasing the profits for smallholder farmers. She also emphasized ICRISAT's commitment to finding solutions to eliminate aflatoxin in groundnuts, which has detrimental effects on all consumers.