

Minutes of the interaction session of Dr. M.S Swami Nathan and the team of National Commission on Farmers with the staff of NCRC on Agriculture:

Brief introduction to NCRC:

Mrs. Annie George, the CEO of NCRC, welcomed the guests and began the session with a brief introduction about NCRC, the purpose and the roles of NCRC in the coordination of the Tsunami relief and rehabilitation activities in Nagapattinam. She highlighted the formation of NCRC and how the NCRC has been coordinating the relief management and addressing the various issues that emerged including NCRC's shift from the relief platform to the evolving areas of focus, namely:

1. Exchange of information, such as GOs and other related information on relief and rehabilitation measures, with the affected community and the NGOs, through the 13 Village Information Centres planned
2. Sectoral support in areas of shelter, agriculture, fisheries and other livelihoods, including facilitating accessibility to expertise – helping to form common comprehensive approach.
3. Advocacy based on field realities with the Government, NGOs, the donors based on the field level realities for a meaningful and sustainable intervention.

Mr. Chandra Mohan of NCRC spoke on the problems of agriculturists in the Tsunami affected areas of Nagapattinam. The sand cast brought by the tsunami has made the land unsuitable for the farmers to grow crops. He highlighted the short term plans NCRC has to execute;

1. To coordinate the collective efforts of the Government, NGOs and the Community in reclaiming affected land and making it suitable for cultivation.
2. To advocate a reclamation package that combines the individual and collective efforts of the farmers for aiding quick reclamation.
3. Facilitate the clearing of private and community ponds and drainage

The expert team accompanying Dr. M.S Swami Nathan pinpointed some important aspects such as the need for retaining the topsoil and the dangers of destroying the topsoil along with the sand or silt cast with indiscriminate clearing using heavy equipment. They suggested the alternative of ploughing back the sand and silt and desalinating it through leaching. They also promised all technical support

Action plan:

Dr. M.S Swaminathan suggested a two- day “traveling workshop” where a team of experts could visit the damaged areas to suggest viable options for the quick reclamation of land. He graciously invited NCRC to be a part of this team. NCRC accepted the invitation and promised any logistic support that would be required for the same. The meeting came to a close by 10. 30 am.