

CONSORTIUM OF INDIAN FARMERS ASSOCIATIONS (CIFA)

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P. Chengal Reddy



President
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To
Smt. Sonia Gandhi ji, President,
All India Congress Committee,
Chairman, National Advisory Committee,
10 Janpath, New Delhi

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Respected Madam,

Sub: Why UPA retreated on FDI in retail?
AICC President owes an explanation to 600 million farmers and 1200 million consumers of India.

The recent decision by Dr. Manmohan Singh's UPA government to allow FDI in retail is a pro-farmers policy initiative and farmers across the country welcome it.

Unfortunately Congress Party has miserably failed to utilize the pro-reform policy to its advantage. On the contrary, UPA is put on defense and has now retreated its decision. Last year, in another misadventure a GOI statutory body GEAC approved genetically modified Brinjal was kept in cold storage by another Union Minister. For Congressmen what their UPA does is not known to AICC. It is like right hand doesn't know what the left hand does!

This is an open letter addressed by farmers of India to Smt. Sonia Gandhi ji and to AICC Members. Does the Congress party is in favour of reforms in Agriculture sector? Is AICC interested to find permanent solution to Indian Agrarian Crisis?

Indian Economy has achieved 8% growth in service and industrial sectors due to liberalization. But, in spite of having favourable Agro Climatic advantages and highly enterprising farmers, and 400 million middle class consumers the farm sector production remained stagnant, huge wastage is occurring, farmers are continuing suicides, in many states crop holiday is declared and the overall farm sector is in serious crisis with inflation. Does AICC aware what are the reasons and does it has solution?

It seems to be that the AICC including its leadership do not have clarity on agriculture crisis. They have failed to understand that the FDI in retail and allowing GMO technologies, PPP, APMC Reforms are part of liberalization process.

"Food security first - Farmers welfare must"

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India has complex problems in Agriculture sector, but, there are excellent solutions which are available in and outside the country. Developing competitiveness of Indian Farm sector requires reforms including accessing modern technologies such as GMOs, mechanization, fertilizer, pesticides, drip, liberalizing the markets, allowing processing, retailing, exports and also involving the farmers including empowering Panchayat Raj in planning and implementation. There is urgent need for encouraging not only private including FDI participation in farm sector but also encouraging partnership between producer farmers groups and the industry including retailers and exporters.

Dr. Manmohan Singh on his part is making an effort to take the reforms forward, but does the AICC understand the Agriculture reform process and is it willing to support them?

Smt. Sonia Gandhi ji as an AICC President and also Chairman of National Advisory Committee needs to come out openly on Agricultural reforms. While she and NAC members have piloted populist MGNREGA and now Food Security bill, what is their stand on National Committee on Farmers (Prof. M.S. Swaminathan) and Bhupinder Singh Hooda Committee Reports implementation?

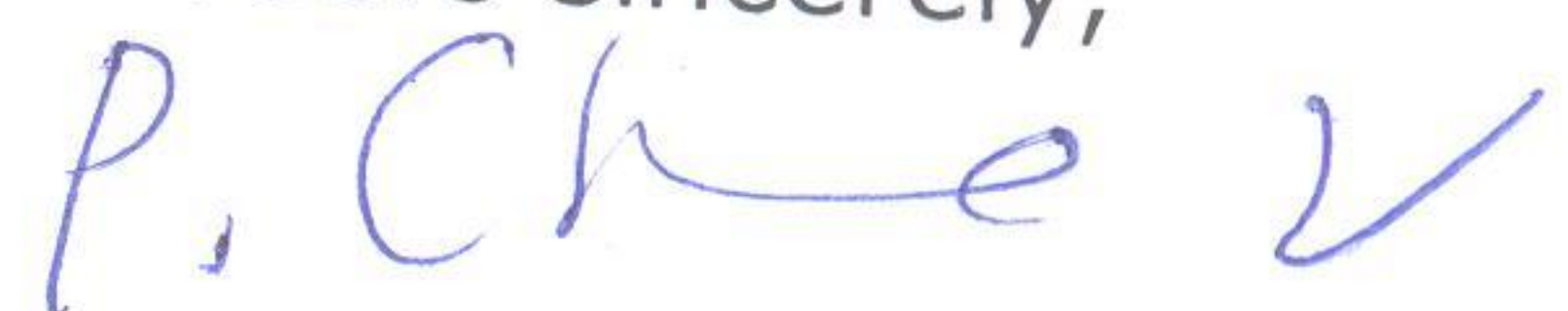
Has NAC ever discussed while 5th and 6th Pay Commission reports were implemented within few months with retrospective effects, why farmers reports were kept in cold storage for over 5 years?

Why is that NAC with highly committed members did not openly support FDI in retail? Why is that the Congress MPs amongst whom 60% are from farming community did not raise their voice in support of FDI? Why are the thousands of AICC, State PCCs and District Congress Committee Members kept silent on FDI and GMOs?

Is it because of ignorance or is it they want a signal from High Command? Does the Congress Party favour FDI in retail which is beneficial to 600 million farmers and also 1200 million consumers or do they want present adthiya system to continue?

It is high time that the Congress Party Members should not behave like Terra Kota Warriors! The AICC Leadership needs to give an explanation to the farmers and consumers of India on the Agriculture Sector liberalization.

Yours sincerely,



(P. CHENGAL REDDY)
Secretary General