

**Remarks by Ambassador
National Day of India Celebration at Floriade 2022 on August 18, 2022**

- Mayor of Almere, Ms. Maaike Veeningen
- Commissioner General of Floriade, Ms. Annemarie Jorritsma
- CEO Floriade, Mr. Hans Bakker
- Deputy King's Commissioner, Mr. Harold Hofstra
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for joining us for the celebration of the National Day of India at Floriade 2022. The Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture Shri Narendra Singh Tomar was scheduled to be here today. But unfortunately, due to official exigency, he was unable to travel to the Netherlands and join us for the Celebration. On his behalf, I would like to convey his greetings and best wishes to all the guests and thanks to the Floriade Authorities for their support in organizing today's program.

2. Since the start of the Exhibition in April, Floriade has provided an excellent opportunity to familiarize visitors with the latest developments and innovative concepts in horticulture around the world and has helped to forge new partnerships. This year, the Floriade is displaying green innovations and sustainable living environments. This theme is of great relevance and a priority for India also.

3. India is happy to be participating in this globally reputed horticulture exhibition. At the India Pavilion, we are showcasing India's horticulture strengths and opportunities including world class products and groundbreaking reforms to promote greater growth & modernization in the agriculture sector. I hope you all will take the time to visit the India pavilion after this program.

4. This year, India is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahostav to commemorate 75 years of its independence. On this 75th anniversary of our independence, we have resolved to build over the next 25 years an Atma Nirbhar Bharat, a self-reliant India that is prosperous & economically advanced. The ambitious goal of economic development is generating tremendous opportunities in numerous fields. We invite you to be a part of India's growth story.

5. This year is also a special year marking 75 years of diplomatic relations between India and the Netherlands. To mark the occasion, both countries released a joint logo in March 2022 depicting a lotus and tulip and the Netherlands also presented 3000 fresh tulips to India, as a symbol of friendship, which were planted in New Delhi. During the visit of our President in April, a new Tulip called Maitri or Freindship was presented. It is significant that India is participating in the Floriade at a time when we are celebrating 25 years of diplomatic ties, underlining our strong bilateral cooperation in the agriculture sector.

6. Both India and the Netherlands are agricultural power houses and have much to gain mutually with leveraging each other strengths. India is bestowed with vast resources, tremendous diversity, all types of agro climatic zones as well as rich heritage of knowledge on farming systems.

7. At the same time we have much to learn and adopt from research and technological breakthroughs in the Netherlands. With its vast expertise in agriculture, Netherlands can contribute significantly towards India's ambitious agenda to enhance growth, productivity and incomes in the agricultural sector. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has called for a mass movement for natural farming underlining the importance of sustainable farming practices. This is an area where Netherlands can be a valuable partner given its knowledge and best practices.

8. The complementarity between the Dutch strengths and India's priorities offer substantial opportunities to work together. For example, we are establishing Centres of Excellence in agriculture in India with Dutch expertise and have an ambitious agenda to put up 25 such Centres of Excellence by 2025. A few of the Centres are already operational. These Centres of Excellence will facilitate introduction of high-tech methods and techniques in agricultural practices in India which in turn will offer opportunities for Dutch businesses.

9. Several Dutch companies are manufacturing seeds, agricultural machinery and equipment in India and are engaged in food processing. I hope we can further strengthen these contacts.

10. Finally before I conclude, I would like to inform you that on India's proposal, the UN has decided to celebrate 2023 as the International Year of Millets. Millets have served as a traditional staple food for millions of people across the world, including India. The IYM provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the important role of millets to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. I request your support for celebration of this dedicated year for millets and

popularize not only their health benefits but also their importance for ensuring food and nutrition security and their potential to address climate change.

11. Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to once again thank you all for joining the celebrations today. And my thanks to the Floriade authorities for facilitating this celebration.

Thank you.
