

WELCOME ADDRESS

Prof. Dr. Bashir Ahmad (*Ezaz-e-Fazeelat*)
Vice Chancellor, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan

Respectable Mr. Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan, Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad Khan, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Aslam Pervez, Director, Institute of Horticultural Sciences, scientists, distinguished foreign delegates, farmers, students, ladies and gentleman.

Aslam-o-Alaikum

I am indebted to the honourable Minister for Food, Agriculture and Livestock for having spared sometime to grace the occasion with his presence inspite of heavy pre-occupation. His keen interest in horticulture is manifest by his presence at concluding session in a symposium held two days back at this campus. I am also thankful to the scientists, especially those from abroad as they would guide us to formulate tangible proposals by interacting with the end users (farmers) by drawing on the practical experience of the later. It is hoped that the students would crystallize their perceptions by participating in the discussion.

Sir, our economy at the moment is cotton based only. Volatility of the narrow base has been realized in the recent past. The government is laying emphasis to broaden this base for achieving the objective of sustainability. Role of horticulture towards this end has also been appreciated. This symposium is being held to augment government efforts in that direction.

As a consequence of your patronization we were hoping to alleviate rural poverty by embarking on labour intensive ventures like horticulture which also enjoy forward linkages with the industry for value addition. I am constrained to remark that a tilt towards engineering sector is evident from the establishment of 10 engineering and technology universities at a huge cost of Rs. 20 billion while in case of agriculture all hopes to resolve future problems have been confined to biotechnology and saline agriculture in the “Vision 2030”. Without improving economic lot of marginalized rural masses so as to increase the consumer base the boom in auto industry injected by banks through loans may not sustain in future. Furthermore to pin down hopes on biotechnology and saline agriculture for meeting perspective needs of burgeoning population upto 2030 deserves rethinking. We have to harness potential of resource base of agriculture by refurbishing R&D of irrigated, mountain and dry land agriculture besides fisheries on the pattern of engineering sector because value addition of natural resource base is more economical than electronic goods because of higher wages in the latter case.

Thanking you all.

Pakistan Zindabad.