

# **Vote of Thanks By Mr N M Kejriwal, President, ILSI-India at Conference on Micronutrient Fortification of Foods: Science, Application & Management**

Friday January 7, 2011; Hotel Le Meridien, New Delhi

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**Mr Ashok Sinha, Mr Panandiker and Friends**

India is a country which has diverse climate where anything can be produced. We are leading producers of number of agricultural and horticulture crops in the world including cereals, fruits and vegetables, milk etc. The country is also progressing at a very fast pace. However, we have been lagging in the health status.

Micronutrient deficiencies are a major culprit for poor health score. Today's Conference has number of illustrious speakers from around the world who will look at how food fortification and biofortification can enrich the quality of food. They will share their experience with food fortification programs in their organizations and focus on some of the key aspects which made the programs successful. They will also look at some of the critical issues in fortification and come out with recommendations on priorities for future programs.

Why we have not succeeded very well in our efforts to eliminate micronutrient malnutrition?

We have to pay a little more attention and invest little more to improve the nutrition status of women and children particularly. It is imperative to look at

where our programs and policies need to be strengthened, and implementation expedited and made more effective. Nutrition security along with food security should be part of the programs to improve public health. Many smaller countries have gone much ahead of us.

There is a need for public private partnership in food fortification programs. Industry should develop low cost fortified products with the help of R&D institutions and prove their effectiveness scientifically for eliminating micronutrient malnutrition. Government should act as facilitator to enable industry to produce such products. At times industry is not able to go ahead because of lack of clarity about the regulations. **Since fortification is a “win win situation” for all there should not be any hesitation on part of Government to facilitate the process and allow industry to take initiatives for public health.**

ILSI brings the science to everyone's notice and also information on how it has been used in other countries. However, how such information can be used has to be judged by the concerned organizations. ILSI-India will always be available for any further assistance. You may like to know that ILSI works with more than 4000 scientists and it is a unique in its approach to issues i.e. it works with scientists from Government, R&D institutions and industry from around the world to seek solutions to public health issues particularly those relating to food safety, nutrition and biotechnology. It encourages research which are practical to follow.

It is a privilege to propose vote of thanks to a Mr Sinha who has graced the occasion today and delivered a very meaningful and thought provoking Key Note

Address. We all should ponder over the points made by him and take necessary action . We are most grateful to you, Mr Sinha for joining us today and sharing your thoughts. We are also grateful to you for cosponsoring today's Conference. We will forward the Conference recommendations to you for further action.

We are grateful to National Institute of Nutrition for joining us as co-sponsor. Unfortunately Dr Sesikeran, Director, NIN is unable to join us due to an urgent assignment but I will request Dr Madhvan Nair from NIN to kindly convey our appreciation to him.

I am also grateful to Mr Panandiker, Chairman, ILSI-India for welcome address. Mr Panandiker is an eminent economist and is indispensable to many institutions in the country and advisor on some critical areas to Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission. In the area of nutrition also he has excelled and is responsible for the excellence achieved by ILSI-India. In spite of the fact that he is very hard pressed for time, he never lets us feel that he is doing any extraordinary thing for ILSI-India. We are very fortunate to have him as our Honorary Chairman.

I am also grateful to all the illustrious speakers from leading organizations from the country and from far off places around the world for coming to the Conference. I hope that Delhi weather will improve and you can enjoy your stay. Please don't hesitate to contact any one in ILSI-India Secretariat, Ms Sinha or even myself and Mr Panandiker if we can be of any assistance to you.

I am also grateful to the participants for joining us here today and we look forward to your active participation in discussions. We are fortunate to have participation of not only academia but industry and Government representatives from Central and State Governments.

I am grateful to media for covering this event. It is increasingly being realized that it is the Media which is the most powerful tool of communication with public and on you rests the responsibility of bringing awareness about the benefits of consuming fortified foods.

Last but not the least I would like to thank ILSI-India secretariat headed by Ms Sinha for their untiring efforts and for foregoing Christmas and other holidays to make today's Conference a success.

With these words I would like you all to carry vote of thanks with acclamation. **Let the New Year begin with our hard resolve to eliminate Malnutrition from the country and write a success story for a healthy and fit India.**