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## IPS focuses on value chain research and development initiatives in agro-food industry

April 11, 2016, 6:55 pm



Dignitaries at the inauguration: (L-R) Dr. Saman Kelegama, Executive Director - IPS, Dr. P.K. Joshi, Director-South Asia – IFPRI, Daya Gamage, Minister of Primary Industries, Dr. Suresh Babu, Head-Capacity Strengthening - IFPRI W. C Dheerasekara, Consultant IFPRI

The Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS) says it continues to engage in value chain research in several agricultural commodities to support national policy.

At a recently held National Workshop on Food Value Chain Development, IPS Executive Director, Dr. Saman Kelegama, pointed out that "most large enterprises do not wish to invest in the agriculture sector in Sri Lanka due to policy uncertainty" and reiterated the importance of value chain research and development. The two day workshop organized by the IPS, together with the Ministry of Primary Industries and the support of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was held at the IPS Auditorium in Colombo, with the aim of facilitating a dialogue on value chain developments in agro-food industries and to develop a Food Value Chain Development Plan for Primary Industries with four sub-sectors Development Program.

Dr. Kelegama says that despite Sri Lanka being blessed with myriad of opportunities to strengthen its agricultural sector the country faces certain key challenges that inhibit the performance of the sector. He said that "Limited land and labour availability for agricultural production and the spread of agricultural production among a large number of small semi-subsistence farmers, inefficient resource use and climate change are among such challenges". Among other challenges Dr. Kelegama pointed out that "value addition is largely done by the small and medium enterprises, which do not have sufficient access to finance" adding that "Poor governance with respect to public provisions has also been observed over the years".

Speaking at the event, Daya Gamage, Minister of Primary Industries said that the Ministry has identified the "lack of value chain research in the food industry and agro-sector as a glaring and immediate factor that needed to be addressed". He added that the Ministry aims to "drive to double exports by the year 2020, while addressing relevant issues", and that the "value chain concept will play a major role by holistically examining all issues in an organized a structured manner".

Director of IFPRI-South Asia, Dr. P. K Joshi speaking at the event said that successful value chains should be "efficient, inclusive, sustainable, climate-smart, health & nutrition driven and business friendly".

The workshop brought together key stakeholders and experts to discuss the development of most suitable value chains and a pro-poor way that will improve the position of small enterprises and farmers and the working poor. Professionals from agriculture, fishery, livestock, trade, health and nutrition and finance backgrounds from various ministries, universities, private sector, NGOs and civil society engaged in a fruitful workshop with the aim of developing strategies for potential value chains that lead to the goal of sustainable development.

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