



**Report of the India Food Banking Network, IFBN, Planning Forum Meet  
Visioning Meet to Evolve IFBN Eco System**

**Organized by: The Global FoodBanking Network & Aidmatrix  
Foundation, India**

**Date: 19th January 2010**

**Venue: National Disaster Management Authority  
NDMA Bhawan, A-1, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi - 110 029**

Taking the agenda forward from the Launch of India Food Banking Network, Planning Forum on 17th of November 2009, details of which can be viewed at <http://www.indiafoodbanking.org>, Aidmatrix Foundation India & The Global Food Banking Network organised the first India Food Banking Network Planning Forum Meet to **to Evolve the Eco System for Food Banking in India. The interactive meet was to** share ideas and seek commitments for the way forward of IFBN towards the implementation phase. The discussion points of the meet were laid in the line of discussing and agreeing on the suggestions for organisational structure, identification of top 10 models and top 10 champions who can partner with IFBN in the implementation of the initiative, strategising the application and the implementation plan and collectively identify and make use of the available resources.

***Chris Rebstock, Vice President – The Global FoodBanking Network, GFN,*** delivering the welcome speech spoke about how GFN began its effort in India few years ago by visiting number of places and meeting many private sector companies, NGOs and Government trying to get his head around and understand the hunger and nutritional problems and solutions in India and the kind of services that are already being offered by stakeholders. At the end of the assessment, it was agreed by all the parties involved that Food Banking is a viable infrastructure that could be established in India. He added that Food Banking by its nature requires significant cross sector collaborations and we are now in the stage where we are trying to convene those three segments of society into a planning process to launch IFBN.

He welcomed J.K.Sinha & V.C. Menon of National Disaster Management Authority for extending support in hosting the meet, Dr. Sam Pitroda for visioning around the unfolding of the IFBN process and Mrs. Veena Rao who is working as an advisor to the process.

He invited all for ideas, dialogue and concensus on how to move forward the initiative, IFBN.

Addressing the inaugural address, ***J.K. Sinha, Member, National Disaster Management Authority*** praised Dr. Sam Pitroda as a person who has made things happen in India as an example the telecom revolution in India. He cited Haiti earthquake as an example where everything is available and how it has been badly managed due to non presence of networking and coordination and therefore troops are being sent to control the chaos.

He stressed upon the need to be prepared in time and plan for everything. During his inaugural speech, he suggested for a platform in the public domain which would connect immediately and provide information on what is required during disaster relief and otherwise too. He concluded his address stating that collective effort in all fronts is what is required to make such an innovative process of food banking work.

***On behalf of the Global FoodBanking Network, GFN, Dr. Sam Pitroda*** welcomed all at the meet providing a brief outline on the agenda. He also spoke about how he got involved in the FoodBanking initiative almost three years ago when he first had a discussion with GFN on how the concept of FoodBanking has reached in over 30 countries and suggested if the same concept could be taken to India too. Stating that, he highlighted the huge need in organising the voluntary sectors in India for food. He further spoke about how they collectively started off to investigate the possibilities of starting FoodBanks in India while at the same time respecting all the efforts that are ongoing in India. There is already many good works carried out at the national, state and district level which has somehow not added up much and this is where Dr. Sam Pitroda expressed on how IFBN can come in and add substantial value to it. He also emphasised that if IFBN does not add up substantial value, its probably not worth doing it.

He then highlighted some of the areas that we can value: 30 years of GFN experience in 30 countries; all the expertise in logistics, processes, discipline

could be of great value when trying to scale up. Adding to that, he cited one of his experiences of a visit to Illinois FoodBank facility in a place called Saint Charles which impressed him with almost 140000 sq feet facility managed by about 40 dedicated volunteers who were feeding the hungry. Here the key to the systematic management was logistics where everything was computerised, labelled, color coded, cordinated boxes and shipping trucks lined up as if the whole machinery is designed properly to respond to the coming load during Christmas which contained cooked food, canned juices, and other resources. The message here from Dr. Sam Pitroda is that we have a lot to learn from other experiences and a lot of resources that needs to be organised.

Talking about the learnings and the experiences, he then laid emphasis on the importance of documentation in our country where we are far lacking behind and how documentation could really help the country in many ways. Once this is done, we will have the right information infrastructure for public delivery system.

Looking at the FoodBank, he stressed upon the point that we need to look at FoodBank for the future not at FoodBank of the past where we need to focus on information infrastructure, logistics, computerisation, data transfer, discipline, processes, documentation which are very important tools to scale.

Some of the thoughts or fundamental questions he laid down to the participants were:

- What to launch?
- When can we launch?
- Where can we launch?
- What are the opportunities available where we can immediately show some results collectively that gives us confidence and credibility?
- What are the resources we need?

After putting the collective thoughts together, we would need to be working hand in hand with the government, organisations and add substantial value to the efforts that are already there and help in building them up and multiply the impact. He also placed a request to all on how we can set a goal to eliminate hunger by 2020 which is indeed a massive call.

Dr. Sam Pitroda concluded his address expressing his thought of launching IFBN in 2010 where he invited everyone to put ideas and expertise to launch it successfully.

***Following the motivated and inspiring talk of Dr. Sam Pitroda, Prof.V.C. Menon, Member of National Disaster Management Authority*** delivered the special address appreciating Dr. Sam Pitroda and The Global Food Banking Network for bringing together the extremely innovative experience in India. He highlighted the issue in Food Corporation of India where because of logistic problems, bumper crops and buffer stocks are being dumped in the FCI godowns and not being distributed to the hungry.

Highlighting the logistic issues, he also added that there is severe poverty that exist in places like Kalahandi and KBK belt where 100 million people who are marginalised and also the tribal areas are suffering from severe hunger and malnourishment. He stated that death due to severe hunger and malnourishment are avoidable only if we have immunization campaign and have delivery of health services which is sufficiently strong to ensure that we have insurance against these kind of avoidable deaths.

Further, he submitted a request where 0 tolerance to avoidable death, hunger, malnourishment could be a mission which could actually drive the whole process of IFBN. He further added that this idea would actually set standards which would be very worth emulating not only in India but also in several other countries which have similar strengths, weakness and challenges.

Another suggestion he put across was of putting a system in place that brings in synergy between Corporate Disaster Resource Network on one hand and the civil society organisations ideas and aspirations and also what the government is able to contribute in the relief entitlements. He also proposed to map places and resources and see where the demand is and then where we can set up a policy / system that can drive these resources to the areas where they are really needed.

On behalf of NDMA he offered all assistance and cooperation in making sure that the efforts are meeting the kind of support that is required within the government.

Veena S. Rao, an IAS and retired Secretary to the Government of India giving the valedictory address recalled two points which Dr. Sam Pitroda highlighted during his speech: IFBN to add value on what is going on; to laid down the basic minimum principles which is required for IFBN to go ahead in a credible and sustainable mannner.

Adding to the above statement, she pointed out one of the greatest gap areas where innovation has been sadly lacking and how do we salvage the acknowledged loss of 30 – 35% of our horticulture and agriculture produce at primarily levels, add value to it, salvage it and make it available for consumptions. She then highlighted the value of the lost agriculture and horticulture produce in India as 10 billion worth where on the other hand we have 50% of our population suffering from malnutrition which is one of the challenges that all will try and address to incorporate in the IFBN roadmap that will be drawn up. Another challenge which she brought up that can be addressed and included in the discussion is to note the blurred but very definite line between food security for the hungry and malnutrition.

Concluding her valedictory addressal, she noted to the audience on the need to have a champion for addressing malnutrition and hungry in the country requesting Dr. Sam Pitroda to become champion for this subject.

The inaugural session was then continued with a presentation from ***Catholic Relief Services*** highlighting the following:

- Overview of CRS existing feeding programs
- How to create alignment between existing programmes and new resources to maximise the impact without creating duplications and without creating competition.
- CRS activities – Food Aid Program, development program and emergency program.
- The sections of people benefiting from the CRS feeding programs as 3,26,865
- Overall estimation of grain requirements for 6 months of CRS feeding programs as 10000 metric tonne
- 60 counter parts and 2000 operating partners in 10 states in India
- The resource flow of CRS feeding programmes of the Counter parts and the Operating partners
- Available warehouses and its practices.
- Food accounting done through using food management system
- Available warehouses with the prepositioning for Disaster Management.

Concluded the presentation highlighting the priority states as Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa for the feeding programs

Chris Rebstock, GFN, took over the interactive session by throwing the floor to the participants to come out with the collective thoughts and plan on the questions laid by Dr. Sam Pitroda. Some of the actionables proposed by the group that came out during the meet to implement IFBN are:

- A portal which will be a public national portal inviting partners to join and contribute which will further have updated information. Identification of needs, food mapping, outreach models to develop a collective voice with information sharing as a focus
- Asset and need study to be integrated with portal for collaborative model for information collation
- Policy document for adaptation of IFBN in India linked with manuals
- To highlight continuously a need for a good samaritan law in order to limit liability of donors
- Logistics mapping with resource available / volunteered
- Feeding program methodologies for diverse beneficiaries
- Warehouse mapping available and volunteered
- Adaptation of food safety policy and guidelines
- Identification of eligible categories of suppliers and demand factor
- Sustainability linked with innovation and resilience of feeding programmes to be a focus
- Multi product identification for warehousing
- Governance support and stakeholder participation to be element of communication driven food banks
- To identify top 10 known champions and top 10 organisation known in India working in the area of food security, malnutrition and hunger.
- To start with 1 or 2 states as a prototype to learn how it works and then followed by a national conference on the subject which will be a platform to launch IFBN.
- Core Groups to be identified for approaching potential Core Group members i.e., Donors, Policy, Logistics, Partnerships.
- To Create an Executive Board for Decision making process.

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- Sal Logistics
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- Naandi Foundation
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- World Food Programme
- Safexpress
- Bharti - Wal-Mart
- JSL Ltd.
- Frontier Agro

- Bhaskar Foundation
- AIFPA
- Raj Mahal Basmati Rice
- Tai Industries
- PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- USAID / Vistaar
- LMJ Logistics
- Aquatabs



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