

## **Message of Shri Sharad Pawar**

I would like to thank and welcome all of you.

Today we are gathered to honor the memory of the Dr. Norman Borlaug, father of the Green Revolution, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, wheat scientist, and the man whose work saved millions from starvation.

As a child in a small agrarian family in the United States during the economic depression of the 1930s, Dr. Borlaug witnessed hunger and poverty all around him. This shaped his life. When he came to Mexico early in his career as part of a Rockefeller Foundation program, he seized the chance to apply crop breeding and help farmers grow and earn more. Dr. Borlaug and his Mexican team developed high-yielding varieties and improved farming practices during the 1940s and 50s that made Mexico self-sufficient for wheat.

Those technologies were introduced into South Asia in the 1960s, a time when India faced several threats of famine. With encouragement from visionary researchers like Dr. MS Swaminathan and courageous policymakers, many Indian farmers sowed the Mexican wheats, and under proper management. In a few short years were producing twice the grain they would have harvested before. Improved varieties of major crops were widely adopted and are estimated to have saved hundreds of millions of people from starvation.

Wheat derived from Dr. Borlaug's pioneering work is grown on 80 million hectares throughout the world. For his contributions Borlaug has received many accolades, including the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize and the Padma Vibhushan Award in 2006. He was voted a member of the academies of agricultural science of 11 nations, received 60 honorary doctorate degrees from those countries, and was honored by farmer and civic associations in 28 countries.

Dr. Borlaug always considered himself to be a teacher, as well as a scientist. Today, several thousand men and women agricultural scientists from more than 50 countries are proud to say they were Norman Borlaug's "students."

He used his fame and influence to champion the cause of smallholder agricultural development around the globe. Over a 63-year career, he traveled tirelessly to more than 100 nations, visiting farmers and agricultural scientists in their fields. It is estimated that over his lifetime he personally spoke to more than 500,000 students and ordinary citizens, explaining the challenges and complexities of world food production.

Norm, as he liked be called, lived his life as a dedicated hunger-fighter, but one who was forever vigilant. As he said in his acceptance speech of the 1970 Nobel Prize: "...It is true that the tide of the battle against hunger has changed for the better...but ebb tide could soon set in, if we become complacent..."

The bronze statue we will unveil was created by the American sculptress Katharine McDavitt through hundreds of hours of work. It represents Dr. Borlaug in the field, in his prime, making selections among thousands of wheat lines, a day-long job he normally began in the pre-dawn hours. The expression on his face reflects the concentration and determination of purpose that characterized him. Replicates of the statue exist in Mexico and are planned for Borlaug's home state of Iowa.

We can think of no greater tribute to Norm than to carry on the work to which he dedicated his life: applying agricultural science for humanitarian benefits. Thus, he lives on in our hearts and, through our efforts, the work he began will progress and bear fruit.

The statue which I have the honor to unveil represents the spirit of this great man in our presence. May it ever inspire us.