

International Conference on  
**Wheat Stem Rust Ug99 – A Threat to Food Security**

November 6-8, 2008 , New Delhi

Speech of

Sh. Sharad Pawar,

Union Minister of Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India

At A.P. Shinde Symposium Hall, NASC

9.00 am, November 6, 2008

### Inaugural Session

Honorable Agriculture Ministers of SAARC countries, senior officials from the SAARC countries, SAARC secretariat, Dr. Mangala Rai, Director General, ICAR; Dr. M. Traore, Additional Director General, FAO, Dr. T. Lumpkin, Director General of CIMMYT, Dr. M. Solh, Director General, ICARDA, Dr. R. Coffman, Vice-Chairman, Borlaug Global Rust Initiative, Officials from international organizations FAO, CIMMYT, ICARDA, ACIAR, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, BGRI, Government Officials from different wheat growing countries, international researchers on wheat, scientists from the NARS, State department of agriculture, Members of the Press and Media, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to inaugurate this very important conference on issues related to securing wheat production and productivity from getting affected because of the stem rust race Ug99 and its variants. It was in June this year when I was in FAO in a meeting where it was brought out that the securing global wheat production in the coming years could be a challenge because of the damage by Ug99. This conference was envisioned then in order to take stock of the global situation and the preparedness in the wheat producing countries to jointly overcome this challenge. We are grateful to the Ministers of Agriculture of SAARC countries and all other national policy makers from different countries for participating in this conference.