

## PRESS RELEASE FROM SIMFED

The Sikkim State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd. (SIMFED) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) at Sahakari Bhawan, Tadong, Gangtok, with the objective of strengthening cooperative-led seed production and improving access to quality agricultural inputs for farmers in Sikkim.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Ms. Jabi Thapa, Secretary-cum-Principal Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Cooperation Department, Government of Sikkim. Senior officers of the Cooperation Department, Government of Sikkim, officials of SIMFED, representatives of BBSSL, and member stakeholders were also present during the programme.

As per the agreement, SIMFED will function as the nodal cooperative agency in the State for coordination with BBSSL in matters relating to seed production, procurement, and distribution.

The collaboration is aimed at ensuring the availability of certified, high-quality seeds at affordable prices, addressing existing shortages in seed supply, and strengthening the overall seed distribution system through the cooperative network.

Through this partnership, SIMFED will work closely with primary agricultural cooperative societies and other cooperative institutions to facilitate organised seed production and structured distribution mechanisms. The initiative is expected to improve timely access to quality planting material for farmers across different agro-climatic regions of Sikkim, thereby contributing to enhanced crop productivity and farm incomes.

A key focus of the MoU is farmer participation and capacity building. By involving farmers and grassroots cooperatives directly in seed production activities, the programme seeks to promote farmer entrepreneurship, create additional livelihood opportunities, and encourage the scientific conservation and development of indigenous and locally adapted crop varieties suited to local conditions.

The agreement reflects the principle of cooperation among cooperatives, wherein national and state-level cooperative institutions work together to achieve shared developmental objectives. It is aligned with the Ministry of Cooperation's vision of "Sahakar se Samriddhi", translating cooperative values into practical benefits for farmers through improved access to quality inputs, transparent systems, and equitable distribution of economic gains.

The signing of this MoU marks an important step in strengthening cooperative-based agricultural infrastructure in Sikkim. By institutionalising seed production and distribution through the cooperative framework, the initiative is expected to support sustainable agricultural growth, improve farm productivity, and contribute to the development of a resilient and self-reliant rural economy in the State.