Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Secretary (DARE) & Director General (ICAR) inaugurated the XII Pathology Workshop on 3rd September 2018 at Coimbatore. The workshop is organized by the International Society of Sugarcane Technologists (ISSCT) Association and jointly hosted by ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute & Society for Sugarcane Research and Development.

Congratulating the **ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute** for playing a major role in the country’s ‘sweet revolution’ with its major varieties such as Co 0238 and Co 86032, Dr. Mohapatra in his address, said this was possible due to a systematic breeding process at the institute. The sugar production this year of about 32 million tonnes has paved way for a change in ethanol policy, which is a significant development, he added.

Mentioning that the wide range of wild species available in sugarcane need to be utilized effectively to manage major sugarcane diseases as was done in the case of rust in wheat, Dr. Mohapatra suggested GIS tagging of field gene banks and identifying traits in the germplasm in order to utilize them in the breeding programmes.
Citing the recent examples of fall army worm infestation in maize and wheat blast disease in India, Dr. Mohapatra hoped that the researchers would come up with effective quarantine methods to prevent entry of foreign pathogens across borders. Forming a global consortium could address these plant protection issues effectively, he added.

Dr. K Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University said an integrated approach is needed among breeders and pathologists to contain major diseases in sugarcane such as red rot and smut. Taking the cue from Australia and Indonesia, Indian researchers need to shift their focus towards enhancing resistance to diseases such as smut and manage them.

Dr. Philippe Rotte, University of Florida, USA and Chair, ISSCT Executive committee in his address said that ISSCT is a global organization with its headquarters at Mauritius. The society has been in existence for 93 years during which it had organized 29 Congresses, usually at 3-year intervals. Between the two Congresses, it organizes Workshops of different sections to facilitate participation and interaction of the host country scientists with the global experts, he said.

Dr. R.K. Singh, Assistant Director General, ICAR, Dr. Asha Dookun-Saumtally, Chair, ISSCT Biology Committee, Mauritius, Dr. Freddy Fernando Garces Obando, Chair, ISSCT Pathology Section, Columbia, Dr. Bakshi Ram, Director, ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute and Dr. R. Viswanathan, Head, Crop Production Division, ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute spoke on the occasion.

The theme of the current Pathology workshop being held during 3-7 September 2018, is “Challenges and Advances in Sugarcane Pathology – A key to resolve emerging issues and to formulate innovative disease management strategies”. Over 50 delegates representing different sugarcane growing countries across the world are participating in this workshop including 25 foreign delegates from USA, Brazil, Colombia, France, South Africa, China, Australia, Thailand, and Srilanka.