Millets are the quinoa of India and are critical crops under the banner of Smart Foods – good for you, good for the environment and good for smallholder farmers.
The need for iron: In India, 52% of women, 80% of pregnant women and 74% of children under the age of 3 are anemic. 

Pearl millet has very high levels of iron that can meet the daily allowance of the average person.

The need for calcium: An estimated 25 million Indians are estimated to be affected with osteoporosis (Indian Journal of Medical Research). Calcium deficiencies contribute to osteoporosis, bone diseases and the underdevelopment of the fetus and young child.

Finger millet has 3 times the amount of calcium than milk.

The need for more nutritious and healthy foods

Millets are high in protein, vitamins and micronutrients. Millets are 4 times higher in folic acid than rice, have low glycemic index and are gluten free.

The need for climate-smart crops that will survive climate change and use natural resources efficiently.

Millets need less water than other cereals and are heat tolerant, eg, pearl millet can survive in temperatures up to 64°C and requires less than 25% of the water required for rice.

The need to help smallholder farmers improve their livelihood options, achieve nutritional security, and manage the risk of extreme weather conditions can be addressed through Smart Foods.

Millets still have significant potential for yield increases, multiple uses (from food, feed, fodder, fermentation and biofuels) and untapped markets.