

**Proceedings
of the
XII APCoAB STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
24 April 2010
NASC Complex, New Delhi**



**Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology,
C/o ICRISAT Delhi Office,
National Agricultural Science Centre Complex
Dev Prakash Shastri Marg, Pusa Campus, New Delhi – 110 012, India**

Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB)

XII STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

PROCEEDINGS

The XII Steering Committee (SC) meeting of Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB) was held on 24th April 2010 at National Agricultural Science Centre complex, New Delhi. It was chaired by Dr. Abd Shukor Abd Rahman, Chairman, APAARI and attended by nine other members/representatives and special invitees (Annexure I). Dr. Malcolm Hazelman, FAO-RAP was represented by Dr. Gavin Wall, FAO representative in India, Dr. William Dar, DG, ICRISAT by Dr. Kiran Sharma, Principal Scientist, ICRISAT, and Dr. S. Ayyappan, DG, ICAR by Dr. A. K. Bawa, Principal Scientist, ICAR.

Agenda item 1: Welcome Remarks

Dr. Raj Paroda, Executive Secretary, APAARI welcomed the Chairman, other members of SC and special invitees. He congratulated Dr. Gavin Wall on his new assignment in India and apprised him about the long association of APAARI with FAO. Dr. Paroda expressed appreciation of the strong support extended by ICRISAT to APCoAB and requested Dr. Kiran Sharma to convey APAARI's gratitude to Dr. Dar. While responding to welcome remarks of Dr. Paroda, Dr. Bawa informed the committee of the urgent engagements of Dr. Ayyappan due to which he could not attend this meeting.

Agenda item 2: Address by the Chairman

Dr. Abd Shukor welcomed the SC members and other participants also conveying his thanks to Dr. Ayyappan for hosting the meeting. He expressed his regret that other members of the SC, Dr. Wais Kabir, Mr. Thierry Mennesson, Dr. Mark Holderness and Dr. Randy Hutea could not be present due to unavoidable reasons.

Dr. Abd Shukor highlighted the activities carried out during the past six months, which in his opinion were quite substantial. He expressed happiness that APCoAB is being recognized by international agencies like FAO and Convention on Biodiversity as they had invited APAARI-APCoAB to organize and participate in their technical meetings. He thanked Mahyco for continued funding support and hoped that Council of Agriculture (COA), Chinese Taipei would extend its collaboration in biotechnology program with APAARI for another term of three years.

Agenda Item 3: Approval of Minutes of XI Steering Committee Meeting

The SC members were informed that the proceedings of XI SC meeting had been circulated on 21st December 2009 to which no comments were received. Chairman sought the concurrence of members for approval of the minutes. The same were adopted unanimously. The members also adopted the agenda of XI SC meeting (Annexure II)

Agenda Item 4: Action Taken Report

In his introduction to the Action Taken Report, Dr. Paroda apprised about the earlier developments that led to the establishment of APCoAB under the umbrella of APAARI. While, it was initially anticipated that private sector and other stakeholders would support a neutral forum like APCoAB, these hopes have somehow not been met. He, however, felt that there is better appreciation of the need for such a forum.

Dr. J. L. Karihaloo, Coordinator, APCoAB presented a brief on the actions taken on recommendations of XI SC meeting and elaborated on the following points:

- Regarding TCP on “Tissue culture platform for South Asia for regional cooperation for production, exchange and delivery of high quality planting materials and low-cost biotechnology products to smallholder farmers”, it was informed that the Executive Secretary, APAARI had approached FAO’s AGP Division for reconsideration of the proposal. The proposal has since been resubmitted to FAO-RAP for consideration.
- FAO has been requested to accord permission for revision and funding support for printing of “Biosafety Regulations” and reprinting of another FAO funded publication. Dr. Gavin Wall, representing FAO, informed that the proposal was under consideration and he would apprise FAO about the need for supporting revision of this important publication.
- With regard to the recommendation of XI SC meeting on funding arrangements for training programs, it was informed that fifty percent of travel costs of participants are being met by APCoAB while the nominating NARS are requested to bear the other half. Other training costs are jointly borne by the host organization and APAARI. It was further informed that APAARI had requested ICAR to waive training fee for courses held in ICAR institutes or provide funding support for organizing these trainings. Another reminder for the same will be sent for final decision.
- The earlier offer of Dr. Mike Butterfield representing DG, ICRISAT in the XI SC meeting to co-organize with APCoAB some events related to translational research and business partnership development in biotechnology was further taken up during the presentation of ATR. Dr. Kiran Sharma representing ICRISAT in this meeting reiterated the offer and elaborated on the activities that APCoAB could carry out jointly with ICRISAT.
- In response to recommendation made by Dr. Randy Hutea in XI SC for APAARI to foster exchange of information and apprise the leadership on issues that are important for harnessing biotechnology in the region, the Coordinator highlighted the following activities:
 - APAARI and APCoAB are actively involved in policy advocacy and information exchange through expert consultations, print publications and web-based information dissemination.
 - Executive Secretary, APAARI has been apprising policy makers in India on GM technology, particularly issues related to Bt brinjal, through meetings with policy makers, media interviews and newspaper articles.

- Coordinator, APCoAB convened “Asia-Pacific Regional Specific Session” in FAO conference on Agricultural Biotechnology (ABDC-10) held in Mexico on 1 – 4 March 2010, wherein issues related to adoption of biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific region were highlighted.

Agenda Item 5: Progress Report

Coordinator, APCoAB briefed the SC about the following activities carried out during the period under report.

- **Expert Consultation on “Biopesticides and Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture in Asia-Pacific”, TARI, Taichung, 27 – 29 October 2009.**
This meeting was organized at Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute, Taichung under the APAARI-COA collaborative project on agricultural biotechnology. Seventy-two participants from 23 countries representing NARS, CG centres, other academic institutions, CSOs, private sector and farmer organizations participated in the deliberations and field visit. Group discussions were held on priorities for R&D, commercialization, policy regulation and regional cooperation for promotion of biopesticides and biofertilizers. The delegates expressed consensus that these bio-inputs have an important role in creating sustainable agriculture, reducing cost of inputs and achieving Millennium Development Goals.
- **Meeting of South Asia Network on Plant Genetic Resources, National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi, 3 – 5 November 2009.**
SANPGR is a sub-regional network established with the aim of improving conservation and use of plant genetic resources through collaborative efforts amongst the member countries in South Asia. The network meeting was jointly organized by Bioversity International, APAARI and ICAR with 28 participants attending it. The meeting reviewed the status of conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in accordance with Global Plan of Action, and implementation of Treaty and Standard Material Transfer Agreement.
- **FAO International Technical Conference on “Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries: Option and Opportunities in Crops, Forestry, Livestock, Fisheries and Agro-Industry to Face the Challenges of Food Insecurity and Climate Change” (ABDC-10), Mexico, 1 – 4 March 2010.**
APCoAB Coordinator representing APAARI, attended and organized the Asia-Pacific region specific session in the conference. This session comprised two introductory presentations, discussion and compilation of recommendations. These recommendations were presented in the Plenary Session of the conference and form a part of the consolidated conference report.
- **Sixth Coordination Meeting of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on Biosafety Capacity Building, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 1-3 February, 2010.**
APCoAB Coordinator participated in the meeting at the invitation of CBD. He presented APAARI’s programs on biosafety and capacity building in the AP region and invited the participation of CBD parties in these programs.
- **Meeting of the GlobalHort Board of Directors, Bangkok, Thailand, 12-13 November 2009.**

APCoAB Coordinator attended the meeting as GFAR representative. on a specific request. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Norman Looney and attended by representatives of CIRAD, ICDF, CGIAR, IFAD, NEPAD, AVRDC, GFAR and HortCRSP. APCoAB offered to include GlobalHort nominees in its training programs in horticulture and related areas.

- **Training Course on “*In Vitro* and Cryopreservation Techniques for Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources”, NBPGR, New Delhi, 9 – 21 November 2009.**

This training course was organized in collaboration with Bioversity International and ICAR. Eleven participants including four sponsored by APAARI (one each from PNG, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Vietnam) attended the course covering areas of *in vitro* conservation, cryopreservation and molecular markers for genotype identification and genetic stability testing.

- **Publication: Proceedings of Expert Consultation on Biopesticides and Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture.**

This publication is an outcome of the APAARI-COA meeting on Biopesticides and Biofertilizers for Sustainable Agriculture held on 27-29 October 2009 at Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute (TARI), Taichung.

- **Web-based information dissemination.**

APCoAB website (www.apcoab.org) provides information on APCoAB programs and latest developments in agricultural biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific region. A new website with added features and user-friendly navigation is under development.

Agenda Item 6: Work Plan

The work plan for 2010, as approved by XI Steering Committee, was reviewed. Members were briefed on the progress relating to following proposed activities during the current year:

Expert Consultations/Symposia/Meetings

- Expert Consultation on “Post Harvest Technology and Value Addition of Horticultural Produce” to be held at MARDI, Malaysia during December, 2010.
- APCoAB SC meeting to be held in Korea in October 2010, alongwith General Assembly Meeting of APAARI.

Training Courses

- Training Program on "Edible Mushroom Production for Asian Farmers and Entrepreneurs" in collaboration with COA to be held at TARI, Taichung, 15-21 November, 2010.
- Training Program on "*In vitro* and cryopreservation techniques for conservation of Plant Genetic Resources", to be held at NBPGR, New Delhi, 15-27 November, 2010.

- Training Program on "Assisted reproductive technologies for livestock genetic improvement" in collaboration with COA and ILRI to be held at Livestock Research Institute, Chinese Taipei.

Publications

- Publication of success stories on Banana Tissue Culture in India and Banana Tissue Culture in the Philippines.

Agenda Item 7: Audited Accounts 2009 and Budget 2010

The audited accounts statement of APCoAB for the period January to December 2009 was presented by the Coordinator for review (Annexure III) and the same was duly approved. He also presented the budget for 2010, which was approved unanimously (Annexure IV). The members noted with satisfaction that the expenditure had been kept to bare minimum and limited to only committed activities under the work plan.

Agenda Item 8: General Discussion and Suggestions of Members

All the members participated in the discussion following the presentation of Action Taken Report and Progress Report. Following suggestions were made:

- The SC appreciated the progress of APCoAB particularly the important activities carried out during the period under report. The success of programs undertaken during the last few years is evident from the international recognition and visibility gained by the consortium.
- The continuing support of Mahyco and CAO was appreciated. It was recommended to request COA for extension of APAARI-COA collaborative project for another term of three years with enhanced funding support.
- As agreed by DG, ICAR, who attended the APAARI Executive Committee meeting held in the forenoon, and reiterated by Dr. Bawa in the SC meeting, ICAR would consider favorably the request of APAARI to waive the training fee for courses being organized in ICAR institutes.
- The SC unanimously agreed to request ICAR for funding support to APCoAB particularly in view of the observation that a large proportion of its activities relate to agricultural R&D in India. These include publication of status reports highlighting achievements of Indian agricultural research and organization of training programs in ICAR institutes.
- Dr. Gavin Wall offered to follow the pending proposals on TCP project and revision of publication on Biosafety Regulations with respective departments in FAO. He suggested the possibility of Ms. Rosa Rolle, Senior Agro-Industry and Post-Harvest Officer, FAO-RAP getting associated with the APAARI Expert Consultation on Post-Harvest Technology being held in Malaysia later this year.
- Following detailed discussion on the proposal received from MARDI regarding organization of Expert Consultation on Post-Harvest Technology, it was suggested that the program should give due prominence to rural-based PH technologies that

help in linking farmers with markets. It was suggested that IFAP could consider farmer's participation in this meeting.

- Dr. Kiran Sharma and Coordinator, APCoAB would identify specific joint activities related to agribusiness development and biotechnology translation. Based on specific needs, joint funding proposals for capacity building of stakeholders in the AP region would be formulated.
- It was suggested that the news updates posted on APAARI website should also be emailed to potential users.

Agenda Item 9: Any Other Business

No specific item under this Agenda was discussed.

Agenda Item 10: Concluding Remark

Dr. Abd Shukor in his concluding remarks thanked the participants for their consistent support and advice. Dr. Paroda thanked the members and funding agencies for their trust and appreciation of the need for a neutral forum on biotechnology such as APCoAB.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.