In the last three decades, the Asia-Pacific Region has emerged as an agriculturally most vibrant region in the world. This has happened due to the cutting-edge of science, coupled with dedicated efforts of farmers and developmental agencies. The National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the region have provided the much needed technical backstopping for these spectacular advances. The NARS have also gained effectively through partnerships with the International Centres under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Today, the region is more food secure than ever before.

Considering the challenges for the next two decades (2020), such as increase in productivity, profitability and sustainability, diversification, value-addition, conservation of agrobiodiversity, protection of natural resources, global climate change, environmental protection, globalization, agri-business, etc., most of the NARS as well as CG Centres are reorienting their research priorities. The process of reprioritization of research agenda is drawing a greater global attention, focussing more on poverty, agriculture and environment. In the process, involvement of NARS, regional fora and the international institutes is considered vital. Realizing this need, the CGIAR has recently taken a new initiative, under the dynamic leadership of its present Chairman, Dr Ismail Serageldin, to establish a “Global Forum”, which would enable effective involvement of all key players in a true partnership mode for priority-setting mechanism for agricultural research and development.

In the Asia-Pacific Region, the APAARI has emerged as an effective Regional Forum to play a pro-active role in the research priority-setting exercise involving NARS and CG Centres. Already two Expert Consultations have been organized to harmonize regional and sub-regional priorities. As a sequel, it is envisaged that striking regional research linkages would be established to allow NARS to meet future challenges successfully. The APAARI has also initiated steps to promote linkages with the CG Centres to support a number of regional activities, besides setting in motion the consultative mechanism for regular interactions to generate relevant research collaborations among the NARS. Proceeding further, clarity to a far greater extent would appear in our research priorities.

Editors
FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE APAARI

The Fourth General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) met on 26 November 1996 at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, India. It was held in conjunction with the FAO/ APAARI/ISNAR/ICAR/IARI-sponsored Expert Consultations on Research Priority-Setting by the NARS in the Asia-Pacific Region and NARS-CGIAR Partnership. Heads of the NARS from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Australia, Japan, Korea, Iran, Western Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, besides senior-level representatives of associated member-institutions (ICRISAT/ISNAR/CIMMYT/IRRI/ICARDA) participated in this Assembly.

The Assembly greatly appreciated the excellent outcome of the Expert Consultation on the Research Priority-Setting by the NARS in the Asia-Pacific Region held at New Delhi on 25-26 November 1996 to crystallize priority areas for collaborative research in which partnership of NARS-CGIAR could be further strengthened. It felt that it would be useful to identify priorities both at the regional and sub-regional levels. The regional-level priorities may include issues like information-sharing, policy issues such as harmonization of regulatory measures related to IPR, biosafety, quarantine and germplasm-sharing.

The Assembly also suggested that the APAARI should be effectively represented at the ICW meetings of the CGIAR, and the CGIAR may keep NARS-CGIAR partnership as a standing agenda, and invite the regional forum to make a detailed presentation under this item.

MEMBERSHIP

The present national membership of the APAARI is 19. Efforts are underway to encourage China and Indonesia to join APAARI. Vietnam has agreed to join APAARI from 1996. China, Indonesia and New Zealand are being persuaded to join APAARI. The Assembly welcomed the decision of the ICLARM and CABI to join APAARI as associate-members. It urged that the ISNAR may also join APAARI as an associate-member, in view of its expected role in the region and its long association with the regional forum. The General Assembly was pleased with the participation of Bhutan for the first time in the capacity of an observer, and wished that Bhutan would also join the regional forum in the near future. The Assembly endorsed the enhanced membership fees for 3 categories, recommended in the last APAARI Executive Meeting.

APAARI PUBLICATIONS PROGRAMME

- The APAARI has successfully brought out two issues of the Newsletter i.e. December’95 and June’96. These issues were well received by the member-countries. Especially the "Institute Profile" coverage, which highlights research achievements and activities of a particular institution of a member-country, received appreciations.
- The Directory of the Research Institutions of South Asia has already been published and circulated. The manuscript of the Directory of the South-East Asia is in the final stage; through the help of the PCARD. As for the Directory of the Oceania, support of the ACIAR is being sought.
- Success story on the Research and Extension Linkages in the Republic of Korea has already been published. A similar publication on Cotton Production in Pakistan is in the press. Manuscript for Orchids in Thailand has also been received.
- A comprehensive exercise on the research-priorities on a sub-regional basis was undertaken and 4 sub-regional reports pertaining to the South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia and Pacific Island Countries were prepared by identified resource-persons. Dr William D. Dar, Chairman, APAARI, and the nodal person for this exercise had synthesized these reports in the document entitled Synthesis Paper on Agricultural Research Priorities for the Asia-Pacific Region, which along with the sub-regional documents were circulated as the Secretariat paper for discussion in the Expert Consultation on Research Priority-Setting by the NARS in the Asia-Pacific Region. It is planned to bring out a comprehensive publication on the subject using all the sub-regional reports and the synthesis reports.
The Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the last Executive Committee Meeting regarding entering the information into Internet and other compatible databases so that it could be accessed by all nations. For this and opening a “home page for APAARI” on Internet for benefit of all concerned, the ISNAR is to be approached.

**Activities of APAARI During 1997-98**

- Continued publication of the Newsletter. The members have been urged to feed material to the Secretariat for the publication.
- The Directories for the South-East Asia (with PCARRD’s support) and for the Oceania (with ACIAR’s support) to be brought out.
- Success stories on Orchids in Thailand, Wheat Production in Iran, Direct-seeded Rice in Irrigated Conditions in Malaysia, Agro-tourism in Australia are to be published as already decided, and the additional ones are to be identified for publication in future, for which members have been urged to send their suggestions.
- The information management capacity of the APAARI needs to be strengthened. The Secretariat has been urged to prepare a background note on this subject for consideration by the next meeting of the Executive Committee. Support of the ISNAR and CABI in getting the network established has been considered important and both organizations agreed to work out modalities to address this.

**Executive Committee for 1997-98**

The Assembly has elected the following Executive Committee for 1997-98, which becomes effective from 1 January 1997.

- **Chairman**: Pakistan (Dr M. Akbar)
- **Vice-Chairman**: Japan (Dr Nobuyoshi Maeno)
- **Members**: Bangladesh (Dr M.S.U. Chowdhury), Thailand (Dr Vichitr Benjasil), Fiji (Dr J. Kumar), Philippines (Dr William D. Dar)
- **Executive Secretary**: India (Dr R.S. Paroda)

**Budget for the 1997 and 1998**

The Assembly approved the budget proposed for 1997 and 1998. The Assembly decided to allocate more funds for active support to the selected networks in the region.

**Establishment and Strengthening of the APAARI Secretariat**

The Assembly discussed several options for strengthening Secretariat of the APAARI and suggested that for the time being the present arrangement may continue. The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), Bangkok, may be requested to continue to provide the space and other logistic supports and FAO Representative Office in New Delhi be requested to continue its support to the Executive Secretary.

The network support may continue to be provided to the CLAN (instead of FLGCNET), UTFANET, TAMNET and Rice-Wheat Consortium. It has been suggested that the scope of the CLAN be expanded to include lentil, soybean and mungbean through involvement of the ICARDA and AVRDC, and the ICRISAT and IFAD/ADB should be approached for possible funding-support, including that for the APAARI Summit. In addition, some support should also be provided to the ASPRAD and the Network on Root Crops for Pacific Island Countries (PIC). Considering the pre-eminent place of the Asia-Pacific Region at the global level in aquaculture research, development and production, the Assembly suggested that the ICLARM may also establish an Asian Council on Aquaculture on the same lines as the CORRA by the IRRI.

**Future General Assembly Meetings**

The Republic of Korea agreed to host the Fifth General Assembly in December 1998, and the Sixth General Assembly in 2000 will be held in one of the Pacific Island Countries, most likely Papua New Guinea.
Since its establishment in 1990, the APAARI has now become the most important forum in the region for renewing, enhancing and establishing collaborations and partnerships among the NARS and between the NARS and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) – International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs), as well as with advance research institutions (ARIs) and other regional and international organizations that promote agricultural research. As of 1996, 19 NARS have joined the APAARI and 7 International Centres have become associate-members.

The APAARI’s action programme embodies the vision of a region empowered, its resources stretched and sustained to optimal capacity and its products and services matching the world-class standards. It seeks to take part in nursing the Asia-Pacific Region to a sustained growth. The programme addresses pressing issues of food security, poverty alleviation, sustainable natural resource management and global competitiveness.

The APAARI considers the important features of the Asia-Pacific Region (the most economically dynamic region of the world) for moving towards the 21st century through the translation and implementation of its perspective plan. The APAARI medium-term programme (1998-2000) shall enhance the APAARI as the regional forum for co-operation, broadening partnerships, capacity building, consultation and priority-setting, networking of programmes, information support, training, resource-generation and regional representation. The components of the medium-term programme include the following.

**Strengthening NARS and APAARI**

**Broadening partnership.** In order to enhance partnership, the NARS shall be continuously broadened not only to include NARIs but also universities, farmers’ associations, NGOs, and the private sector. The APAARI, as the regional forum, shall also continue to broaden and adopt a more holistic approach to agricultural research, encompassing all cash crops, food crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries.

**Priority-setting.** Individually and collectively, the NARS in the region shall enhance their capabilities in systematically setting research priorities. Stronger NARS have now the capacity but weaker NARS shall be assisted. The APAARI will work with the NARS in improving their capabilities on research evaluation and agenda setting. It shall formulate regional R&D priorities/agenda and shall interact actively with the CGIAR-TAC-IARCs in pursuit of joint priorities/programmes in the region. Other research management concerns shall be looked into and enhanced at the national and regional levels.

**Support to APAARI**

**Secretariat.** It is envisioned that a Secretariat with adequate logistical support needs to be set up with a full-time Executive Secretary and an Administrative Assistant. The Secretariat may be located in either the FAO-RAP or in any NARS of the region.

**Publications and MIS.** The APAARI shall continue to pursue an aggressive publications programme. Likewise, a Management Information System (MIS) shall be set up for enhanced scientific and technological exchange and other related purposes.

**Information technology and communication links.** The APAARI and its member-countries shall pursue use of new communication technologies/tools that could be effectively linked with the CGIAR and its IARCs. Partnership of all concerned shall be enhanced with new means of communication and with the setting up of a system-wide network.

**Human resources development.** Training programme and other forms of human capital build-up shall be pursued. Cross visits, fellowships, retooling programmes, particularly for lending edge to science, shall be worked out.

**Setting up of a Regional Technology Fund**

The APAARI shall pursue in partnership with its member-countries, the setting up of a Regional Technology Fund to support regional/sub-regional R&D projects including support activities. This fund shall be an endowment fund and only its interests shall be appropriated accordingly. Proceeds can also be used as a matching fund mechanism.

**Collaborative Research Programmes/Networks**

**Strengthening existing programmes/networks.** The APAARI shall endeavour to strengthen existing regional/sub-regional collaborative programmes, particularly NARS-driven projects. Likewise, effective partnership modalities shall be enhanced. Case analysis of successful research collaborations shall also be done.

**Proposed programmes/networks.** The APAARI with the NARS and with its partnership with the CG system, shall identify and pursue priority collaborative R&D programmes/networks. The APAARI is systematically formulating its regional R&D priorities/agenda. These priorities shall be the basis to pursue discussions with TAC and the IARCs on new programmes for 1998-2000.
A n Expert Consultation on the Research Priority- Setting by the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the Asia-Pacific Region, co-sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), was organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and held at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, India, on 25-26 November 1996.

The Consultation was inaugurated by Shri Chaturanan Mishra, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Government of India, and President, ICAR, and chaired by Dr Ismail Serageldin, Chairman, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and Vice-President, World Bank. The Directors-General of the ISNAR, ICRISAT, CIMMYT, IRRI, very senior representatives of the World Bank, FAO, IPGRI, ICARDA, IIMI, ICLARM, ILRI, AVRDC, CABI, heads of the NARS of members-countries, senior officials from the countries, the ICAR, its Institutes and State Agricultural Universities from India including some special invitees, participated in the Consultation.

The Expert Consultation was held on wide-ranging subjects such as research priority-setting for the Asia-Pacific Region and 4 sub-regions, i.e. South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia and the Pacific Island Countries, priorities for CG and other Centres in the region, and the present status and future strategies for the existing networks, TAMNET, UTFANET and CLAN.

PRIORITIES FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION
A synthesis of the research priorities for the Asia-Pacific Region was presented by Dr William D. Dar. He pointed out that in the region, production, consumption and the demand should be considered important factors for setting regional research priorities. In research sector, primary emphasis should be laid on improving production efficiency and bringing much needed food self-sufficiency.
Sub-regional Research Priorities

On research priority-setting for the sub-regions in the APAARI region, 4 groups met separately.

I South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) - An informative base paper on the agricultural research priorities in South Asia was prepared and presented by Dr R.B. Singh.

II South-East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) - The base paper for research priorities in the sub-region was presented by Dr William D. Dar.

He emphasized the need to consider biotechnology as an important tool for most of the commodities, and that the APAARI's Vision towards NARS-CGIAR Partnership and a perspective plan for the APAARI together must embody the vision for nursing the Asia-Pacific Region to a sustained growth.

Dr Dar was of the view that a specific APAARI action plan should enumerate such activities as for providing required technical and funding support for the regional co-ordination activities such as TAMNET, CLAN, UTFANET, INGER, and other networks; developing a consortia approach for the basic and strategic research on a pilot-scale to begin within some highly relevant and priority areas; and the APAARI and NARS should be effectively represented in the priority-setting as well as governance of the CG system, among others.

Major commodity-research areas considered by various NARS in South-East Asia could be on common research priorities such as enhanced production and productivity in crops; increased production and productivity in livestock and poultry (cattle, carabao, goat, sheep and chicken); fish production (aquaculture, artisanal fisheries, deep-sea fisheries); farming systems and on-farm research; post-harvest technology in crops; conservation and management of soil resources and socio-economics.

III North-East Asia (China, Japan and Korea) - The base paper for the North-East Asian countries was prepared and presented by Dr Young Sang Kim.

The following, common research priorities in this sub-region are accorded in line with the changes in the agrarian structure and the recent advent of the World Trade Organization (WTO): diversified and high-quality oriented research and development of agriculture, forests and fisheries; stable production of quality-grain crops; biotechnological innovation to create extra revenues; new technologies to improve nutrition, appearance and sanitary conditions; technical support for production of crops for special local or export markets; low input sustainable development of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, compatible with the preservation of environmental resources and natural ecosystems.

IV Pacific Islands (including Papua New Guinea) - The base paper presented by Dr Semisi gave a comprehensive picture of the status of agriculture and agricultural research-priorities in the Pacific Island Countries (PIC).

Major issues and constraints faced by this sub-region include: natural disasters including cyclones and fragile ecosystem of small islands; exploitation of natural resources under economic pressure; and high population growth rate with increased demands.

Priorities for CG/Non-CG IARCs

A productive general discussion that followed the various presentations and the comments by Chair, brought in some useful points related to interface between the APAARI and the CG/Non-
CG IARCs, and a follow-up agenda, which is as follows.

- CLAN network should be enlarged to include lentil (ICARDA mandate), and mungbean and soybean (AVRDC).
- A consortium or network for information exchange and knowledge-sharing may have a big impact in the Asia-Pacific Region.
- Inland aquaculture needs more emphasis. Success stories in aquaculture need to be disseminated.
- Concerned IARCs should continue support to networks on their mandate crops.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were endorsed by the APAARI in the plenary session.

- The priorities identified in the base papers presented/sub-regional group discussions held and general observations made were agreed to. These priorities need to be collated so that depending on the priority needs, specific bilateral and multilateral programmes could be drawn for action for research, information dissemination, technology transfer, human-resource development and institution-capacity building in the region.

- While appreciating working of the TAMNET, it was felt that monitoring mechanisms for trials to be conducted needs strengthening. Resources and funds required for strengthening should be made available. The CIMMYT agreed, in principle, to APAARI’s request to explore the possibility of extending further support to the TAMNET.

- A need was felt for making fresh efforts to extend Rice-Wheat Consortium to China. The participation of China would provide impetus to research efforts on rice-wheat, the important crops for food security in the region.

- A network approach on other coarse-cereals, such as sorghum and pearl millet on analogy of TAMNET was felt. This would call for an effective support from the ICRISAT. Similarly, soybean, mungbean and lentil should be brought under the ambit of the CLAN and association with AVRDC and ICARDA should be strengthened in order to make CLAN more effective.

- Recent development on hybrid rice in the region was noted with satisfaction and a networking approach with effective support from the IRRI was felt important. Materials generated by the NARS in the region and IRRI could be effectively used, through the network programmes, for evaluation.

- The representatives of the CG Centres appreciated efforts being made towards networking. They also agreed, in principle, to play a far greater role as facilitator for their respective, mandated crops/commodities.

- Two networks, one each on potato and sweet-potato, could also be initiated in the region. This would call for support from the International Potato Centre as well as of the respective NARS interested in the development of these crops. A network for taro and yams could also be envisaged for the PIC.

- The publication of a Newsletter was recommended so as to address various issues of agrobiodiversity. This would bring much needed awareness, and also facilitate sharing materials among partners.

- While considering the dissemination of information as the most important task, it was agreed to explore the possibility of networking of various NARS and CG Centres through ERNET.

- The objectives and the activities of the APAARI were wholeheartedly supported by the representatives of the FAO, UNDP and CG Centres, who also showed willingness to extend all possible support to this regional forum. It was agreed, in principle, that based on the priorities identified, a few regional projects should be formulated and posed to various donors for support.

*APAARI Newsletter, December 1996*
The Second International Crop Science Congress (ICSC) held at New Delhi from 17 to 24 November 1996 had the focal theme ‘Crop Productivity and Sustainability: Shaping the Future’. It reviewed current status of food security, agricultural sustainability and environmental health, and analysed role of science in food security, economic security and ecological security.

The Congress was attended by about 1,500 delegates, 500 from abroad. It was organized jointly by the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the ICAR and co-sponsored by the CGIAR, Washington; MAHYCO Research Foundation, Mumbai; Association of Seed Industry, Mumbai; National Seeds Corporation, New Delhi; and Pioneer Hi-bred International, Iowa, USA. The level of participation was extremely high, specially from abroad, as leading crop scientists including Nobel laureate Dr Norman E. Borlaug, the former Director-General of the FAO Dr Edouard Saouma, Chairman of the CGIAR and Vice-President of the World Bank Dr Ismail Serageldin, Ms Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary, USDA, and a number of Directors-General of the CG Centres and other international organizations had participated.

The various presentations and discussions revealed that the world’s natural resources, if managed sustainably, should be able to meet food demand towards the year 2020 and beyond. Judicious harnessing of new and emerging technologies holds a great promise for alleviating hunger from the face of the earth.

The Congress suggested that along with the technological breakthroughs, the non-technological breakthroughs in policy dimensions and international co-operations should be considered for ensuring fair and equitable sharing of advanced technologies. In this context, the scientists advocated that the Farmers Rights (FR), Plant Breeders’ Rights (PBR) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) should be harmonized in such a way that while the inventor could be rewarded, the inventions and products derived from his invention should be within the access of all bonafide users throughout the world.

The Congress also debated and expressed concern on decelerating rates of growth of factor productivity in intensive agricultural production areas. From the point of view of comprehensive and sustainable food security, it identified several technological solutions for reverting this trend. Integrated management of soil, water and nutrients as well as integrated pest management were strongly commended to national programmes in the Congress. Agrobiodiversity was focussed within the overall umbrella of biodiversity.

For enhancing yield potential of several crops, which are still considered low yielding, the Congress has identified that with the help of interdisciplinary approaches, new super-plant types could be developed with exceptionally high total biomass production as well as harvest index.
SEVEN COMMITMENTS AGAINST HUNGER MADE IN ROME

The World Food Summit in Rome (13-17 November 1996) adopted a Rome declaration on World Food Security and a Plan of Action which set a framework for future action to halve the number of hungry people in the world to about 400 million by the year 2015. In order to achieve this goal, 187 participating nations solemnly committed themselves to adhere to the following policies.

Commitment One
We will ensure an enabling political, social, and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty and for durable peace, based on full and equal participation of women and men, which is most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all.

Commitment Two
We will implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all, at all times, to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilization.

Commitment Three
We will pursue participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development policies and practices in high and low potential areas, which are essential to adequate and reliable food supplies at the household, national, regional and global levels, and combat pests, drought and desertification, considering the multifunctional character of agriculture.

Commitment Four
We will strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system.

Commitment Five
We will endeavour to prevent and be prepared for natural disasters and man-made emergencies and to meet transitory and emergency food requirements in ways that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, development and a capacity to satisfy future needs.

Commitment Six
We will promote optimal allocation and use of public and private investments to foster human resources, sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems, and rural development, in high and low potential areas.

Commitment Seven
We will implement, monitor, and follow-up this Plan of Action at all levels in co-operation with the international community.

(Source: D+C Development and Cooperation)

Following consultations among themselves, the invitation of the Government of Germany, on behalf of the European Society of Crop Sciences, was accepted to hold the next Congress in Germany in 2000. Considering the enthusiasm of Australian scientists and their warm invitation, the Congress decided to have its Fourth Congress in 2004 in Australia. The Congress had further observed that the Fifth Congress should meet in a developing country, most probably Brazil or Egypt.

Shri C. Subramaniam, Former Agriculture Minister, India, receiving Borlaug award from Dr Norman Borlaug at the 2nd ICSC

From the Congress, it emerged that development of hybrid varieties will be a major thrust in crop research in the near future. The work is likely to get impetus also from biotechnology and hope was expressed that apomixis (asexual seed) can revolutionize hybrid approach and will particularly be helpful to resource-poor farmers, as farmers would not be required to buy fresh hybrid seed every year.

Recognizing interdependence in sharing genetic resources and technologies, and wide differences in level and use of new technologies in different countries, the Congress felt that intercountry co-operation, specially among developing countries should be strengthened.

The Congress recognized that efficient use of several of the external inputs could be greatly enhanced through knowledge of their appropriate use. Therefore, it has been suggested that knowledge intensive technologies should get high priority in technology transfer system.

The Congress had resolved to establish an International Crop Science Society and the proposal was endorsed by the representatives of all national and international societies present at the Congress.
The 1996 Mid-term Meeting of the CGIAR was held in Jakarta from 21 to 24 May 1996. Pakistan and Syria were admitted to the CGIAR membership by acclamation. Representatives from Morocco, New Zealand, South Africa and Sri Lanka attended MTM96 as observers. Welcoming them to the meeting, Dr Serageldin expressed hope that all 4 countries would soon join the CGIAR.

Dr Ismail Serageldin, the Chairman of the CGIAR, reviewed the achievements of the CGIAR and outlined the major challenges in the future in the meeting. He emphasized the need for commitments to the Research Agenda to be maintained. In this connection, he outlined a new system of incentives for encouraging entrepreneurship, flexibility, transparency, and accountability in resource mobilization and allocation. He stressed, as well, the need for the CGIAR to work in close collaboration with partners in a global agricultural research system.

CGIAR's Research Strategy

The TAC recommendations on priorities and strategies were discussed and broadly endorsed, with modifications to give greater attention to networking and training, as a framework for medium-term planning.

To facilitate in-depth discussion of TAC’s proposals, the main TAC report as well as connected studies were discussed.

The TAC Chair and his colleagues were commended for transparency which characterized both criteria used by the TAC in determining priorities and strategies and the process by which TAC arrived at its conclusions and recommendations. As well, TAC was commended for its serious effort to integrate poverty considerations in its analysis. Among the broad points emphasized during the discussion were:

- reaffirmation of desired emphasis on environment, rural poor, and on women, and the need to find ways to ensure that this is carried out;
- the need for greater urgency and visibility for research on the soil and water aspects of natural resources management, given the fundamental importance of soil and water to sustainable production systems;
- the need to increase both collaboration among Centres as well as linkages with other actors in the global agricultural research system including NARS, NGOs, the private sector, ARIs, and non-CGIAR centres;
- the need to find ways to collaborate with NARS as equal partners, through research networks, training, and outsourcing of Centre’s Work to strong NARS;
- the need for greater attention to post-harvest technology development, particularly given its relevance for women;
- recognition of the limitations of currently available data on poverty and the environment, which makes aggregate modelling difficult, and the need for a simultaneous bottom-up approach;
- recognition of the importance of an integrated approach to agricultural production and environmental conservation;
- the need for a review of system-wide programmes, although this should not limit the consideration of new initiatives; and
- the importance of obtaining an overall balance in the way resources are deployed in order to protect the key elements of the Research Agenda.

25th Anniversary of the CGIAR

The anniversary was celebrated in October 1996 with a programme that integrated commemoration of past achievements and tribute to CGIAR pioneers, a Centres Forum, and a Global Forum with International Centres Week. Participants in the first meeting of the CGIAR, past Chairs, and other distinguished CGIAR alumni were invited to participate along with the present CGIAR leaders.

CGIAR's 1996 Funding

At the commencement of the MTM96, there was a widespread concern that the Research Agenda, which required support of $300 million as approved at ICW'95, would be underfunded by some 6% (approximately $20 million), while some $47 million in funding remained outside of the Agenda. Dr Serageldin urged that self-discipline be imposed by both members and centres so that, through redefinition and/or reclassification of funding outside of the Agenda, resources could be identified to fund Agreed Research Agenda.

Two steps – redefinition and/or classification of funding and additional resources provided by the members – will reduce the funding gap, thus facilitating implementation of the 1996 Agenda.
In response to the request from the Asian NARS, and to have a single window for research and technology-exchange activities for the ICRISAT mandate crops in Asia, a unified Cereals and Legumes Asia Network (CLAN) was formally launched in April 1992. The CLAN amalgamated activities involving sorghum, pearl millet, chickpea, pigeonpea, and groundnut and related resource-management research.

**Specific Objectives**

- Strengthen linkages and enhance exchange of germplasm, breeding material, information and technology options among members
- Facilitate collaborative research among members to address and solve high-priority production constraints, giving attention to poverty and equity issues as per needs and priorities of member-countries

Assist in improving research and extension capability of member-countries through human-resource development

Enhance co-ordination of regional research on sorghum, pearl millet, chickpea, pigeonpea and groundnut

Contribute to the development of stable and sustainable production systems through a responsive research capability in member-countries.

**Membership**

National programmes that have substantial area and production of one or more mandate crops, and indicate interest in working together to alleviate production constraints, become members of the network. Currently core-members in the CLAN are Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. The CLAN also includes regional and international institutions working in Asia, and also responds to requests from other Asian countries, depending on the need and interest.

**CLAN Co-operators**

Scientists and administrators in Asian countries who indicate their willingness and commitment to collaborative research, share research responsibilities, results, and technology are invited to become network co-operators. Currently there are more than 950 co-operators. A Directory of CLAN Co-operators containing information regarding the crop and disciplinary research interests of members has been published.

**Network Structure**

The network structure consists of bilateral and multilateral elements. The bilateral linkages are based on formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the ICRISAT and the member-countries. The MOUs serve as umbrellas for collaborative research and for administrative
procedures that assist in joint research, movement of staff, material and equipment.

**CO-ORDINATION UNIT**

The Co-ordination Unit (CU), is based at the ICRISAT Asia Centre, and a CLAN Co-ordinator is in charge of its activities. The CU provides logistic support to network activities, and co-ordinator facilitates implementation of planned network activities.

**COUNTRY CO-ORDINATOR**

Each member-country nominates a senior scientist/research administrator as the Country Co-ordinator for in-country co-ordination of network activities. The Country Co-ordinator is the main administrative link between the Co-ordination Unit and the national agricultural research systems of that country, and between the network-members within the country.

**STEERING COMMITTEE/ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

A Steering Committee of the Country Co-ordinators oversees the network activities and provides guidance on future collaborative research. In addition, a CLAN Advisory Committee at the ICRISAT Asia Centre (IAC) also provides guidance to the Co-ordinator in executing planned network activities.

**NETWORK ACTIVITIES**

The CLAN supports diverse activities in the region, based on the needs, interest and comparative advantage of member-countries.

- **Collaborative research workplans.** These bilateral workplans are prepared at the review and workplan meetings held in each country, every one or two years. Previous research results are reviewed, and a workplan for future research is prepared based on need, interest, and capabilities of member-countries.

- **Exchange of germplasm and breeding material.** The germplasm available at the IAC genebank and the improved breeding materials are shared with scientists in network member-countries. The CLAN facilitates exchange and assists NARS in testing, evaluation, and use of these genetic materials in the national programmes.

- **Training.** The CLAN Co-ordination Unit assists national programme by identifying training needs, by arranging and organizing special training courses at the ICRISAT Asia Centre or in other countries, and also by arranging in-country training courses.

- **Information exchange.** The network members are in access to services provided by the ICRISAT’s Information Management and Exchange Programme (IMEP). These include (i) research and information bulletins, proceedings of workshops, conferences, and meetings, and other ICRISAT publications; (ii) Selective Dissemination of Information Service (SDI) and Literature Searches; (iii) travelling workshops on use of electronic media for accessing global literature databases, and (iv) co-publication of information and research bulletins and field manuals in local languages also.

*Regional workshops and meetings. The CLAN facilitates and assists in organizing regional workshops and meetings.

- **Working groups.** Working groups are formed by a group of committed scientists having a common interest in addressing and finding solutions to high-priority regional problems. Working Groups (WG) avoid duplication of efforts and engage a critical mass of scientists, at relatively low cost, to solve research problems. The members of working groups includes scientists from NARS, and from the international and advanced research institutions. The CLAN provides administrative and logistic support to a few working groups, such as Asia-Pacific groundnut viruses, Botrytis gray mould of chickpea, Biological nitrogen fixation in legumes, Drought tolerance in legumes and sorghum and Cytoplasmic-genic male sterility in pigeonpea.

- **Scientists’ exchange.** Visits of national programme scientists to IAC and to other countries to participate in workshops, meetings, and study-tours have assisted in enhancing interaction and exchanges and developing co-operative endeavours.

During 1991-95, 16 varieties in sorghum, 7 in pearl millet, 11 in chickpea, 10 in pigeonpea, and 11 in groundnut have been released by the various countries using ICRISAT-supplied breeding materials and germplasm lines.
Regional Advisory Committee Meeting of the Asia and the Pacific Network for Banana and Plantain

A co-ordinating centre (ASPNET) of the International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain (INIBAP), located in Philippines, is largely responsible for programmes under the INIBAP objectives in the countries of the Asia and Pacific Region. The ASPNET holds an annual meeting of the region and functions on the advice of its member-countries. The Regional Advisory Committee Meeting of the Asia and the Pacific Network (ASPNET) of the International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain (INIBAP), hosted by the National Research Centre on Banana, Trichy, India, was held on 26-28 September 1996.

The meeting started with address of the Chairperson Ms Siti Hawa Jamaluddin. Dr Ramon V. Valmayor, the Regional Coordinator (ASPNET/INIBAP), updated the activities of the ASPNET member-countries and applauded their achievements. He also informed about the establishment of a Regional Information System on Banana and Plantain (RISBAP), and told that Pakistan, Bangladesh have also shown their interest to join the ASPNET.

Dr H.P. Singh, Director, NRC on Banana, India, welcomed the delegates. Dr Emile Frison, Director, INIBAP, addressed and appraised of about the various activities of the INIBAP. Dr K.L. Chadha, who was elected Chairman of the RAC, presented a brief account of the National Agricultural Research System and informed that, India has already achieved self-sufficiency in many of the horticultural crops through effective research programmes of the ICAR. He also briefed about the horticultural development in India.

Dr H.P. Singh gave a comprehensive information on achievements in banana research and development, and expressed need for effective co-operation among member-countries.

The Regional Advisory Committee Meeting of the ASPNET took the following decisions:
- The INIBAP will support collection and conservation of banana in India on priority
- The INIBAP will supply global germplasm collection to the NRC on Banana
- The INIBAP will support human-resource development in identifying areas for improving capabilities

In the meeting, it was decided to have a genetic resources exploration and conservation in a phased manner. Considering priority of collection and conservation of genetic resources of banana, the ASPNET unanimously agreed to support this.

It was also decided that global collection shall be evaluated at the NRC on Banana to remove duplicates and synonyms.
Institute Profile

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is committed to improving agricultural production in developing countries and some related training—informal and postgraduate.

- commission research into improving agricultural production in developing countries and some projects' related training—informal and postgraduate.

ACIAR administers the Australian Government’s funding contribution to the international agricultural research centres, including those in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

Promoting bilateral research collaboration between Australia and individual developing countries remains ACIAR’s primary aim. It defines the term ‘agriculture’ broadly to include forestry, fisheries, and other natural resources. It does not research itself; it commissions research.
Thai and Australian scientists working together in northern Thailand on control of foot- and mouth disease in cattle. A Malaysian scientist checking bait-traps during joint studies on fruit-flies that have proved valuable for many countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific. A Filipina technician at the University of Philippines at Los Baños checking soil rhizobia levels, during joint studies on biological fixation of nitrogen in crops. A Fijian technician checks samples for parasites during studies that have provided new ways of controlling gut-parasites in sheep in tropical Pacific and South-East Asian countries.

The ACIAR work is supported by 10 Research Programme Co-ordinators/senior scientists who co-ordinate programmes across the major areas of agricultural research. They act as research brokers, commissioning projects with research groups in Australian universities, CSIRO (the national science organization), agriculture, forestry and fisheries departments in the Australian states and, on occasions, with private industry.

It is in its partnership approach that ACIAR's modus operandi differs from other forms of development assistances. In this, the partner developing countries are equal partners, not merely recipients, they contribute both intellectually and financially to research. Results are therefore 'owned' by partner-countries, which encourages further development and extension to farmers.

PROGRAMMES

Bilateral researches. These activities are co-ordinated through 7 discipline-based programmes. In 1995-96, $A30.5 million were provided across 25 countries. The research programmes of the Centre are on: Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics, Animal Sciences, Crop Sciences, Fisheries, Forestry,
Land and Water Resources and Post-harvest Technology.

Support to International Agricultural Research Centres. The ACIAR is responsible for administering Australia’s annual contribution of $A8.5 million to the International Agricultural Research Centres, for both those within and outside the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The ACIAR is responsible for deciding which centres should receive support, and what form that funding should take.

Training. The ACIAR awards around 10 John Allwright Fellowships each year to the scientists of developing countries involved in the ACIAR projects to undertake Masters or PhD training at Australian universities. There are currently 33 fellowship holders from 13 countries. The ACIAR also provides some non-formal training through project-associated conferences and workshops, instruction in laboratory and field-work, and courses, both directly and through the Crawford Fund for the International Agricultural Research.

COMMUNICATIONS

The ACIAR provides information about its activities and results, coming from its research, through various media, especially through the ACIAR Newsletter and magazine Partners in Research for Development, and through its scientific publishing programme, which publishes 15-20 conference proceedings, monographs, technical reports and manuals each year.

Most of the ACIAR projects are located in South-East Asia and the South Pacific. Between 50 and 80% of the ACIAR’s research money, depending on the number of research projects running at any particular time, is spent for the benefit of the South-East Asian and South Pacific countries, and Papua New Guinea. In addition, the ACIAR allocates between 10 and 20% of its research funds for South Asia and for China-regions that share many similarities of climate and environment with Australia, as does Africa, which receives between 5 and 10% of the ACIAR’s research funds.

RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

- Joint development with Malaysia of a heat-tolerant vaccine suitable for use against Newcastle disease in village-chickens, which is now in use in many countries in Asia and Africa.
- Introduction of low-cost fertilizer and soil management practices for problem soils in Asian, African and Australian tropics, to encourage sustainable agriculture and rehabilitation of degraded lands.
- Domestication and management of Australian trees and shrubs for fuelwood, agroforestry and industrial needs of developing countries, and promotion of salt-tolerant species to restore lands degraded by salinization, with trials in China, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Kenya and Zimbabwe.
- Development of environmentally safe, appropriate technologies that have improved health and productivity of animals owned by smallholder farming communities in many Asian and Pacific countries.
- Development of more productive, disease-free lines of traditional crops such as coconut, banana, sweet-potato and cassava for South-East Asia, Africa and the Pacific.
- Control of serious pests and weeds in Asia, the Pacific and Africa through techniques of biological control and integrated pest management.
- Gathering information about subsistence and commercial fisheries in the Pacific and South-East Asia that permits management for sustainability.
- Development of improved methods for safe handling, processing, storage, transport and marketing of both durable and perishable food commodities after harvest, especially in the humid tropics of Asia.
- Provision of economic information and recommendations on agricultural commodity policies to assist government agencies in a number of countries, including Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.
THE LEIPZIG CONFERENCE
IV INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

The IV International Technical Conference on the Plant Genetic Resources, represented by 148 countries, was held at Leipzig, Germany, between 17 and 24 June 1996. It was addressed by Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the FAO. His Excellency, Jochen Borchert, Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry of Germany, delivered a welcome address on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, emphasizing the need for the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources. The Minister of Agriculture and Food of the Free State of Saxony, His Excellency, Rolf Jühnichen, also reiterated the important role of plant genetic resources in maintenance of cultural heritage. The Lord Mayor of Leipzig, Mr. Lehmann-Grube, noted the symbolic importance of the Conference.

The Conference established an open-ended Working Group to complete work of the Pre-Leipzig Committee, set up by the Commission on the Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA). The Leipzig Conference reviewed and finalized consolidated draft text prepared by the Working Group. After extensive discussions, the Conference approved the draft and adopted it as the Global Plan of Action for the conservation and sustainable utilization of the PGR. The second session was the closed door one, having 2 representatives each from Asia, Far East, Pacific and Oceania, Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe. Asia was represented by India and Malaysia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to enlist the widest participation and support for the implementation of the GPA, the outcome of the Leipzig Conference should be reported to the major international, regional and national bodies, dealing with food and agriculture and biodiversity, including in particular the FAO Conference, the COP of the CBD, the CSD of the UN and the Governing Bodies of the UNEP, GEF, UNDP, IFAD, World Bank, Common Fund for Commodities, Regional Development Banks and CGIAR.

- Overall progress in the implementation of the GPA and the related follow-up processes would be monitored and guided by the national governments and other members of the FAO.

- The Conference recognized the need for financial resources for the implementation of the GPA, and also that its full implementation would involve a significant increase in the activities currently taking place. The Conference recognized that the GPA will have to be implemented progressively, and adequate financial resources commensurating with the scope of the GPA should, therefore, be mobilized. Each country should determine its own priorities in the light of those agreed in the GPA and in the framework of its food and agricultural development needs.

- The Conference recognized that significant but intermediate funding for the PGRFA is currently provided by the national governments and other domestic sources of funds, multilateral organizations and bilateral and regional sources.

- Recognizing the importance of the contributions of the domestic sources (both public and private), the Conference strongly recommended that each country should make every possible effort to provide, in accordance with its capacity, financial support and incentives in accordance with its national plans, priorities and programmes.

- The Conference reaffirmed that international co-operation for conservation and sustainable utilization of the PGRFA should be strengthened in particular to support and complement efforts of developing countries.
and countries with their economies in transition.

- The Conference reaffirmed the commitments for new and additional funds made under Agenda 21 of the UNCED and by the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Under the commitments, funds should be made available to finance the implementation of the GPA by the developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Such funding should come from developed countries and/or other sources and should come, when possible, facilitating leveraging of other funding sources and mechanisms; and assist countries to implement the GPA. Every effort should be made to seek new additional and innovative sources of funding within the process of implementation of the GPA.

- The analysis of information on activities of the PGRFA worldwide and through all funding sources should be extended under the auspices of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources on Food and Agriculture. This work should help utilizing funds more efficiently and assist national, multinational, regional and bilateral organizations to develop effective programmes.

The Indian delegation, comprising Dr R.B. Singh, Director, IARI and Dr K.P.S. Chandel, Director, NBPGR, played a very positive, constructive and prominent role in negotiations. Its contributions particularly in the financial aspects in the closed door session along with several representative countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America resulted in direct commitment by developed countries for new and additional funding for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action (GPA).

**Prioritizing Minor Crops for Future Use: Indian Experience**

The Asia-Pacific Region possesses a rich diversity of several crop-plant species, which though presently underutilized, have a good potential for food production or for other industrial uses, suiting local adaptation or for introduction in similar ecological conditions in other parts of the world. This rich genetic estate, extant in diverse ecosystems, nurtured by ingenuous indigenous communities, provides ample opportunities for further development of agriculture in the region at a comparative advantage in terms of sustainability and diversification of farming systems.

In India, which is a gene-rich centre, housing more than 160 indigenous cultivated plant species, the National Agricultural Research Programme of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is encouraging co-ordinated research on different underutilized and underexploited plants, life-support species, new exotic crops, etc., at its various crop-based or farming systems-based research institutions and state agricultural universities.

The National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi, one of the ICAR Institutes, established in 1976, has provided a leading role in all the PGR activities of the country including on crops of future promise. One of its regional stations at Shimla has been identified, among the 30 National Active Germplasm Sites, specifically for pseudocereals; the globally
### Underutilized Food Crops Receiving Research Priorities in India (Category-Wise)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub Category</th>
<th>New Food Crops</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staples</strong></td>
<td>Seed Staples</td>
<td>Pseudocereals – Amaranths, Chenopods, Buckwheat</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Job’s tears</td>
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<td>Minor Pulses – Ricebean, Fababean, Adzukibean</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuberous</td>
<td>Winged-bean, <em>Momordica dioica</em> (Meetha karela)</td>
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<td><strong>Secondary Foods</strong></td>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td><em>Atriplex</em> (Saltbush), Pseudocereals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Raw Fruit</td>
<td><em>Momordica dioica</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other Vegetables</td>
<td>Bamboo sprouts/Young Shoots</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tertiary Foods</strong></td>
<td>Condiments</td>
<td><em>Perilla</em></td>
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<td><strong>Oilseeds</strong></td>
<td>Tree Oilseed</td>
<td>Paradise tree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oilseed Crop</td>
<td><em>Perilla</em></td>
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Pseudocereals. In pseudocereals, grain-amaranth (*Amaranthus* sp.) shows highest promise and wide adaptability, and India houses its largest collection in the region, comprising over 3,000 accessions in the NBPGR network system. Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* L.), which is adapted to high- and mid-high elevations, China far exceeds other countries of the region in conserving its over 1,500 accessions, followed by Japan (+600) and India (+500); and in Chenopods (*Chenopodium* spp.), the third prominent pseudocereal, significant augmentation of germplasm resources is still lacking.

There is also an increasing research interest in perilla (*Perilla frutescens*) and Job’s tears (*Coix lacryma-jobi*). The NBPGR’s Shillong Centre has built substantial local variability in these crops for characterization, evaluation and further testing. Job’s tears (*Coix lacryma-jobi*), a distant relative of maize, is cultivated as an additional carbohydrate source in hilly tribal tracts of the north-eastern India, particularly in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. Its soft-shelled types are used for human consumption and the hard-shelled types are used as poultry feed or fodder. Specific interest to this crop is due to high calcium content in its seed.

In all, over 6,700 accessions have piled up in the priority underutilized crops covered and the All-India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Underutilized Crops located at the NBPGR has developed, identified and released 12 improved varieties and other technologies in 7 such crops.

These minor crops are linked with sustainable farming systems in socially remote areas and marginal lands. Their improved technology would not only help to increase food production but would eventually help in raising the overall economic status of the indigenous community.
### RECENT RAP PUBLICATIONS

Some of the important publications brought out recently by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) are listed below.

2. **Report of the Expert Consultation on Technological Evolution and Impact for Sustainable Rice Production in Asia and the Pacific** (RAP Publication: 1996/14)
7. **Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA)** in the Asia Region - Regional Workshop Report and Case Studies (Selected Asian Countries) (RAP Publication: 1996/19)
12. **Monograph on Promising Pest Control of Plant Species of Asia and the Pacific** (RAP Publication: 1996/24)

**Note:** Copies can be obtained upon request from the FAO, RAP, Maliwan Mansion, Phra Atit Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

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### FUTURE CONFERENCES

| **1. Title:** | Thirteenth International Symposium on Environmental Biogeochimistry |
| **Venue:** | Monopoli (Italy) |
| **Period:** | 21-27 September 1997 |
| **Contact:** | Prof. Nicola Senesi  
Istituto di Chimica Agraria  
Università di Bari  
via Amendola 165/A  
70126 Bari (Italy) |

| **2. Title:** | Third International Conference on Reservoir Limnology and Water Quality |
| **Venue:** | Ceske Budejovice (Czech Republic) |
| **Period:** | 31 August-5 September 1997 |
| **Contact:** | Prof. Jaroslav Vrba  
Hydrobiological Institute  
Academy of Sciences  
Na Sadkach 7  
CZ-37005 Ceske Budjovice  
Czech Republic |

| **3. Title:** | Seventh International Conference on Conservation and Management of Lakes |
| **Venue:** | San Martina de los Andes, Argentina |
| **Period:** | 27-31 October 1997 |
| **Contact:** | Instituto Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnica Hidricas  
CC 46  
1802 Aeropuerto Ezeiza  
Prov. de Buenos Aires  
Argentina |

| **4. Title:** | Seventh International Congress of Ecology |
| **Venue:** | Florence, Italy |
| **Period:** | 19-25 July 1998 |
| **Contact:** | Dr Almo Farina, Vice President  
INTECOL, Lunigiana  
Museum of Natural History  
Fortezza della Brunella, 54011  
Aulla, Italy |

| **5. Title:** | International Conference on Integrated Plant Disease Management for Sustainable Agriculture (on the Occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Indian Phytopathological Society) |
| **Venue:** | IARI, New Delhi |
| **Period:** | 11-15 November 1997 |
| **Contact:** | Dr Anupam Varma, Chair  
Steering Committee |
| **Fax:** | 91-11575 3678 |
| **Email:** | root @ maax toll ren. nic. in. |

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Dr Nobuyoshi Maeno has been appointed as the Director-General of the Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) on 1 August 1996. He has succeeded Dr Keiji Kainuma. APAARI congratulates Dr Maeno.