



## Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)



### Progress Report (January– June, 2015)

C/o Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
4th Floor, FAO RAP Annex Building  
202/1 Larn Laung Road, Pomprab Sattrupai  
Bangkok 10100, Thailand

# **BRIEF PROGRESS REPORT ON APAARI ACTIVITIES**

## **(January - June, 2015)**

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) is an apolitical, neutral, non-profit forum of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the Asia-Pacific region and was established in 1990 at the initiative of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It has its headquarters at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. The main mission of APAARI is to promote the development of national agricultural research systems in the Asia-Pacific region through facilitation of intra-regional, inter-institutional, and international cooperation/partnership. APAARI has been active in fostering the overall agricultural development by addressing the concerns of hunger, poverty, environmental degradation and sustainability of agricultural production. It has completed 25 years of its establishment with an impressive record of achievements.

APAARI organized/co-organized several activities comprising meetings/consultations/conferences/workshops/training programs during January - June, 2015. These included: i) APAARI Executive Committee Meeting, ii) Tropical Agriculture Platform - CD (AIS) Expert Group Workshop, iii) International Training Course on Smart Use of Fertilizers to Improve Crop Production and Soil Conservation, and iv) CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program. Also, a number of publications, including proceedings of conferences/workshops held were brought out and widely disseminated to APAARI members and other stakeholders.

A brief account of the accomplishments during the period under report is presented here for kind information of APAARI members/partners.

### **I. Meetings and Expert Consultations**

#### **1. APAARI Executive Committee Meeting**

The first meeting of the new APAARI Executive Committee (EC) was held at the Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand on 12 May, 2015 under the Chairmanship of Dr Suwit Chaikiattiyos, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture (DOA), Thailand who officiated in place of Mr Anan Suwannarat, Chairman, APAARI and Director General, DOA, Thailand. The meeting was attended by 24 participants including APAARI members and special invitees. At the outset, the participants expressed special concern on the tremendous loss to life and property in Nepal, a member country of APAARI, due to an earthquake on 26 April, 2015. On the Chair's request the participants observed a one minute silence in memory of the people who lost their lives. It was also decided to include a special agenda item to deliberate on exploring with Nepal authorities how APAARI could contribute to the recovery and rehabilitation of agriculture in Nepal. The full proceedings of the Executive Committee meeting is available on APAARI Website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/apari-ex-com-2015.html>

The following are the highlights of the decisions and outcomes of the meeting:

- APAARI Progress Report November 2014- April 2015 was endorsed and its relevant aspects would be included in the Progress Report: January – July 2015.
- Audit Report and Audited Financial Statements as audited by APAARI External Auditor for financial year 2014 was endorsed.

- The GAAP Professional Audit Co. Ltd. was approved as External Auditor for APAARI for the biennium 2015-16.
- The Executive Committee approved APAARI Work Plan 2015 for implementation. The major activities included are : i) Revisiting APAARI Vision 2025, ii) High Level Policy Dialogue on Investment in AR4D in Asia-Pacific Region, iii) M&E towards Outcome and Impact Assessment, iv) Policy Dialogue on Transforming Towards Knowledge Based Agriculture in Southeast Asia, v) Dialogue on Performance of Bt. Brinjal in Bangladesh and Prospects of Its Wider Adoption, vi) Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-biotechnology in Asia-Pacific, and vii) CRP on Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program.
- Major highlights of Revisiting APAARI Vision 2025 are: i) development of vision document containing vision, mission and goal statements with outline of broad system level outcomes, strategic thrusts and strategic interventions. ii) vision document to be developed in close consultation with EC members and other eminent persons who participated in the EC meeting, iii) draft vision document thus developed will go through wider consultation with APAARI members, partners and stakeholders, iv) the Executive Secretary of APAARI is tasked to oversee the development, and v) the second stage of strategic planning on mid-term program implementation plan will be undertaken after the acceptance of the revised vision document.
- APAARI Income-Expenditure Plan for 2015-16 was approved for implementation. The highlights are: i) estimated income (US\$ 825,881 and predicted expenditure (US\$ 805,547) during 2015, ii) estimated income (US\$ 724,074) and predicted expenditure (US\$ 795, 838), with a provision of using US\$ 71,764 from the reserve funds during 2016.
- The Asia-Pacific Seed Association (APSA) has been nominated and endorsed as a representative of the private sector on the APAARI Executive Committee for the biennium 2015-16.
- Proposal for an additional seat to jointly represent the Association of International Research Centres for Agriculture (AIRCA) and Universities (Higher Education Sector) on the APAARI Executive Committee was approved, subject to the approval of the appropriate amendment to the APAARI Constitution by the APAARI General Assembly.
- The Executive Committee approved the following composition of APCoAB Steering Committee for the Biennium 2015-16.

#	Position	Designation	Organization	Country
1	Chairman	Director General, Department of Agriculture (Chair, APAARI)	Department of Agriculture (DOA)	Thailand
2	Vice Chairman	Director General, International Cooperation	Council of Agriculture (COA)	Chinese Taipei
3	Member	Executive Director	PCAARRD	Philippines
4	Member	Executive Chairman (Vice-Chair, APAARI)	BARC	Bangladesh
5	Member	Representative	ACIAR	Australia
6	Member	Representative	World Fish Centre	Malaysia
7	Member	Executive Secretary	APAARI	Thailand
8	Participant*	Biotech Professional	ICRISAT	India

9	Secretary	Coordinator	APCoAB	Thailand
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\* Special invitee

- The Executive Committee approved the following composition of APARIS Steering Committee for the Biennium 2015-16.

<b>Composition of APARIS Steering Committee: Biennium 2015-16</b>				
#	Title	Designation	Organization	Country
1	Chairman	Director General, Department of Agriculture (Chair, APAARI)	Department of Agriculture (DOA)	Thailand
2	Vice-Chairman	Member, APAARI Executive Committee	ACIAR	Australia
3	Member	Member, APAARI Executive Committee	GFAR	Italy
4	Member	Member, APAARI Executive Committee	ICRAF	Kenya
5	Member	Representative	FAO-RAP	Thailand
6	Member	Executive Secretary	APAARI	Thailand
7	Secretary	APARIS Coordinator	APAARI	Thailand

- It was resolved that APAARI would explore the possibilities of supporting the recovery and assisting in rehabilitation of agriculture that has been adversely affected in Nepal because of the recent earthquakes in the country.
- FAO RAP has established the Asia-Pacific Extension and Outreach Network (APAEON). FAO will be the Chair and APAARI will be the Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee of APAEON.
- The EC took note of the three major decisions made by the CG Fund Council in its meeting held on 27-30, April 2015 in Bogor, Indonesia: i) agreement to submit revised SRF to funders, ii) establishment of CGIAR systems organization, and iii) plan on resource mobilization and innovative financing.

## **2. Tropical Agriculture Platform - CD (AIS) Expert Group Workshop**

APAARI is one of partners of Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) and a member of its Global Task Force (GTF). Based on the recommendations of TAP Steering Committee and TAP Global Task Force, an Expert Group was created to develop the Common Framework on Capacity Development (CD) for Agricultural Innovation System (AIS). Dr Bhag Mal, Senior Consultant, APAARI, attended the CD Expert Group Workshop held at Montpellier, France on 19-20, March, 2015. The workshop provided a platform to TAP partners to share their on-going and planned activities and provide inputs on how this can inform and be linked to the Framework.

The discussion was held around three main themes: (i) Elements of the Framework, (ii) Needs Assessment, and (iii) Monitoring and Evaluation. The Framework needs to deliver operational and

practical guidance on CD for AIS at system and project levels and at the same time it should remain adaptable and flexible. The draft of the Framework is likely to be available by 25 June which will be circulated to the wider expert group, Tap Global Task Force and TAP Steering Committee for feedback and endorsement. The validation of the Framework in pilot countries (Bangladesh and Laos in Asia region) is planned to begin in September, 2015 in the context of CD (AIS) Project.

### **3. International Training Course on Smart Use of Fertilizers to Improve Crop Production and Soil Conservation**

The Food and Fertilizer Training Centre (FFTC), Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), Council of Agriculture (COA), Chinese Taipei, and Taichung District Agricultural Research and Extension Station (TDARES) jointly organized the “International Training Course on Smart Use of Fertilizers to Improve Crop Production and Soil Conservation” at Changhua County, Taichung, Taiwan on 11-15 May, 2015.

This five-day training course aimed to introduce and teach the participants from developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region the concept, theory, and application of judicious use of fertilizers through the smart ways. The training program included keynote presentations, laboratory practices and on-site field studies. Nine participants from 8 countries, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Thailand nominated by APAARI attended the course.

### **4. Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program**

APAARI has signed an MoU with ICRISAT to be a partner in its CRP Dryland Cereals Scholarship Program for which funding support of USD 150,000 has been provided by ICRISAT. Under this program, full or partial support will be provided to candidates from the countries in South Asia and Central and Western Asia to pursue their Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral research related to dryland cereal crops, namely, barley, finger millet, pearl millet and sorghum. The disciplines of study include Agriculture Economics, Food Science, Nutrition, Molecular Genetics, Plant Breeding, Integrated Crop Management, Crop Physiology, Entomology, and Gender.

The objective of the program is to: i) develop a new cadre of scientists with core competencies, knowledge and experience in advanced science and technologies that address productivity and quality enhancements, post-harvest value and policy interventions for the dryland cereals; ii) encourage and develop excellence in fundamental and practical research capabilities in women and early-career scientists in developing countries to address global challenges in agriculture, with a focus on dryland cereals, and iii) strengthen and enhance human resource capacities of national agricultural research institutions in the developing countries in Asia.

A total of nine applications for Ph.D. Scholarship and two applications for Post-Doctoral Fellowship were received from India, China and Sri Lanka. Based on the criteria: i) contribution to improvement of dryland cereal crops, ii) motivation, iii) integration of project/thesis in the work plan, iv) nominating scientist's reference, and v) specified crops and disciplines, the applications were evaluated by APAARI Expert Committee and based on scoring, seven candidates for Ph. D. Scholarship and one for Post-Doctoral Fellowship were selected and the list was sent to ICRISAT Oversight Committee for their comments and approval.

## **5. Other Important Meetings**

### ***Meeting with Director, APSA***

Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI met with Dr Tom Burns, Director, APSA at APSA Office in Bangkok on 19 January 2015 to introduce himself as a new Executive Secretary of APAARI. In the meeting, Dr Ghodake discussed with Dr Burns about a seat of private sector on the APAARI Executive Committee as per the decision of the APAARI General Assembly in 2014 to push closer collaboration with the private sector. It was proposed at the General Assembly meeting that APSA will take a seat on the APAARI Executive Committee in 2015 initially as an observer. Since each association has reciprocal membership of each other for many years, Dr Ghodake took this opportunity to discuss possible collaboration on issues of relevance to both organizations.

### ***Meeting with CoRRB delegation***

Mr Namgay Wangchuk, Director General of Council for RNR Research of Bhutan (CoRRB) along with his team visited APAARI Headquarters, Bangkok on 17 February, 2015 to strengthen collaboration and to meet Dr Raghunath Ghodake, the new Executive Secretary, APAARI. Dr Ghodake updated the CoRRB Director General on various activities of APAARI and also briefed about the forthcoming events. Mr Wangchuk appreciated the progress made by APAARI in promoting agricultural research for development (AR4D) in the region. At the end of the meeting, Mr Wangchuk presented a souvenir to Dr Ghodake and wished him a great success in his new assignment.

### ***Meeting with CABI Delegation***

A delegation from Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International (CABI), headed by Dr Dennis Rangi, Executive Director, International Development together with Dr Wai-Hong Loke, Regional Director, South East Asia, Mr. Sharbendu Banerjee, Global Director, Mobile, Dr Ravi Khetarpal, Regional Director for South Asia and Dr Babar E. Bajwa, Regional Director for Central and West Asia visited the APAARI Headquarters, Bangkok on the 21st May 2015 and met Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI and Dr Vilasini Pillai, APCoAB Coordinator, APAARI. CABI is an international non-profit organization that improves lives through knowledge sharing and plant services to solve agriculture and environmental related problems, which are very much in line with APAARI's vision and mission.

Dr Ghodake gave a brief overview of the current and planned activities of APAARI, while Dr Rangi and the team expressed great interest and enthusiasm in working closely and partnering with APAARI in common areas of interest as well as playing an active role as an Associate Member of APAARI. CABI in 2015 looks forward to participating in the High Level Policy Dialogue on Investment in AR4D and in the Dialogue on Transforming Towards Knowledge Based Agriculture Development and in turn APAARI will be participating in the CABI organized regional workshop.

## **II. Information Dissemination and Publications**

### **A. APAARI website**

The APAARI website is being regularly updated with APAARI's news and activities, and general events of specific interest on agricultural research and development in Asia-Pacific region. APAARI reports and proceedings have all been uploaded on the website for free access. Other contents and database were also updated regularly. Besides, APAARI's account on Facebook has also been created to widen communication channels and to capture the views of young professionals.

### **B. Web-based and CD Information**

#### ***APAARI Web Space***

APAARI Website [www.apaari.org](http://www.apaari.org) provides access to more than 40 success stories and status reports, 46 issues of APPARI Newsletter, and more than 60 reports and proceedings of expert consultations. The website provides links to NARS in Asia and the Pacific region, partners like ACIAR, FAO, CGIAR, GFAR, AARINENA, FARA, CACAARI and directories such as research networks, projects database, ASTI databases, regional research networks, etc. The website is being updated on regular basis with upcoming events, activities completed and latest publications with introduction of discussion forum, RSS feed Web 2.0 and social networking tools for dissemination of agricultural research information efficiently.

To improve effective dissemination of information, APAARI has been implementing a communication strategy in phased manner. The APAARI website domain and dedicated webhosting services have been renewed.

APAARI website (<http://www.apaari.org>) has more than 300 linkages to various national, regional and international institutions, networks and other relevant organizations.

#### **APAARI Website Usage Statistics**

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
Jan-15	5,759	10,953	77,762	186,114
Feb-15	6,267	10,893	82,791	182,342
Mar-15	10,309	16,253	58,724	176,101
Apr-15	5,980	11,211	82,034	197,547
May-15	5,452	11,252	134,562	242,778
Jun-15	7,604	13,115	70,813	169,926
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,371</b>	<b>73,677</b>	<b>506,686</b>	<b>1,154,808</b>

APAARI website had received more than 1.15 million hits during the last six months. Among the total number of 73,677 persons, more than half were unique visitors indicating that the website also attracted new comers. On an average, the numbers of pages that visitors accessed per visit were seven. APAARI website attracted visitors from many countries mainly from USA, China, Turkey, Brazil, and Thailand. Top ten downloads from the site were publications on Success Stories highlighting the best practices of



agricultural development in many countries from Asia-Pacific region. This reflects usefulness of APAARI's efforts made so far in popularizing the good agricultural practices in various fields of agriculture for their faster adoption elsewhere.

### ***Database Platforms***

Under the implementation of APAARI Communication Strategy 2010-2015, APAARI launched Contact Database on its website. It helps to search contact details of APAARI Members by sub-region, country, category, area of activity etc., and allows downloading of contact information. NARS and National Information Nodal Points (NINPs) are welcome to register in this platform and add contacts of their constituencies. The design of databases on ARD Experts and ARD Projects was also completed and it was demonstrated in the Eleventh Meeting of APARIS Steering Committee held on 13 October, 2012. The database platforms are available at APAARI website: <http://www.apaari.org/ard-database>. The database development is progressing by adding more information on experts and projects.

### **C. APCoAB Website**

APCoAB website ([www.apcoab.org](http://www.apcoab.org)) provides information on APCoAB organization, objectives, activities, and news and events on agricultural biotechnology. It provides access to APCoAB publications comprising success stories, status reports and proceedings of expert consultation and other group meetings. Databases of agricultural biotechnology institutions in Asia-Pacific and biosafety regulations of Asia-Pacific countries are also available at this website. These resources are updated on regular basis and all stakeholders are being kept fully apprised of new developments.

### **D. Publications**

Following new publications were brought out by APAARI during the period under report:

#### **1. APAARI Newsletter (half yearly)**

APAARI Newsletter, January-June 2015 issue was published and widely circulated to its members and other stakeholders and was also posted on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/newsletter-june-2015.html>

#### **2. Expert Consultation on Assuring Food Safety in Asia-Pacific: Proceedings and Recommendations**

The publication reports the proceedings of the meeting held at Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Science (JIRCAS), Tsukuba, Japan on 4-5 August 2014. It includes summary of presentations on keynote lectures, country reports, scientific advances in specific commodities followed by discussions held in each session. Details of discussions on key issues and recommendations made in the final session are also provided. The full report is available on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/assuring-food-safety-2014.html>



### **3. APAARI Constitution**

The fifth edition of APAARI Constitution was published in January 2015. This edition incorporates a provision on an additional seat for private sector on the Executive Committee of APAARI as approved by the General Assembly in its meeting held on 1 November, 2014. Full document is available on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/apaari-reports/apaari-constitution.html>

### **4. 13th General Assembly Meeting (GAM): Proceedings**

The proceedings of the 13th General Assembly Meeting of APAARI held at Bangkok on 1 November 2014 was published. It includes the details on progress report, membership and fee payment status, composition of the new Executive Committee, work plan and budget for 2015 and 2016, and other items, namely, Third Global Conference on Agricultural Research and Development (GCARD3), Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP), and Asia-Pacific Extension and Outreach Network (APEON). The proceedings is available on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/13th-apaari-gam.html>

### **5. 12<sup>th</sup> Asian Maize Conference and Expert Consultation on Maize for Food, Feed, Nutrition and Environmental Security: Proceedings**

The Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup> Asian Maize Conference and Expert Consultation on Maize for Food, Feed, Nutrition and Environmental Security held at Bangkok on 30 October-1 November, 2014 was published. It includes summary of presentations on keynote lectures, panel discussions, and contributory papers. Details of discussions on key issues and the major recommendations made and presented in the Plenary Session are also included. The proceedings is available on APAARI website at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/12th-asian-maize-conference.html>

### **6. APAARI Flyer**

APAARI Flyer was revised to include updated information on membership status, proceedings of conferences/workshops/meetings, success stories etc.

The above publications have been shared with all the member organizations, participants of the respective meetings and other stakeholders. These are also available at <http://www.apaari.org/publications/apaari-flyer-2015.html>

## **III. Membership Drive**

During the period January-June, 2015, concerted efforts were made towards making new members and also for upgrading the status of existing members.. Six new Associate Members joined APAARI. These include, i) International Potato Center (CIP), Lima, Peru, ii) International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), Dubai, United Arab Emirates, iii) International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, Nepal, iv) Crops for the Future (CFF), Jalan Broga, Malaysia, v) Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia, and vi) Junagadh Agricultural University (JAU), Junagadh, India. Besides, University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad joined as new Affiliate member, while Central Agricultural University (CAU), Imphal, India upgraded its membership status from Affiliate to Associate category

#### **IV. Participation in Meetings Organized by Other Fora**

APAARI participated in the meetings organized by APAARI and other fora. The details are given below:

##### **Dr Raj Paroda, Senior Adviser, APAARI**

- ICRISAT CRP Grain Legumes Consultation Meeting (as Chair of Independent Advisory Committee) at Addis Ababa; 27-29 March, 2015.
- Cereal System Initiative South Asia (CSISA) Phase III Planning Workshop (as a senior resource person) at Singapore; 1-2 May, 2015.
- Brainstorming Workshop on “Upscaling Quality Protein Maize for Nutritional Security” (as Co-Chair of the Organizing Committee) at NASC, New Delhi; 20-21 May, 2015.

##### **Dr Raghunath Ghodake, Executive Secretary, APAARI**

- Third SATNET Policy Dialogue on 'The Role of Technology Transfer in Agriculture for Sustainable Development Outcomes' in Bogor, Indonesia; 10-11 February 2015.
- CRP DC Phase II Planning Meeting at Addis Ababa; 18-19 March, 2015.
- 13th CG Fund Council Meeting in Bogor, Indonesia; 28-29 April, 2015.
- Asia-Pacific Workshop on “Climate Smart Agriculture: A Call for Action” at Bangkok, Thailand; 18-20 June, 2015
- EU-PACIFIC Bi-regional Policy Dialogue on “Moving Further Towards a Policy Dialogue in Science, Technology and Innovations (ST&I) – Science Diplomacy to Serve Policy Demands” at Brussels, Belgium; 23-24 June, 2015

##### **Dr Bhag Mal, Senior Consultant, APAARI**

- Workshop of TAP Capacity Development (AIS) Expert Group Workshop, CIRAD, Montpellier, France; 19-20 March 2015.
- Brainstorming Workshop on “Upscaling Quality Protein Maize for Nutritional Security” at NASC Complex, New Delhi; 20-21 May, 2015.
- Workshop on Bioersity – ICAR Collaborative Activities, NASC Complex, New Delhi; 12 Mach 2015.

#### **V. International/Regional Collaboration**

During the period under report, APAARI had close collaboration with GFAR, CGIAR Centres, ACIAR, COA, CAPSA and FAO RAP and organized several activities/programs including organization of workshops/ conferences/ training programs with funding support from them including the programs on agro-biotechnology and research information systems.

#### **VI. Forthcoming APAARI Meetings/Workshops**

The following APAARI meetings/workshops/consultations are planned to be organized during July-December, 2015.

- Training Workshop on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation towards Measuring Outcomes and Impacts will be organized jointly by APAARI, ACIAR, and GFAR and MARDI at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during 3-7 August, 2015

- GFAR Assembly for Shaping the Future of Agricultural Research and Innovation will be organized by GFAR in partnership with APAARI at Bangkok, Thailand on 24-26 August, 2015.
- Development of Communication Strategies for Adoption of Agri-Biotechnology in Asia will be organized in partnership with ISAAA and MABIC in Dusit Islands Resort, Chiang Rai, Thailand on 28-29 September, 2015.
- Regional Consultation on Agroforestry: The Way Forward, will be organized jointly by ICAR, TAAS, ICRAF and APAARI at New Delhi, India on 8-10 October, 2015
- Dialogue on Transforming Agricultural Innovation Systems in South East Asia Through More Effective Knowledge Management, Vientiane, Lao PDR, October/November, 2015
- High Level Policy Dialogue on Investment in Agricultural Research for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific Region will be jointly organized by APAARI, ACIAR, FAO-RAP, GFAR and IFPRI at Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand on 8-9 December, 2015
- Dialogue on Adoption and Promotion of Bt Brinjal in the Asia-Pacific will be organized by APCoAB/APAARI in collaboration with BARC, BARI, ISAAA and ABSPII at Dhaka in November/December, 2015
- APAARI Executive Committee Meeting will be held at Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand on 10 December, 2015

## **VII. Other Items**

### **Appointment of New APCoAB Coordinator**

Dr Vilasini Pillai from Malaysia joined as APCoAB Coordinator at Bangkok on 30 March, 2015. She has the responsibility of execution of programs/activities related to agricultural biotechnology in the Asia-Pacific region under APCoAB Program of APAARI.

## **VIII. Epilogue**

As is evident from this report, APAARI activities are being expanded and effectively addressing the expectations of its members. This has been possible due to cooperation extended all by all stakeholders, which is duly acknowledged. APAARI looks forward to have more activities/collaboration with the partners in performing its mandate during the remaining period of 2015.

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