



# APAARI

## Newsletter



Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions

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### Editorial

Continuous initiatives towards research prioritization by the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), regional and international organizations, especially during the last one decade, have helped in reshaping their research Agenda. Many NARS have come out with their long-term perspective plans, future strategies and vision statements to ensure proper focus and balance in agricultural research for development while addressing the over all concerns of poverty alleviation, improved productivity and conservation of natural resources.

For Asia-Pacific region, APAARI came out with its Vision 2025 document in 2000, clearly defining future challenges and strategies towards sustainable agriculture. It had been a "bottom up" exercise, involving all stakeholders in continuous brainstorming through various regional and sub-regional consultations. A critical requirement to have the need assessment exercise for gap analysis at sub-regional level was considered important in order to have mid-course corrections for reprioritization of research portfolio and overcoming existing imbalances for sectoral priorities such as those for crops, livestock, forestry, fishery etc.

Accordingly, a need assessment workshop was organized by APAARI in close collaboration with Indian NARS (ICAR) and ICRISAT involving key stakeholders. It became apparent that research prioritization efforts at all levels be seen as a continuous in-built evolutionary process so that emerging gaps and challenges are addressed from time to time. It is heartening that similar emphasis is currently being given by the newly constituted Science Council of the CGIAR and also by the GFAR to set clearly global research agenda and address those areas which were though important but were considered outside their mandate. APAARI plans to continue with research gap analysis during 2005 for the South-East Asia and the Pacific sub-regions, encouraged from the exercise on South and West Asia region, a brief report of which is presented inside this Newsletter. National Systems also need to get catalyzed to undertake similar initiatives in the near future so as to ensure better returns for their investments in agricultural research for development (ARD). APAARI would be pleased to assist member NARS in having this objective fulfilled.

Editors

## APAARI General Assembly Meeting Held

General Assembly Meeting of APAARI was held on 3 December 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was attended by 77 participants, including members and special invitees. Dr. Mutsuo Iwamoto, Chairman, APAARI welcomed the members and thanked for their cooperation during his tenure as APAARI Chairman from 2003 to 2004. He pointed out that based on his participation in GFAR and other global/regional meetings, APAARI seemed to be one of the most progressive regional fora that could serve as an example for others. He referred to the outstanding progress of APAARI and urged the members for continued support and active participation in its mandated activities. He invited the comments from members on the draft agenda of the general assembly and the same was approved. Dr. Md. Moslem Uddin Miah, Member Director, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) was requested to represent vice-chair, Dr. Nurul Alam.

Dr. R.S. Paroda, Executive Secretary APAARI, briefed the members on the activities undertaken during the year relating to various APARIS, APCoAB and APAARI under its umbrella. During 2004, APARIS steering committee met once and the APCoAB steering committee met twice

to review and plan activities of these two APAARI initiatives. An ICT/ICM training of 9 National Information Nodal Points of 7 developing NARS, one sub-regional Research Need Assessment Workshop for South and West Asia and one inter-regional Cotton Research Network Meeting were also organized by APAARI. The Proceedings of last Expert Consultation on ICT/ICM in ARD held in December 2003 at Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, were published and circulated widely, including all the members and support group organizations. Two issues of APAARI Newsletter, 3 APAARI Success Stories namely, on lentil improvement in Bangladesh, Classical Biological control in India and on Sustaining the Green Revolution in India, and a Regional Report on the Status of ICT/ICM in ARD were published. The success story on Rainbow Trout Culture in Nepal is under publication. Further, all important APAARI publications are also now available on the redesigned APAARI web site and a new CD named "APAARI on CD" is a compilation of all important APAARI documents/publications since its inception. APAARI on CD has been mailed to all APAARI contacts. As per earlier decision of the General Assembly in 2002 in Penang, Malaysia, APCoAB was also established with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004 and several activities

were undertaken, including formalization of partnerships with other organizations and identification of collaborative programs with NARS, FAO, GFAR, CG Centers, ACIAR, JIRCAS, and other ARD organizations. Members were quite satisfied and appreciative of the progress made by APAARI since the last General Assembly in Penang, Malaysia in December 2002.

The members were briefed by Mr. P.K. Saha Liaison Officer, APAARI, on the APAARI initiative to facilitate the membership of smaller, developing NARS such as Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, East-Timor and Bhutan. It was suggested that GFAR and other similar global partners of APAARI should come forward to help these NARS benefit from APAARI organized technical events such as trainings, workshops, seminars and expert consultations. The progress of membership discussion with ARIs such as CIRAD was also presented.

The Election of Eighth Executive Committee was taken up in the meeting as the two year term of the Seventh Executive Committee constituted for the period 2003-2004 was to expire on 31 December 2004.

Dr. Paroda explained the underlying

considerations in electing the Executive Committee as has been practiced since APAARI inception in 1991. He stated that all efforts are made to balance the representation from the South and West Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific sub-regions of APAARI. Accordingly, the three sub-regional groups held separate discussions during the coffee break regarding the possible candidates representing their sub-regions in the executive committee.

A new Executive Committee of APAARI for the period 2005-2006 was unanimously elected by the General Assembly. The composition of the Eighth Executive Committee is presented on page 3.

Audited financial statements of APAARI for the years 2003 and 2004 (up to October 31, 2004) were presented in the meeting. The members expressed their satisfaction on APAARI functioning and its accounting practices, which are in line with the other international bodies. They were also pleased that as per earlier decision, new auditor has been appointed with effect from 2004 and the expenses incurred were well within approved budget of APAARI.



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## Elected Executive Committee of APAARI for the biennium 2005-2006

<b>Dr. H.P.M. Gunasena</b> <i>DG, CARP, Sri Lanka</i>	<b>Chairman</b>
<b>Dr. T. Mennesson</b> <i>DG, IAC, New Caledonia</i>	<b>Vice-Chair</b>
<b>Dr. Mutsuo Iwamoto</b> <i>President, JIRCAS, Japan</i>	<b>Member</b>
<b>Dr. Badaruddin Soomro</b> <i>Chairman, PARC, Pakistan</i>	<b>Member</b>
<b>Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar</b> <i>Director, BAR, Philippines</i>	<b>Member</b>
<b>Mr. Luke Ratuvuki</b> <i>CEO, MASLR, Fiji</i>	<b>Member</b>
<b>Dr. R.S. Paroda, Executive Secretary</b>	

The budget proposal of US\$ 310,000 for the year 2005 and US\$ 320,000 for the year 2006 was placed for consideration and approval of the General Assembly. The General Assembly was informed that even though APAARI activities are increasing, the fixed deposits of APAARI had reached US\$ 750,000. It was mentioned that APAARI was among the few fora that had become self sustaining. Dr. Paroda attributed this achievement to the continued support of members and all support group organizations.

Members expressed appreciation on the judicious use of funds and the excellent control and guidance provided by Dr. R.S. Paroda as Executive Secretary and also approved the budget proposal for the years 2005 and 2006.

The following major activities were also approved for the year 2005:

- ◆ Organization of two Sub-Regional Need Assessment Workshops: South-East Asia (April-May 2005) and the Pacific Countries (August-September 2005).
- ◆ APARIS Regional Workshop (August 2005) of NINPs to develop and strengthen capacity for National Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS) of region's NARS.
- ◆ APCoAB Activities on biosafety and advocacy workshop for policy makers.
- ◆ Publication of Success Stories, APAARI Newsletters and Proceedings of Reports.
- ◆ Executive Committee Meeting and Expert Consultation.
- ◆ Training and Support to Research Networks.
- ◆ APAARI Secretariat Functions.

Dr. Paroda requested the members to provide inputs for possible venues of the next general assembly meeting and topics for the next Expert Consultation and also topics of the future success stories to be published in the year 2005. It was suggested that the next General Assembly in 2006 could be organized back-to-back with GFAR's Global Conference to be tentatively held in India. In response to GFAR invitation for hosting its next global



conference, members endorsed ICAR, India as potential venue. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Impact of Globalization on Resource-Poor Farmers were suggested as tentative topics for consideration for the next Expert Consultation. For meeting in 2005, the Executive Committee was authorized to decide both the Venue and the topic of Expert Consultation, depending on requests received from members of APAARI.

The Chairman Dr. Iwamoto, presented closing remarks and expressed his satisfaction with the APAARI achievements during 2003-2004. He wished APAARI even greater success in future and assured of continued support of JIRCAS, under the newly formed Executive Committee. In appreciation of valuable services of some of the members, who were getting superannuated from their parent organizations such as Dr. Mohan Saxena of ICARDA, Dr. Gajendra Singh of AIT and Dr. R.K. Arora of IPGRI, Chairman presented Memento to them and thanked for their valuable services to APAARI.

The Vice-Chair, represented by Dr. Md. Moslem Uddin Miah of BARC, Bangladesh proposed a vote of thanks. He thanked all the members for their active participation and appreciated the cooperation extended by the host country Thailand in organizing the General Assembly meeting. He recognized and appreciated the hard work of the APAARI Secretariat staff for smooth conduct of the expert consultation as well as the General Assembly meeting.



## CGPRT Centre Renamed as UNESCAP-CAPSA

According to the new Statute which was adopted by the 60<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) session held in Shanghai on 21-28 April 2004, the Regional Coordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP CGPRT Centre) changes its title/name to "Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops' Development in Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP-CAPSA)" as of 28 April 2004.

The mandate of UNESCAP-CAPSA is not changed. UNESCAP-CAPSA hopes that new statute and name change of the Centre will enable closer collaboration between their respective institutions.



## Research Need Assessment and Prioritization of Agricultural Research for Development in South and West Asia

APAARI, in collaboration with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP) organized an international workshop on “Research need assessment and prioritization of agricultural research for development in South and West Asia”, from 7-8 October 2004 at ICRISAT, Patancheru. The primary objective of the workshop was to identify research priorities based on gap analysis by national programs in South and West Asia. The workshop was structured into five sessions: an inaugural session, three technical sessions and a concluding session. There were 40 participants, including

of the country papers on gap analysis developed by each of the participating countries.

During the Technical sessions, country papers on “Research needs and priorities” were presented by 5 country representatives: Dr. Mruthyunjaya (India), Dr. Samaratunga (Sri Lanka), Dr. Md. Ismail Hossain (Bangladesh), Dr. Ms. S.L. Maskey (Nepal) and Dr. Mohsen Mohsenin (Iran).

Technical session 3 featured the “Contributions and comments from IARCs, NGOs and other stakeholders in South and West Asia Region”. There were nine presentations by International



country representatives of South and West Asian NARS (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Iran), CGIAR institutes, donors, NGOs, farmer associations, agricultural universities and the private sector.

In the inaugural session, Dr. William Dar, Director General, ICRISAT extended a warm welcome to the participants, emphasizing that this workshop has been a part of APAARI, ICRISAT and ICAR's on-going collaborative effort to establish a demand driven research agenda based on a participatory approach. Dr. R.S. Paroda presented a detailed background of the research priorities initiative, highlighting the objectives, functions, strategies and action plan of APAARI, and featured the major issues for consideration that include gap analysis, implications of existing network, development of new proposals and partnerships, funding strategy etc. Dr. Cynthia Bantilan, leader of Global theme on SAT Futures and Development Pathways of ICRISAT, presented the specific objectives of the workshop that are: to develop a set of recommendations on research priorities based on gap analysis for South and West Asia and influence the global research agenda; and to undertake a synthesis of the regional research needs and priorities for South and West Asia. She also outlined the structure

Agricultural Research Centers, and six presentations by different NGOs, Farmer Organizations, Private Sector and Research Institutions.

Dr. M. Velayutham, Executive Director, represented the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF). He emphasized that extension and adoption are the critical factors. His presentation also motivated the debate on the relationship between farm size and financial viability. He also views that we must address the uncertain structural changes in the future, particularly on institutional arrangements and their adaptability.

Technical session 3 culminated with the formation of discussion groups. To identify the highest priority research needs/gaps in the agro-ecological system and to suggest a strategy for addressing them, the participants were divided into 4 working groups namely:

- ◆ Irrigated agro-ecological system
- ◆ Rainfed including SAT and arid agro-ecosystem
- ◆ Mountain and hills
- ◆ Coastal eco-system

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	Coastal	Hills & mountains	Irrigated	Rainfed including SAT & Arid
<b>Enterprises Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coconut based cropping systems</li> <li>Fisheries enterprise</li> <li>Mangroves and agro-forestry systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High value, low volume and low weight products (horticulture, livestock, medicinal plants, vegetables)</li> <li>Tourism</li> <li>Mountain handicrafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversification (on farm and off farm)</li> <li>Food quality</li> <li>Safety issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breeding for tolerance to abiotic/biotic stresses</li> <li>Evolving diversified cropping systems</li> <li>Integration of livestock with crops and agri-horti-silvi-pastoral systems</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Resource Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rainwater harvesting and ground water management</li> <li>Maintaining soil health</li> <li>Avoiding seawater ingress</li> <li>Water pollution</li> <li>Coral reef destruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treating watershed as the functional unit for assessment</li> <li>Linking NRM with enterprise improvement activities</li> <li>Involving local people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water scarcity</li> <li>Soil degradation</li> <li>Water quality issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harvesting of surface runoff on a watershed basis</li> <li>Improvement of soil health</li> <li>Selective mechanization</li> <li>Conservation of biodiversity</li> </ul>
<b>Institutions and Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processing, cold chain, anchorage and landing facilities in the coast</li> <li>Credit support to fishermen extension system</li> <li>The research-extension interface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and shift policy paradigm</li> <li>Identification of institution and programs</li> <li>Validation and spread of policy changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food quality and global markets</li> <li>Participatory irrigation management</li> <li>Food procurement/ pricing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input price distortions</li> <li>Collective action</li> <li>Alternative livelihood opportunities</li> <li>Suitable public-private partnerships and safety net mechanisms</li> </ul>

The reports of the four working groups on different agro-ecosystems were presented during the concluding session, chaired by Dr. R.S. Paroda. Summarized priorities are presented in the table on page 5:

In each one of these group reports, strategies for implementation with emphasis on networking, multi-disciplinary approach, planning and monitoring, participatory approach, capacity building, improved delivery of services were stressed.

At the concluding session, a representative from the donor community also spoke. Dr. Kevin Crockford, Senior Rural Livelihoods Adviser, Department for International Development (DFID), stressed on factoring future challenges into the present. He endorsed the reports of the 4 working groups, and stressed that the priorities have to be matched with the millennium goals. Dr. Dyno Keatinge appreciated APAARI's continued efforts in research prioritization. He said that we should have a short list of priorities for effective implementation and system wide impact. He exhorted the need for emphasis on South-South collaboration, climate change, integrated genetic and NRM management, regional information management, quality competitiveness etc, besides those already mentioned.

Dr. R.S. Paroda in his concluding remarks said that the workshop has been useful in flagging micro-priorities in genetic improvement, NRM and socio-economic and policy research. Under each one of these, he stressed on three priorities. In genetic improvement, i) system approach with agri-horti-silvi-pastoral system, ii) diversification with emphasis on legumes, and iii) genetic resource management including post-harvest technology, value addition and agri-business-marketing aspects are important. In NRM, integrated watershed management, soil fertility/health management, salinity/quality of water are important. In policy, higher investment on infrastructure, marketing, credit and pricing are important. Private sector has to be brought in for capital investment. Extension mechanisms have to be strengthened for effective R-E-F linkages at the grass root level. Partnership of key players at all levels is very important. He opined that separate brainstorming sessions for each one of the four agro-ecologies have to be undertaken to fine-tune the priorities for maximum uptake and implementation. Finally, we have to catalyze policy makers for enhanced support to R&D in agriculture in general and prioritized areas under different agro-ecosystems in particular, for example, in India less than 1% of GDP is spent on agriculture research.



## Training Workshop on Capacity Building for Developing National Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS) of Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Vietnam

3-12 August 2004, AIT Conference Center, AIT, Pathumthani, Thailand

### Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), with the membership of 20 national agricultural research systems from the Asia-Pacific region and several regional and international organizations, has been actively promoting ICM in ARD. Over the last few years, APAARI has organized several Expert Consultations dealing with the subject by bringing together diverse stakeholders on

a common platform. The most recent expert consultation in December 2003 was the third organized by APAARI with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) as co-sponsor and it assessed the progress made by various NARS since the last consultation in 2002; explored the existing opportunities for enhancing the role of ICM in ARD; and discussed potential improvements in the Asia-Pacific Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS), an APAARI initiative, by focusing on potential user-groups and their information needs. APARIS serves as a portal to information resources of member NARS and other regional and international ARD organizations. It also acts as an information link between NARS and the international ARD organizations. APAARI is committed to bridge digital divide by assisting NARS of developing countries to effectively use ICM in their common goal of providing food security and poverty reduction through agricultural development.

NARS of some countries of the region, including Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar and Timor-Leste are currently not the members of APAARI and hence been unable to benefit from the above expert consultations that have helped several member NARS in developing frameworks of their national agricultural information systems (NAIS). Vietnam has only recently become a member.

APAARI, in collaboration with GFAR, AIT, FAO-RAP, SDLEARN, UN-ESCAP, JIRCAS/NARO and AgriWatch, organized a training workshop on Capacity Building for Developing National Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS) of Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Vietnam during 3-12 August 2004 at AIT Conference Center, AIT, Pathumthani, Thailand.



### Participants

There were 9 training participants from the above 7 countries, representing the information divisions of their respective NARS. The training was facilitated by Resource Speakers from APAARI (4), FAO-RAP (1), AIT (2), JIRCAS/NARO (2), UNESCAP (2), SDLEARN (2) and AgriWatch (1).

### Proceedings

The Workshop was designed, through the use of generic frameworks, tools and techniques, to enable participants to analyze,

understand and learn about information and communications management in organizations engaged in agriculture research for development, especially at the National level, through a participatory approach. A Workshop Manual including the presentations, guidelines for group and individual activities and background reading material was developed and made accessible through a simple, web based user interface as all participants had access to a networked computer and other peripheral equipment. All workshop materials were also provided on a CDROM to the participants. All the training material and outputs are also available on APAARI web site ([www.apaari.org](http://www.apaari.org)) under the Training section. The following are the workshop conclusions:

- ◆ There is strong enthusiasm in the participating countries to use ICT for agricultural and rural development.
- ◆ The skill levels needed for ICM and embedding ICTs in agricultural information systems in the participating countries are weak.
- ◆ A participatory mode with emphasis on working sessions for the Workshop was found to be successful.
- ◆ The design of the Workshop around frameworks, tools and techniques for ICM was found to be useful to convey the significance of ICM in NAIS within the short time available.
- ◆ Participants could develop a basic web based platform for a NAIS, though most had no exposure to web design and development.





## Third Steering Committee Meeting of APARIS

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia Pacific Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS) Steering Committee Meeting was held on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2004 at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand. The participants included: Dr. Seishi Ninomiya, JIRCAS/NARO, Japan (Chair, APARIS Steering Committee); Dr. Ashraf Tanvir, PARC, Pakistan (Member); Dr. Malcolm Hazelman, FAO-RAP (Member); Dr. Ajit Maru, APAARI Resource Person (special invitee to report to GLOBAL.RAIS Initiative); Mr. P.K. Saha, APAARI (Liaison Officer); Dr. Qiaoqiao Zhang, CABI (special invitee); Mr. Satoru Miyata, Regional JIRCAS Coordinator (special invitee); and Dr. Sahdev Singh, APAARI (Member Secretary).

Dr. Seishi Ninomiya, the APARIS Steering Committee Chairperson, welcomed the participants and invited comments on the meeting agenda items and the background paper that was provided to all participants in advance and also during the meeting. He emphasized that the meeting discussions should concentrate on practical, doable activities that APARIS can undertake considering its current financial and manpower limitations. Dr. Ashraf Tanvir of PARC, Pakistan was invited to co-chair the meeting and he also welcomed the participants. The main agenda for discussions was the APARIS Business Plan for 2004-2007 under 3 broad themes as follows:

- ◆ Advocacy for enabling, enhancing and enlarging agriculture related information systems at national, subregional and regional levels in the Asia-Pacific Region.
- ◆ Capacity development in information and communications management and use of appropriate information and communications technologies for national agricultural information systems.
- ◆ Integration of information systems within NARS, in the Asia-Pacific Region and with other regional and global agricultural information systems such as the GFAR Web ring.

The Chair invited Dr. Sahdev Singh, Member Secretary, to brief the participants on on-going activities of APARIS as described in details in the Background Paper. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the APAARI efforts and also agreed that APARIS should continue to focus on the above three broad themes in accordance with the GFAR's initiative to evolve a global agricultural information system of which APARIS will be the Asia-Pacific node. The deliberations prioritized the activities of APARIS Business Plan for 2004-2007 as follows:

### A. Advocacy

1. Collecting, collating and providing access to information, on a biannual basis, related to status of ICT use and information systems in NARS of the region and agriculture and rural development related ICT use indicators at national and regional level (2005 and 2007).
2. Developing an advocacy paper on ICT and agricultural information related policy and strategy issues at national, sub-regional and regional level that can provide fact-based support for advocacy role of APARIS (early 2005).



3. Organize, during APAARI General Assemblies, a 1/2 day sensitization and awareness workshop on policy and strategy issues in enabling, enhancing and enlarging agricultural information systems for senior NARS and agricultural policy makers and managers (2004-2007).

4. Identify and publish success stories on ICT/ICM in ARD using case studies from selected Asian countries (2005).

5. Associate and network with other initiatives and forums to promote awareness about ICT/ICM in ARD and also publicize APARIS in the on-going AFITA Conference in Bangkok as well as the next one in India in 2006; FAO-RAP/ SPC sub-regional workshop in the Pacific in September 2004; and as co-sponsor of the NARO Field Server Workshop in Bangkok in January 2005. (2004-2007).

### b. Capacity Development

1. An Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop for NINPs for need assessment and to evolve a framework for National Agricultural Information Systems (in 2005).
2. Three Sub-Regional Training Workshops for NINPs and two ICT/ICM trainers from each country (in 2006).
  - a. South Asia (Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) in collaboration with SAIC.
  - b. South-East Asia (ASEAN countries) in collaboration with SEARCA.
  - c. The Pacific (APAARI member countries) in collaboration with SPC.
3. National Workshops, facilitated by NINPs and trained NAIS trainers, for two officers from each major national agricultural institute (in 2007).

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### c. Integration of Agricultural Information Systems and Resources

1. Develop an online compendium of good practices, standards, guidelines, protocols etc. for agricultural information exchange and sharing in the Asia-Pacific Region (2004-2007).
2. Participate, as a representative of the Asia-Pacific Region's NARS, in negotiations related to setting of standards, guidelines, protocols related to agricultural information systems at the global level (2004-2007).
3. Conduct seminars at Sub-Regional levels, South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific countries related to sharing and exchange of information, especially on the use of standards, guidelines and best practices in agricultural information systems in conjunction with the Sub-Regional training workshops proposed in the Capacity Development section and other APAARI related activities. (2004-2007).

4. Further strengthen the directory of agricultural information on the web and the Gateway/Portal function to access the information resources of various institutes (2005-2007).
5. Promote data and information sharing among various member institutes using applications such as MetBroker and localized crop models.
6. In consultation with GFAR and other regional and subregional forums, integrate APARIS as Asia-Pacific node in the Global Web Ring of Agricultural Information Systems (2004-2005).

It was suggested that APAARI should develop a detailed Business Plan using concept notes for these activities and submit to GFAR for consideration and also identify potential collaborators and donors in close consultation with APARIS Steering Committee members and focal points in Support Group Organizations such as GFAR, FAO-RAP, ACIAR, AIT, JIRCAS/ NARO, CABI, SDLEARN, and others.



### *SYSTEM PRIORITIES PROPOSED BY THE CGIAR SCIENCE COUNCIL*

1. *Conserve and characterize genetic resources*
2. *Genetic improvement of specific traits*
3. *Improve water management and use in agriculture*
4. *Better management and use of forests and forest landscapes*
5. *Better soil and land management and use*
6. *Improve production and processing systems for high-value commodities*
7. *Enhance resource-efficient and equitable forms of livestock sector growth*
8. *Improve management and use of aquatic resources*
9. *Policy and institutional innovation to reduce poverty and hunger and to enhance competitiveness of smallholders*
10. *Strengthen national and regional capacities for agricultural research.*

### *ICARDA's New Strategic Plan and Research Portfolio*

To support the developing countries in the dry areas achieve the Millennium Development Goals, ICARDA has launched the development of a new research strategy to focus more on poverty alleviation starting 1 January 2005. The 19 research projects, on which the Center's research portfolio was built, have been consolidated into six Mega-Projects (MPs) for better coherence and coordination of research activities. The six mega-projects are:

1. Management of scarce water resources and mitigation of drought.
2. Integrated gene management: Conservation, improvement and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity.
3. Improved land management to combat desertification.
4. Diversification and sustainable improvement of rural livelihoods.

5. Poverty and livelihoods analysis.
6. Knowledge management and dissemination for sustainable development.

To implement the new research portfolio, ICARDA has initiated the recruitment process for Directors for these six MPs. The Director-General has already appointed the following Directors:

MP1: Dr. Theib Oweis  
MP2: Dr. Sanjaya Rajaram  
MP3: Dr. Richard Thomas  
MP5: Dr. Kamel Shideed  
MP6: Dr. Ahmed Sidahmed.

With regard to MP4, Dr. William Erskine is acting as interim Director.





## Second Steering Committee Meeting of APCoAB

The Second Steering Committee (SC) Meeting of APCoAB was held on 30 November 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand under the chairmanship of Dr. Mutsuo Iwamoto. Eight members of SC as well as two observers and representatives of APAARI and ABCoAB Secretariats participated.

Dr. Iwamoto delivered the chairman's address and welcomed all the participants. For the benefit of the new members/their nominees, Dr. Iwamoto gave a brief on the genesis of APCoAB and expressed his satisfaction over establishment of its Secretariat.

Dr. R.S. Paroda, APAARI Executive Secretary welcomed Dr. Greg Johnson from ACIAR, Dr. Rupert Best from GFAR, Dr. Jill Montgomery from Monsanto, Dr. Randy Hautea from ISAAA, and all the steering committee members. The presence of all the members was indicative of the support APCoAB is privileged to enjoy. He extended his gratitude to Dr. William Dar for hosting the Secretariat and providing all the infrastructure support for the office and extending required secretarial assistance. He briefed the steering committee members regarding the global recruitment process that was followed for the appointment of Coordinator. Three short listed candidates were invited for the interview and recommendations were sent to other members of the steering committee. The offer was made to Dr. Vibha Dhawan, earlier working as consultant. She joined as Coordinator on 1 November 2004 for a term of three years.

Dr. Paroda briefed the members about the progress made since the last meeting and re-emphasized the need to develop stronger partnerships/linkages with other institutions/initiatives. Citing example of FAO's program on Biosafety and ISAAA, working with similar broad objectives, developing collaborations with them will avoid duplication and result in better utilization of limited resources that are available. APCoAB is a unique initiative and its strength lies in the NARS support group and involvement of all stakeholders including the private sector, farmers and NGO's, thus providing a neutral platform for all.

Dr. Dhawan made a detailed presentation on the objectives and the progress made since the last meeting. She also outlined the possibilities of future activities and scope of collaboration with other organizations. Dr. Paroda supplemented the presentation and briefed the members regarding APCoAB's preparation for a ministerial level consultation, proposed for the year 2006. It will be based on the

current status on issues related to implementation of Cartagena Protocol, Regional regulatory mechanisms, biosafety, etc.

After thorough deliberations, members of the Steering Committee agreed that in 2005, APCoAB may prioritize its work on:

- ◆ Developing models for Public-Private partnership, for which first meeting is likely to be scheduled in January 2005 in New Delhi, India and based on experience so gained, similar meeting can be organized in other countries.
- ◆ Regional harmonization of biosafety protocol (planned with Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India).
- ◆ Catalyzing Policy Makers for adoption/commercialization of biotechnologies (planned with FAO-RAP).
- ◆ IPR's in agricultural biotechnology (concept being discussed with ADB).
- ◆ Preparation for a ministerial level conference on agricultural biotechnology.

The budget for 2005 was presented and approved after detailed deliberations along with the workplan. It was also suggested that efforts be made to prioritize the activities for better visibility and APCoAB Coordinator should make efforts to generate additional resources.

It was agreed upon that steering committee should have representation from the Pacific region. Dr. Mennesson was requested to have a name suggested, after consulting other Pacific members of APAARI, to serve on this Committee (subsequently, General Assembly of APAARI approved PNG to represent the Pacific on this Committee, which will be represented by Dr. Raghunath Ghodake, Director General, NARI). Also, dialogue with NGO's be reinitiated, and ANGOC be re-approached.

On the issue of technical advisory group, it was agreed that for the time being steering committee may serve this purpose, whereas technical experts as focal points from countries be identified to develop suitable work plans at country level. To begin with, it can be an informal relationship but later specific MoU's can be developed with institutions/organizations.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the steering committee will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> April' 2005 in Bangkok.

### APCoAB Steering Committee

Dr. H.P.M. Gunasena, Chairman – CARP  
Dr. William D. Dar – ICRISAT  
Dr. Mangla Rai – ICAR  
Mr. Somchai Channarongkul – DOA  
Dr. Ola Smith – GFAR  
Dr. Malcolm Hazelman – FAO-RAP  
Dr. Eric Johnson – Monsanto  
Dr. R.S. Paroda – APAARI  
Mr. Roel Ravanera – ANGOC  
Dr. Randy A. Hautea – ISAAA  
Dr. Raghunath Ghodake – NARI  
Dr. Vibha Dhawan, Member – Secretary

### Young Scientist from ICRISAT Gets CGIAR Award

P. Lava Kumar of ICRISAT received the Young Scientist Award for identifying the agent that causes sterility mosaic disease in pigeonpea (*Cajanus cajan*), a hardy leguminous plant grown by hundreds of poor farmers in Asia and Africa. Sterility mosaic disease is a widespread problem that drastically cuts pigeonpea yields, causing more than US\$ 300 million crop losses. The harvested pods are cheap source of vegetable protein for millions of poor consumers, and the leaves are an important source of fodder for livestock. Mr. Kumar received a cash prize of US\$ 5,000.

## Second INCANA Meeting Held in Tashkent

The Second Meeting of Interregional Cotton Network for Central Asia and North Africa (INCANA) was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 6-8 September 2004. The meeting was organized by PFU and ICARDA-CAC Regional Office under the umbrella of Central Asian and Caucasian Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (CACAARI). The meeting was co-sponsored by the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR), Association of Agricultural Research Institutes for Near East and North Africa (AARINENA), Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) and CACAARI. In all, about 35 scientists

Uzbekistan presented their country reports, highlighting the problems and promising results in cotton research and development.

During the second technical session, impressive presentations were made on Hybrid Cotton (Dr. C.D. Mayee, Agriculture Commissioner, India), IPM Program in Cotton (Dr. Naif Al-Salti, Syria), Biological control of cotton pests (Mr. Anil Kakkar, Excel Crop Care, India), Application of new biotechnologies to improve efficiency of cotton breeding (Acad. Abdusattar Abdugarimov, Uzbekistan), Bt Cotton (Mr. Raju Barwale, MAHYCO, India) and INCANA web site (Ms. Aisel Gharedaghi, Iran).



participated in the meeting, including representatives from Iran, India, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Greece, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan. The meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Ikramkhon Najmitdinov, Minister of Agriculture and Water Management of Uzbekistan. He extended a warm welcome to all the participants and thanked the organizers for having selected Tashkent to be a venue of the Second INCANA Meeting. He was pleased that an inter-regional network on crop like cotton, being so important in Central Asia, has been established. He also hoped that the meeting would provide excellent opportunities for strengthening linkages among cotton scientists of Central and West Asia and North Africa. During the Opening Session, chaired by Dr. Sherali Nigmatov, Chairman, CACAARI and Dr. Mahmood Ayed Duwayri, AARINENA, the participants were welcomed by Dr. Raj Paroda, Executive Secretary, APAARI and Regional Coordinator, ICARDA and thanked by Dr. Ebadollah Baniani, INCANA Coordinator. While thanking the dignitaries, he explained about the achievements and future prospects of INCANA.

The meeting included three technical sessions on country presentations, new developments in cotton research and strengthening research collaboration as well as round table discussions. During the first technical session, representatives from Egypt, Iran, India, Greece, Syria, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and

On 7 September, the participants of INCANA meeting attended the Opening Ceremony of the International Scientific-Practical Conference on “Problems of development of cotton growing and grain production”, dedicated to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Uzbek Cotton Growing Research Institute (UzCGRI). The conference was opened by H.E. Mr. I. Najmitdinov, Minister of Agriculture and Water Management, Uzbekistan. He heartily congratulated the scientists of the UzCGRI and wished them all the success in their endeavors. Dr. Raj Paroda presented highlights of the achievements under the Collaborative Program on Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which was highly appreciated. Opportunities to congratulate the scientists of the UzCGRI were also provided to the participants of the INCANA meeting. All of them felt happy to attend the celebrations and hoped to strengthen further the collaboration between the Institute and cotton researchers in their countries. During the post lunch session on 7 September, a Round Table discussion on current topics of interest for the growth of INCANA was organized. The discussions were chaired by Dr. E. Baniani (Iran) and co-chaired by Dr. C.D. Mayee (India). The topics chosen were: Information and Germplasm Exchange, INCANA Regional Varietal Trials, Collaborations amongst networking countries in areas of Hybrid Research, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Bt Cotton and Cotton-Wheat Rotation.

*Continued on page 11 ➔*

The participants generally agreed that the areas chosen for discussions are all vital issues for cotton production in their respective countries. However, owing to IPR issues, quarantine restrictions, international treaties on plant genetic resources, the desired free exchange of germplasm may not be feasible to deal with by INCANA at this stage. It is also likely that the Germplasm Banks in many countries have not yet characterized their germplasm, particularly from molecular aspects. Hence, INCANA should play only a facilitation role in this area by first gathering information on available germplasm. Material exchange can take place for specific research purposes based under Material Transfer Agreement (MTA). All the members agreed in principle to this suggestion and expressed desire to cooperate.

Regarding establishment of a Regional Varietal Trials under INCANA, members expressed different views in the light of specific suitability of varieties under differing agro-ecological situation. Participants were unanimous in their acceptance of IPM in cotton with a major objective of reduction in the cost of cultivation and eco-friendliness of the technology. There are many Success Stories of IPM which can be compiled by INCANA. The Syrian experience narrated by Dr. Naif Al-Salty was found to be unique and hence was proposed to be the facilitator for extending training, organizing traveling workshops for INCANA member countries. Logistic support to such activities could also come from some of the private pesticide industries promoting IPM (ex: India, Pakistan and other countries), beside partial funding by INCANA.

To promote further Bt Cotton technology, APAARI has decided to publish a Success Story on Bt Cotton in India, whereas MAHYCO, a leading private company in India, offered to provide all logistic support for a traveling workshop on Bt Cotton for the benefit of member countries.

The topic of cotton-wheat rotation was introduced by Dr. C.D. Mayee who circulated a detailed note on the current cotton-wheat rotation system in North India. The rotation has been successfully adopted for over more than three decades on 1.5 m ha in North India and on 1.0 m ha in Pakistan. It was considered necessary to generate and disseminate available information in each agro-ecological situations of INCANA member countries.

On 8 September, a field trip was organized to the UzCGRI, Uzbek Cotton Breeding Research Institute, Research Institute of Genetics (Cotton Gene Bank) as well as to the farmers' fields. The participants were highly appreciative of scientific achievements of these institutes and desired to have more collaboration with them in future through INCANA support.



### Morocco to Host AGM'05 of CGIAR

CGIAR is pleased to announce that the Government of Morocco has graciously agreed to host the 2005 Annual General Meeting during the first week of December. Planning for AGM'05 has already commenced and the city and conference venue will be announced early in 2005 after consultation with the Government of Morocco.

### 2004 CGIAR King Baudouin Award

The prestigious 2004 CGIAR King Baudouin Award was won by the Rice-Wheat Consortium of the Indo-Gangetic Plains (led by CIMMYT) for combining their efforts in promoting conservation agriculture benefiting large numbers of farm families in the Indo-Gangetic plains of South Asia. Thanks to the efforts of the consortium and partners, zero tillage is now practiced on over 1.3 million hectares lowering land preparation costs and increasing farmer incomes. In 2003 alone, farmers in India and Pakistan derived \$100 million in net estimated benefits. The consortium is helping farmers to plant different crops such quality protein maize, pigeonpea, mungbean, chickpea, lentil, faba beans, potatoes and vegetables for increasing incomes and household nutrition security.

Dr. Mangla Rai, Director-General, ICAR received the Award on behalf of the CIMMYT-led Rice-Wheat Consortium.

### APAARI on CD



All APAARI publications and reports have been put in electronic format on a user-friendly interactive CD (named APAARI on CD).

### CGIAR Charter Adopted

For the first time since it was founded in 1971, the CGIAR has adopted a charter to enhance and strengthen its efficiency. "The Charter of the CGIAR System" was adopted by acclamation at the 2004 Annual General Meeting of the CGIAR held in Mexico City.

"The CGIAR Charter was drafted through a transparent and participatory process that began in Nairobi last year" commented Francisco Reifschneider, CGIAR Director and Executive Secretary, CGIAR Executive Council. "We made full use of the Internet, posting successive drafts and comments received from CGIAR stakeholders. We can all be proud of the document," he added.

The Charter sets down the roles, responsibilities and functions of the main organs of the CGIAR. These include the Consultative Group itself, the 15 IARCs that conduct a research agenda endorsed and financed by the Group, a Science Council, and a virtual System Office. Full text of the Chapter is available by clicking on: <http://www.cgiar.org>



## APAARI Publications

### SUCCESS STORIES

**Baby Corn Production in Thailand (1994/1)** by Dr. Chamnan Chutkaew and Dr. R.S. Paroda

**Tilapia Farming in the Philippines (1994/2)** by Dr. Rafael D. Guerrero III

**Hybrid Rice in China (1994/3)** by Mr. Lou Xizhi and Dr. C.X. Mao

**Dairying in India (1994/4)** by Dr. R.P. Aneja

**Hybrid Cotton in India (1995/1)** by Dr. A.K. Basu and Dr. R.S. Paroda

**Palm Oil Industry in Malaysia (1995/2)** by Dr. Y.B. Basiron

**Transformation in Korean Farming – A Success Story of Effective Linkages (1996/1)** by Dr. Chae Yun Cho

**Cotton Production in Pakistan (1996/2)** by Dr. Badaruddin Soomro and Dr. Parvez Khaliq

**Orchids in Thailand (1997/1)** by Dr. Kanchit Thammasiri

**Wheat Production in Iran (1997/2)** by Dr. Abbas Keshavarz and Dr. M.J. Mirhadi

**Agro-Tourism in Australia (1997/3)** by Dr. Tom Connors

**Direct Seeded Rice in Malaysia (1998/1)** by Dr. Cheong Ah Wah

**Groundnut in China (1998/2)** by Dr. Duan Shufen, Dr. Hu Wenguang and Dr. Sui Qingwei

**Oilseeds in India (1999/1)** by Dr. Mangala Rai

**Integrated Pest Management in Rice in Indonesia (1999/2)** by Dr. Soejitno

**Bivalve Mariculture in India (2000/1)** by Dr. V.N. Pillai et. al.

**Farming of Carrageenophytes in the Philippines (2001/1)** by Dr. Rafael D. Guerrero III

**Resource Conserving Technologies: Transforming the Rice-Wheat Systems of the Indo-Gangetic Plains (2002/1)** by Dr. Raj K. Gupta et al.

**Success Story on Control of New Castle Disease in Village Chickens (2003/1)** by Dr. Robyn Alders.

**Success Story on the Lentil Improvement in Bangladesh (2004/1)** by Dr. Ashutosh Sharker.

**Success Story on Classical Biological Control (2004/2)** by Dr. S.P. Singh.

**Success Story on Sustaining the Green Revolution in India (2004/3)** by Dr. S. Nagarajan.

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- FAO-APAARI Expert Consultation on the Status of Biotechnology in Agriculture in Asia and the Pacific, 21-23 March 2002
- ICT Expert Consultation on Development of Second Phase of APARIS, 24-26 October 2002
- Proceedings – The Seventh General Assembly of APAARI and Expert Consultation on Strengthening Research Partnerships Through Networks and Consortia, 2-4 December 2002, Penang, Malaysia
- Proceedings of Expert Consultation on Strengthening Regional Agricultural Information System: Role of ICT in ARD, and the Seventh APAARI Executive Committee Meeting, 1-4 December 2003, Bangkok, Thailand
- Status Report – Information and Communication Technologies in Agricultural Research for Development in the Asia-Pacific Region
- APAARI – A Decade of Progress, reprinted in 2001
- APAARI Vision 2025
- Agricultural Research Priorities for Asia and the Pacific – A Synthesis

## Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

### GFAR Statutory meetings

Two Steering Committee meetings will be held during 2005:

1. Prior to the FARA meeting in Uganda (8<sup>th</sup> June, 2005)
2. Prior to the CGIAR AGM in Morocco (first week of December 2005).

### Second International Symposium on Sweetpotato and CASSAVA on “Innovative Technologies for Commercialization”

14-17 June 2005, Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia

<http://www.mardi.my/sweetpotato/swtpot%20main.htm>

### International Grassland Congress

26 June – 1 July 2005, Dublin, Ireland.

<http://www.igc2005.com>

### Fourth Conference of the Global Consortium of Higher Education and Research in Agriculture (GCHERA)

12-15 September 2005, Hangzhou, China

[www.gchera.zju.edu.cn/conference/inv.htm](http://www.gchera.zju.edu.cn/conference/inv.htm)

### ASA-CSSA-SSSA International Annual Meeting

6-10 November 2005, Salt lake City, UT; Convention & Visitor's Bureau

<http://www.visitsaltlake.com/>

### Seventh International Wheat Conference on “Wheat Production in Stressed Environments”

27 November – 2 December 2005, Mar de Plata, Argentina

<http://www.7iwc.com.ar>

### Thirteenth Australasian Plant Breeding Conference on “Breeding for Success: Diversity in Action”

18-21 April 2006, Christchurch, New Zealand

<http://www.apbc.org.nz>

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