

Press release

## Scientists and policy makers to discuss research priorities for agriculture



**Tashkent** (15 September 2011) – Scientists and policy makers from more than twenty countries will meet in Tashkent on 20 September, to discuss ongoing research projects and future plans to increase food production in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Tashkent will host the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee of the CGIAR<sup>1</sup> Regional Program for Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) on 20-22 September. Participants will include the heads of agricultural research programs of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; directors of eleven international research centers that are active in the region; and representatives from a number of international projects, development and donor agencies.

The CAC region has considerable farming potential – but production and yields remain low. The use of modern technologies is limited. Soils are often eroded and lacking in nutrients. And climate change is expected to exacerbate natural constraints, threatening food and nutritional security even further.

The global scientific community is working with CAC governments to address these problems. One of the most successful joint programs is the CGIAR Regional Program, which aims to ensure food and nutritional security and reduce poverty while decreasing the environmental footprint of agriculture. The Program was established in 1988. It is headquartered in Tashkent and operates in eight countries.

The meeting will include technical sessions to discuss how agricultural innovations are improving climate change adaptation and water management in the CAC region. The participants will also visit experimental fields in the Tashkent region.

“Every stakeholder group will be present at the meeting,” said Dr Jozef Turok, Regional Program Coordinator. “This will help us identify specific priorities, and plan research-for-development programs that will be designed, implemented and monitored jointly by all participating countries.”

For example, a major new CGIAR program is being launched, led by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). The new program will focus on integrated dryland farming systems, with multi-disciplinary research teams working at several benchmark sites in the CAC. The program aims to develop and test new farming technologies to improve livelihoods throughout the CAC Region, and in dryland areas elsewhere.

<http://www.icarda.cgiar.org/cac/>

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<sup>1</sup> Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, a global consortium of 15 research centers