

## **Kazakhstan intends to become a member of CGIAR**

26 June, 2008

Astana, Kazakhstan

The Eleventh Steering Committee meeting of CGIAR Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC Program) was organized between 21 and 23 June, 2008, in Astana, Kazakhstan. During this important annual meeting of the CAC Program, more than 40 participants consisting of Heads of the National Agricultural Research Systems of Central Asia and the Caucasus countries, as well as Director Generals and Research Program leaders of eight Centers of Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and other CGIAR-affiliated International Centers welcomed and supported Kazakhstan's intention to become a member of the CGIAR.

The CGIAR Program for Central Asia and the Caucasus is implemented by a Consortium of partners, namely the eight National Agricultural Research Systems of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, eight CGIAR Centers – ICARDA, Bioversity International, CIMMYT, CIP, ICRISAT, IFPRI, ILRI, IWMI, and three CGIAR-affiliated International Centers - the World Vegetable Center, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, and Michigan State University.

Since its establishment in 1998, the Program has been steadfastly serving the region to achieve the goal of increased agricultural productivity through generation and transfer of sustainable cost-effective agricultural production technologies, while ensuring protection of natural resources. Major achievements were made in germplasm improvement, cropping systems and agricultural diversification, integrated system of livestock and fodder production, integrated on-farm soil, water and salinity management, plant and animal genetic resources, capacity development, and regional and international cooperation.

The activities of the Program over the last ten years have been positively evaluated by its External Review in 2008. The report of the External Review Panel with its recommendations for future directions and strategies of the Program was presented during this Steering Committee Meeting in Astana and endorsed by all the participants of the Meeting. During the meeting the participants started working actively on means and ways to implement the recommendations of the Review Panel, principally with regard to further improving the overall integration of all research components of the Program.

In view of globally challenging and pressing problems such as increased food prices, climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and the urgent need for poverty alleviation and improvement of livelihoods, the Program partners emphasized on the approaches that address the above-mentioned problems and challenges through conservation agriculture, integrated land and water management, agricultural water productivity, crop improvement, integrated pest management, diversification of production systems, improved mountain agriculture, integrated livestock/rangeland/crop management, and socio-economic and policy research. They also expressed their commitment to actively work for improving the interaction of the CAC Program with academic, research and

development institutions, civil societies and the private sector, which are actively involved in the region to contribute to sustainable agricultural development in the CAC region. In addition, the participants agreed to jointly develop a fund-raising strategy for the Program activities to seek a wider attraction of financial resources from the international and regional donors. To achieve all this, the participants supported the efforts undertaken by all the Consortium members, including national programs and international agricultural research centers, to coordinate and integrate the Program's activities through the Program's Facilitation Unit (PFU).

One of the major highlights of the meeting was the adoption of the Astana Declaration, where CAC program partners welcomed and supported the intention of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan to **Kazakhstan** become a member in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). They also endorsed efforts to raise the contribution of the national budgets invested in agricultural research.

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