



CAC NEWS

CGIAR Collaborative Research Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development
in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC)

No. 19

January-March, 2004

ARMENIA * AZERBAIJAN * GEORGIA
* KAZAKHSTAN * KYRGYZSTAN * TAJIKISTAN * TURKMENISTAN * UZBEKISTAN

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message from Acad. Bobo Sanginov
New CIMMYT Strategy

Research Highlights:

- Germplasm enhancement
- Conservation and evaluation of plant genetic resources
- Natural resource conservation and management

Strengthening of NARS

Meetings/Workshops/Conferences Organized

Human Resource Development

Miscellaneous News

Important Announcements

Future Events

Message from Acad. Bobo Sanginov President Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences



It is a great honor for me to address my colleagues and readers of the CAC News on the eve of spring and to wish them all great success in all their endeavors.

I was among the Heads of Agricultural Research Systems of the Central Asian and Caucasian countries, who had come together in December, 1995 in Tashkent. It is during this memorable meeting that the priorities of our collaborative work with the CG Centers had been identified for the first time. It is amazing how the time flies! Going back to

almost ten years from today, I do realize how important that meeting had been and once again, I feel happy about the decision we had taken in 1995 to join our hands together. I am delighted with the progress we have made since then and also feel proud that I was associated with some of these credits.

Since September, 1998, the Collaborative Program for Sustainable Agriculture Development has come into force in the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus. No doubt, our achievement in the field of strengthening the agriculture research systems and agriculture development as a whole, are most impressive results of this Program. However, I would like to emphasize another immense success of the Program, which is our great partnership. For all scientists of Central Asia and the Caucasus, after the break up of the former Soviet Union, this partnership has become an invaluable treasure. This partnership, bringing us together to help each other, makes me feel really proud. For this, I would like to thank personally Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, Director General of ICARDA. I believe that it is because of his great efforts that we have now with us 10 out of total 16 CG Centers working in the region.

The international centers of the Consultative Group have opened the door to the international scientific community to the agricultural researchers from CAC. I will not be mistaken in my statement that hundreds of Tajik scientists, agricultural workers and farmers have participated in various regional and international meetings and conferences and attended specialized and English training courses.

Annually, we are getting thousands of accessions of different agricultural crops from international nurseries, and our scientists, together with the specialists from international research centers, carry out activities on breeding and seed production. In Tajikistan, a project on on-farm soil and water management is being implemented. Also several collection missions were undertaken to collect indigenous species of different crops and their wild relatives. A medium-storage facility for plant genetic resources is being established. Our scientists are being trained abroad to improve their knowledge and skills. All these have become possible thanks to our Collaborative Program. We also hope that in 2004, we will be able to start working for the project on Mountain Agriculture.

I would like to thank the management and staff of all the ten CG Centers of the Consortium as well as donor organizations for their valuable support provided to the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus. I hope that our collaboration will be strengthened further under this Collaborative Program.

The Government of Tajikistan and the Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences highly appreciate the partnership established with the International Centers and will do their best to strengthen this important collaboration. We would like to also place on record our gratitude for the support extended to Tajikistan by the Program Facilitation Unit, CGIAR-CAC, located in Tashkent and personally to its Head, Dr. Raj Paroda and also to Dr. Zakir Khalikulov.

NEW CIMMYT STRATEGY

Since fall 2002, CIMMYT initiated a process of developing new strategy, which went through several stakeholders consultations, work of several task forces and a center-wide meeting to define the new priorities, structure and implementation framework. In January, 2004, all CIMMYT staff had a meeting at the headquarters in Mexico to discuss the implementation mechanism of the new strategy. Drs. A. Morgounov, M. Karabayev and D. Bedoshvili participated in the discussions from CAC region. The meeting was very productive and resulted in clear definition of the priorities, strategies and activities of the new program. In the past, CIMMYT's structure was commodity and subject oriented and consisted of the following programs: Wheat, Maize, Economics, Biotechnology and Natural Resource Management. The new strategy took more holistic approach and the following new programs have been established:

Genetic resources: harnessing maize and wheat genetic diversity for humanity. (Director Dr. D. Hoisington)

Global and strategic research: strengthening the global maize and wheat innovation network through capacity building, policy development, and the analysis of strategic global issues (Director Dr. M. Morris)

Sustaining African livelihood: increasing food security in Africa through better technology and improved markets (Director Dr. S. Pandey)

Rainfed systems: reducing vulnerability by managing risk in rainfed systems (Director Dr. H.-J. Braun)

Tropical ecosystems: improving livelihood and conserving natural resources in tropical ecosystems (Director Dr. K. Pixley)

Irrigated, high-potential maize and wheat systems: safeguarding food security through sustainable intensification (Director Dr. L. Hurrington).

With the new strategy, the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus maintains high priority in CIMMYT global activities. The work done in the region, depending on the environment, falls either under rainfed or irrigated programs.

The new strategy presents excellent opportunity to review the work done currently and also to expand and focus the activities emphasizing the impact on the farmer's fields.



Important Events

INCEPTION WORKSHOP OF ADB PROJECT



During the Opening Session

An Inception workshop on Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded project on “Improving Rural Livelihoods through Efficient On-farm Water and Soil Fertility Management in Central Asia” was successfully held in Tashkent from 19-20 February, 2004. In all, more than 60 participants attended the workshop, including Heads of NARS and leading scientists from all Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan, representatives of ADB, SDC, USAID, GTZ, and some NGOs, scientists from ICARDA Headquarters and CAC Regional office as well as IWMI scientists.

The workshop was inaugurated by H.E. Prof. Abduvokhid Juraev, Minister of Agriculture and Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan, who congratulated the participants with the approval of the second phase and emphasized the importance of the project for the region as a whole and Uzbekistan, in particular. The Hon'ble Minister also thanked ADB for the continued support in addressing issues that are critical for the livelihoods of resource poor farmers in Central Asia. He also assured of his full support for the implementation of the project in Uzbekistan.

Dr. Pratima Dayal, Senior Agriculture Specialist presented the ADB's strategy for sustainable agricultural development in Central Asia, centered in the field of soil and water management. She specifically emphasized ICARDA's role to support agriculture

through natural resource conservation being a critical and relevant need in the region for the livelihood opportunities of resource poor farmers. She also informed that in 2004, ADB will organize a Regional Forum on agriculture and natural resources research and policy reorientation in Central Asia in partnership with ICARDA.

During the opening session, Dr. Raj Paroda, Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC welcomed the participants and appreciated the support extended by Drs. Pratima Dayal and Tumurdavaa Bayarsaihan of ADB. Dr. Richard Thomas, Director, NRMP addressed the participants about the ICARDA's strategy on NRM research in Central Asia as an integrated approach.

Dr. Raj Paroda gave an overview on the second phase of the ADB project, and emphasized the need for dissemination of improved technologies on farmers' fields, being the thrust of the second phase. The three working groups on water management, soil fertility and socioeconomic components were organized. The working groups developed specific recommendations on three aspects, which were presented at the Plenary session and approved.

Later, the First Steering Committee Meeting on the project “Improving Rural Livelihoods through Efficient On-farm Water and Soil Fertility Management in Central Asia” was held with participation of NARS Heads and national team leaders from all the six countries involved, as well as ADB representatives and ICARDA scientists. During the meeting, different issues relating to project management were finalized, including the workplan and budget for 2004. It was also decided to hold the National level planning meetings during March-April, 2004.



Minister of Agriculture inaugurating the Workshop

ADB PROJECT EXTENDED TO AZERBAIJAN

The First National Coordination and Planning Meeting of the ADB project on “Improving Rural Livelihoods through Efficient On-Farm Water and Soil Fertility Management in Central Asia” was held in Baku, Azerbaijan on 3 March, 2004. More than 25 scientists from various collaborating research institutions

participated in the meeting, which was opened by HE Dr. Irshad Aliev, Minister of Agriculture, Azerbaijan. He was highly appreciative of ADB to include Azerbaijan in the second phase of the project, emphasizing that issues of soil and water management are crucial for sustainable agricultural development in Azerbaijan. He also expressed his gratitude to ICARDA for having extended NRM research support to his country through this RETA.

Dr. Aliev felt happy that this project in particular will address the specific needs of resource poor farmers. He stressed that scientists have to work in close collaboration with farmers to provide them with appropriate farming practices for increased productivity and, subsequently, improved livelihood. He reiterated the importance of establishing demonstration sites and information dissemination in different areas of Azerbaijan to cover large number of small-scale farmers, and assured of his full support for the implementation of this important project.

During the meeting, Dr. Bahram Aliev, National Team Leader for the project presented a workplan for 2004, which was finalized based on suggestions of participants. Dr. Raj Paroda, Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC, chaired the meeting, whereas Dr. Asad Musaev, Director General, Agrarian Sciences Center of Azerbaijan co-chaired and desired to take full benefits of the project.



Minister of Agriculture opening the planning meeting

FAO NEW TCP PROJECT FOR KARAKALPAKSTAN

FAO supported TCP on “Sustainable agriculture practices in the drought-affected region of Karakalpakstan” was signed recently by the Government of Uzbekistan. The project was prepared at the request of the Government of Uzbekistan for FAO’s assistance in mitigating the consequences of water shortage in the northern area of Uzbekistan during 1999-2001. The Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan (KK), which is located at the tail-end of the Amudarya River, and includes its delta into the Aral Sea, was particularly affected by that severe drought. The main cause of this disaster was mismanagement of water resources in the river basin, compounded by diminishing snow and glacier melt, a declining trend in rainfall, and possible long-term climatic change.

The overall objective of the project is to demonstrate alternative, profitable and more sustainable forms of agricultural

production methods such as appropriate water and soil conservation practices and Conservation Agriculture (CA) for small independent farmers in KK, where water is a very scarce, valuable and a diminishing resource. This FAO intervention will demonstrate commitment towards addressing the agricultural problems underlying the severe drought and emergency situation experienced during the past years. The TCP is consistent with the goals of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management of Uzbekistan (MAWM), and the lessons learned will contribute towards future development initiatives.

The project will be executed by the MAWM of Uzbekistan, with on-site technical guidance and support to be provided through the contractual services of ICARDA and competent national and regional institutes and agencies, over the two-year duration of the project. The first FAO mission is expected to visit Karakalpakstan in mid-May.

**Research Highlights
GERMPLASM ENHANCEMENT
WHEAT**

NEW VARIETIES RELEASED

Two varieties of bread wheat, Azametly-95 and Nurlu-99, from Turkey-CIMMYT-ICARDA nurseries have recently been released in Azerbaijan by the resolution of the State Commission on Variety Testing and Protection of Breeders’ Achievements. During four-year trials, these varieties have shown good resistance to diseases, including yellow rust and are suitable for irrigated conditions in lowlands and foothills. In addition to being early maturing, varieties Azametly-95 and Nurlu-99 have potential productivity of about 7.0-8.0 t/ha. Primary seed production of these varieties was undertaken at the Research Institute of Crop Husbandry and farmers’ fields since 2002 with support received from ICARDA since 2002. Presently, more than 1.4 thousand ha area has been covered by these two varieties. In 2004, it is planned to have about 20 tons of seed distributed to farmers in different areas of Azerbaijan.

In Kyrgyzstan, variety Jamin, a facultative wheat, has also been released recently as a spring crop for mountainous areas in Issyl-Kul and Naryn Provinces. Besides being early maturing and high yielding, Jamin is the first facultative wheat variety released in Kyrgyzstan since 1978 when Intensivnaya was recommended.



Barley variety Azametly-95 in Azerbaijan

Having productivity potential of about 6.0 t/ha, it is resistant to yellow rust and hence, may replace soon the predominant variety Intensivnaya, presently covering around 50% of total area under wheat in Kyrgyzstan, since it has now become susceptible to yellow rust. This year, it is expected to have about 70 tons of Jamin variety seed produced.

BARLEY

COLD TOLERANT LINES SELECTED

In southern Kazakhstan, one of the main constraints to increasing cropping area under winter barley is insufficient cold tolerance of the available barley varieties. Therefore, development of cold tolerant varieties is the highest priority for barley breeders of Kazakhstan.

Last year, while visiting ICARDA Headquarters in Aleppo, Dr. A. Ortaev, Barley Breeder of the Krasniy Vodopad Breeding Station requested Drs. Salvatore Ceccarelli and Stephania Grando to

provide germplasm material of barley for cold tolerance testing. In fall, 2003, a special barley nursery BI05IN-W, including 767 lines, was received and sown at the Krasniy Vodopad Breeding Station (KVBS), Kazakhstan and Galaaral, Uzbekistan. By the end of March, 2004, a few dozens of winter barley lines have been identified as cold tolerant. The selected accessions will be used for hybridization work during 2004.

GROUNDNUT

PROMISING VARIETIES IDENTIFIED

As we informed in our previous issues, efforts for identification of promising varieties of groundnut are underway in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Georgia. Groundnut scientists of these countries are working in close collaboration with Dr. Shyam Nigam, Principal Groundnut Breeder at ICRISAT to evaluate the germplasm materials supplied to the region during 2002-2003.

In Tajikistan, twelve promising varieties of groundnut, including early and medium maturing and confectionery varieties have been identified in 2003. A medium maturing variety C-94016 yielded 3.85 t/ha, whereas the standard check variety Tajikskaya-15 produced 3.02 t/ha. Also, a confectionery variety C-96066 yielded around 3.96

t/ha. Based on the outstanding performance, these two varieties have now been submitted to the State Variety Testing Commission in Tajikistan. In 2004, it is planned to have seed multiplication of these varieties before their for release in near future.

In Uzbekistan, based on three-year studies, three varieties of groundnut, ICGV-86155, ICGV-86590 and ICGV-94088, have been found to be suitable for growing as both main and double crops. An early maturing, high-yielding as well as high oil content variety “Salomat”, submitted to SVTC in 2003, has been recommended for planting as a major crop, and also for double cropping in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya provinces of southern Uzbekistan.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

IWRM PROJECT IN THE FERGANA VALLEY

As we informed in our previous issue, the SDC-funded project on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the Fergana Valley is being carried out jointly by the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia (SIC-ICWC) and International Water Management Institute (IWMI). It was started in 2002 and will continue until April, 2005. The second Annual Planning meeting of the project was held from 26-28 January, 2004 in the Fergana province of Uzbekistan. The annual meeting was attended by more than 150 people, including water users, managers, policy makers and NGO representatives.

The IWRM Project in the Fergana Valley established Canal Management Organizations along the Aravan Akbura Canal in Kyrgyzstan, Hojabakirgon (Gulyakandoz) Canal in Tajikistan and South Fergana Canal in Uzbekistan. The project conducted a Workshop for discussing and finalizing the Model Statutes of the Canal Water Committees (CWC), as well as adapting these statutes for each of the three pilot canals. The Statutes have been finalized, and joint SIC-IWMI mobilization teams have been launched in all the three canals to help stakeholders establish CWCs. In December 2003, the CWCs have been established at the General Constituent Assembly Meetings for each of the three canals. The project has created a real-time Information System tool that enables real-time management of the water delivery process through planned scheduling and monitoring



Discussion during the Annual Planning Meeting

during vegetative season based on actual water requests from water users and climatic conditions. It is the first step towards equitable and reasonable water distribution and at the same time, an attempt to reduce unproductive water losses. This tool also allowed flexibility for farmers to exchange water turns, equity amongst outlets, time savings during actual irrigation, improved fee collection among middle to tail end users, decline in conflicts, and improved yields.

(Source: Mr. M. Ul-Hassan, IWMI-Tashkent)

JOINT IWMI-ICARDA PROJECT IN KARAKALPAKSTAN

In September, 2002, IWMI sub-office in Central Asia and the Caucasus (IWMI-CAC) and ICARDA-CAC launched a core funded project on "Support to Institutional Reforms and WUA establishment in Karakalpakstan region of Uzbekistan". The project is being carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management (MAWM) of Uzbekistan and local NARES. The main goal of the project is to improve the livelihoods of the people in the environmentally degraded, drought affected northern part of Uzbekistan through improvement of water management institutions.

A pilot WUA "Jambul" with an irrigated area of 1,419 ha and membership of 20 private farmers has been established. To assess the perception of water users on WUA, water distribution problems,

cropping needs and markets, as well as existing irrigation and drainage infrastructure, project carried out several surveys including social survey, water impact survey, and agricultural survey. The project also conducted three workshops on WUA functions and management and two training workshops on steps of formation of WUA and role of social mobilization.

As a result of the project activities, water users started taking active part in the organization and management of the irrigation system and making in-kind payment of membership fees. Through the project, irrigation and drainage infrastructure, water distribution, and land and water productivity have been improved.

(Source: Mr. M. Ul-Hassan, IWMI-Tashkent)

TECHNOLOGY FOR SOIL RECLAMATION

Irrigation and soil leaching practices, when applied continuously during a long period of time, cause serious soil degradation by washing away valuable organic matter, nutrients, and minerals, especially Ca. This leads to the processes of soil alkalization, decline in soil fertility and increased water losses for deep percolation. During the first phase of the ADB-ICARDA project on soil and water management, application of phosphogypsum was found to be effective for reclamation of alkaline soil. Phosphogypsum is applied on ploughed land, covered with snow. It gets dissolved and moves into the soil by entering in the exchange reaction, when the snow melts or spring rains occur. Leaching of soil in spring helps in washing away of Mg, being a product of the cation exchange reaction and, subsequently, improves composition of soil absorption complex.

The technology of phosphogypsum application was tested in 2001 at the Arys-Turkestan site by a group of scientists of the Kazakh Research Institute of Water Management (KazRIWM) headed by Dr. F. Vyshpolskiy. Two application rates of phosphogypsum, 4.5 and 8.0 t/ha, were tested. Efficiency of application of phosphogypsum was evaluated by the reduction of Mg concentration in the soil absorption complex and storages of mobile forms of phosphorus. Under initial conditions, the content of Ca and Mg in the soil absorption complex was 54-68 % and 30-43 %, respectively. The application of phosphogypsum increased Ca content by 5-12% and reduced that of Mg by 5-12% of the initial storage. Soil storage of mobile form of phosphorus increased by 8-15 mg/kg. These improvements in soil structure, aeration regime and phosphorus nutrition contributed to

better cotton growth and yield increase from 1.4-1.5 t/ha to 2.5-3.0 t/ha, on an average, during the last two-years experiment. Economic assessment of the phosphogypsum application technology has demonstrated that it increases farmers' income by US\$ 300-500 per hectare. During the second phase of the soil and water management project, it is planned to continue testing and verification of this technology on farmers' fields for large-scale adoption.

(Source: Dr. F. Vyshpolskiy, KazRIWM)



Initial soil status at the farmers' field (left) and reclaimed soil by using phosphogypsum (right)

WATER SAVING TECHNOLOGY THROUGH RAISED-BED PLANTING OF WHEAT

Winter wheat is the most widespread crop in southern Kazakhstan. Under irrigation, the average yield of winter wheat is about 2.5 t/ha, which can be significantly increased using improved irrigation technologies. Strip irrigation technology, commonly used by farmers in this part of Kazakhstan, is simple and has low energy requirements. However, using strip irrigation often leads to destruction of soil structure and crust formation, and requires high application rate of irrigation water. Because of non-uniform water distribution, water losses for surface runoff and deep percolation vary within 30-40% of water applied.

During the first phase of the ADB-ICARDA project on on-farm soil and water management, scientists of the Kazakh Research Institute of Water Management (KazRIWM), under the leadership of Dr. V. Mukhamedjanov and Dr. A. Kalashnikov, tested an improved surge furrow irrigation technology. This technology, when combined with that of raised-bed planting of wheat, which had been earlier developed and tested by the scientists of KazRIWM in collaboration with CIMMYT, has been found to be an effective alternative to the traditional strip irrigation. Surge irrigation is applied to the furrows, which are cut along with sowing of winter wheat on raised beds. Besides considerable saving of energy, simultaneous performance of these two operations allows to prevent soil compaction and also to conduct timely irrigation. During winter, furrows promote uniform distribution of precipitation, whereas during the irrigation season, surge irrigation by furrows reduces water losses for surface runoff and deep percolation. Raised-bed planting of wheat also allows to reduce seed rate almost by half and to apply mechanical method for weed control and treatment by chemicals.

Testing of surge irrigation technology for winter wheat planted on raised beds in Merke district of Jambyl Province during 2001-2003, has shown its considerable advantages over the traditional technology of strip irrigation. The use of surge irrigation reduced surface runoff by 19-21% and saved about 15-20% of irrigation water as compared to strip irrigation. Yield of winter wheat variety Almaly increased from 1.4-2.1 t/ha under the traditional technology to 4.1-4.3 t/ha under the improved one. Also, the seed rate was reduced to 90-150 kg/ha under



Dr. A. Kalashnikov explaining the advantages of surge irrigation combined with raised-bed planting

the raised-bed planting, compared to that of traditional practice 200-240 kg/ha. Economic assessment of this technology in 2003 revealed that it increased farmer's income by 53%. The neighboring farmers have shown considerable interest in this technology, and in 2004, under the second phase of the ADB project, this technology will be adopted on 31 ha area of farmers' fields in Merke district. However, the large-scale adoption of this technology is constrained by the lack of appropriate raised-bed planters. To solve this problem, the scientists of KazRIWM are working on modification of available seeders. Also, it is planned to import one raised-bed planter from abroad.

Successful combination of these two improved technologies, one for raised-bed planting and another for surge furrow irrigation, is an excellent example as to how the CG Centers of the Consortium could complement each others' efforts for the benefit of the farmers of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

(Source: Dr. A. Kalashnikov, KazRIWM)

CONSERVATION AND EVALUATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

NEW PROJECT FOR IN SITU CONSERVATION OF CROP WILD RELATIVES

With the purpose to enhance conservation of crop wild relatives, IPGRI has launched a global project on "In-situ Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives through Enhanced Information Management and Field Application" with support of UNEP-GEF and GTZ. Armenia and Uzbekistan along with Bolivia, Madagascar and Sri Lanka, located within centers of crop or plant diversity, are working together, and also with IUCN, FAO, BGCI, WCMC, USDA and ZADI to develop and implement rational, cost effective approaches to conserving their crop wild relatives. The objective of the project is to improve global food security through effective conservation and better use of priority crop wild relatives and enhanced capacity for information use to support their conservation and sustainable utilization. Within the project, an information system will be developed to enable countries accessing relevant dispersed information held by different international organizations, advanced research institutes and other bodies. The information brought together from national and international sources will be used to establish the endangerment status of crop wild relatives in the countries; determine the *in situ* and *ex situ* locations of the crop wild relatives (in protected

areas, reserves, gene banks, botanic gardens, etc.); develop capacity to engage in planning and priority-setting exercises; formulate procedures for action and undertake selected activities identified through the decision making process that take account of threat, potential use, and social benefit; create systems to monitor conservation status of crop wild relatives and associated conservation actions; and increase public awareness of and appreciation for crop wild relatives conservation and use. Collaborative framework to guide the required activities and link managers of protected areas, genebanks, and botanic gardens with taxonomists and plant breeders to support conservation decision-making will be established.

The First meeting of the National Steering Committee will be held on 12-15 May, 2004, in Tashkent. The main objectives of the meeting will be to develop the work plan and timeframe for project activities in Uzbekistan, identify responsible institutions for each activity, and discuss various issues on project management at the country level.

IPGRI-Tashkent office will keep "CAC News" readers informed on the project progress.

(Source: Ms. Muhabbat Turdieva, IPGRI-Tashkent)

A BOOKLET ON FRUIT AND NUT GR TO BE PUBLISHED SOON

A booklet on Complementary Conservation and Use of Fruit and Nut Genetic Resources in Central Asia is currently being prepared by Ms. Heidi Renkema, Associate Expert, IPGRI-CWANA, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. To gather the information for this

booklet, she traveled to all the countries of Central Asia in order to interact with national specialists on genetic resources. The booklet in English will be brought out by summer, 2004.

Strengthening of NARS

INFORMATION SHARING MECHANISM ESTABLISHED IN UZBEKISTAN

With the aim to strengthen National Programs for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA), FAO, in collaboration with IPGRI, has developed a proposal for establishing national information sharing mechanisms, which are expected to improve the ability of countries to make decisions about plant genetic resources, including establishing objectives, defining needs and allocating resources. Major emphasis is to be laid on improving the quality of information about plant genetic resources status and dynamics, increasing the ability of countries to monitor changes in their plant genetic resources over time and enhancing the capacity of countries to meet international reporting obligations (Global Plan of Action (GPA)), Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA, CBD, etc).

First National Workshop within the framework of FAO project on "Establishment of a national information sharing mechanism on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in Uzbekistan" was held on 15-17, March, 2004. The workshop was organized by the Uzbek Institute of Genetics and Experimental Biology of Plants (UzIGEBP), the National Focal staff for project implementation and IPGRI, and hosted by the Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU). In all, 54 representatives of 18 research institutes, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management, State Committee of Nature Protection, Universities, Main Forestry Office, NGOs and other institutions dealing with agrobiodiversity in Uzbekistan participated in the workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by Acad. Abdusattar Abdukarimov, Director General, UzIGEBP and PGR National Coordinator in Uzbekistan. In his welcome address, Acad. Abdukarimov highlighted that Central Asia is a centre of origin and domestication of many globally important crops. Therefore, establishment of National information sharing mechanism will facilitate achievement of food security and integration of Uzbekistan into the global mechanism on monitoring of implementation of the GPA. Prof. H. Buriev, Rector, TSAU emphasized the importance of training young specialists and scientists to strengthen the sustainability of activities on biodiversity protection and use in

Uzbekistan. He also stressed that the rational use of plant diversity is vital for ensuring food supply in view of the population growth in the world.

Dr. Zakir Khalikulov, Consultant Scientist, PFU-CGIAR, and Ms. Muhabbat Turdieva, Forest Genetic Resources Scientist, IPGRI-CWANA-Tashkent briefed the participants on the support provided by ICARDA and IPGRI to National Programs in CAC region for evaluation, conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources. Mrs. Iva Faberova, Documentation Specialist of the Institute of Crop Production, the Czech Republic emphasized that documentation is a core of all activities on plant genetic resources.

During the three-day workshop, core elements of the proposed national PGRFA information sharing mechanism, including a set of indicators and a reporting format for monitoring GPA implementation, a computer application to gather and exchange information on the indicators among national stakeholders were presented and discussed by the participants. Mrs. Iva Faberova shared her experience and knowledge gained during the implementation of a similar project in the Czech Republic. One day of the workshop was fully devoted to practical work on the use of computer application and training on data searching and entering. The work plan for completing the Reporting Format including a timetable for the delivery of the stakeholders' inputs was approved.

Dr. Raj Paroda, Head, PFU-CGIAR for CAC, on behalf of all the nine CG Centres working in the region, expressed his gratitude to Acad. Abdukarimov and Prof. Buriev for excellent workshop organization and congratulated all participants with successful achievement of the workshop objectives. He highlighted the importance of establishment of the Information Sharing Mechanism on PGRFA and mentioned that FAO is hosting the Secretariat for International Treaty on PGRFA. He also stressed that lessons learnt and experience gained in Uzbekistan on information exchange system will be disseminated in other CAC countries. Dr. Paroda thanked Mrs. Faberova for her invaluable assistance and assured the participants that CG Centres would continue supporting National Programs in CAC region in their efforts to conserve indigenous agrobiodiversity and to develop national agricultural information systems.

(Source: Ms. Muhabbat Turdieva, IPGRI-Tashkent)

RESEARCH TO LINK SCIENTISTS WITH US UNIVERSITIES

Under the project on the International Cooperation for Agricultural Research (ICAR), funded by United State Department of Agriculture (USDA), 14 on-farm demonstration grants on winter wheat and five on spring wheat were approved for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The two-year grants were given to the scientists to carry out collaborative research with partners from USA. While selecting the proposals, agronomy, breeding and IPM issues have been considered as priority areas.

The majority of these projects have achieved considerable progress in terms of impact on the farmers' fields, meeting the technical expectations, as well as training and financial reporting requirements. However, two projects (one on winter wheat and one on spring wheat) failed due to untimely field operations during planting that resulted in poor stand establishment. In general, on-farm demonstrations targeted some new inventions like varieties, technology of cultivation or both. They all were relevant in showing to farmers what is needed at present to increase the production and profitability. The major achievements of the first year are the following:

The project established a system for competitive selection of the projects for on-farm trials and demonstrations of technologies as well as publicized the ICAR project in the research establishments, with farmers and farmers associations, local administration and policy makers.

The on-farm activities within the project contributed to achieving food security in the region through dissemination of new varieties and improved technologies. In all, more than 1000 people attended field days, training courses and seminars conducted at the project sites.

The lessons learnt during the first year suggested the need for slight modification of the system. The grants will now be provided for two years and in the context of crop diversification, the scope of work will also be expanded beyond wheat to cover other important crops such as maize and legumes. A total of 8 projects, implemented jointly by national agricultural research systems and scientists of the Washington State University and CIMMYT, will receive funding in this cropping season. More details are available from CIMMYT office in Almaty.

(Source: Dr. Alexey Morgounov, CIMMYT-Almaty)



RETREAT MEETING HELD IN FLORENCE

Drs. Samvel Avetysyan, First Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Armenia and Executive Secretary of the Central Asian and Caucasian Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (CACAARI) for the Caucasus Region, and Asanbek Ajibekov, Director General, Kyrgyz Center of Agrarian Sciences and Consulting Services and Executive Secretary of CACAARI for Central Asia Region along with Dr. Zakir Khalikulov, Consultant-Scientist, CGIAR-PFU participated in GFAR Retreat Meeting held from 1-3 February, 2004 in Florence, Italy.

A total of 25 participants, representing seven stakeholder groups of GFAR, including GFAR Secretariat, attended this two-and-half day retreat meeting, the main objective of which was to complete the development of the second triennium of GFAR Business Plan for 2004-2006. The Business Plan of GFAR consists of three separate but linked documents: a strategic plan document to provide the overall vision, goals and implementing strategies; a flexible three year rolling Business Plan that could be updated as the need arise; and a GFAR Secretariat annual work plan

During the workshop, the following four pillars of the Business Plan were identified: (i) Advocacy, Liaison and Public Awareness; (ii) Development of Research Partnerships; (iii) Inter-



Participants of the meeting

Regional Collaboration; and (iv) Development of Information and Communication Systems.

All the participants recognized the need for updating, strengthening and refining the strategies and linkages among these four pillars for the GFAR Business Plan 2004-2006 on an ongoing basis. It was decided that the Business Plan will be finalized by GFAR Secretariat by 15 April and published by 1 May, 2004.

Meetings/Workshops/Conferences Organized

SECOND INTERNATIONAL YELLOW RUST CONFERENCE

A Second International Yellow Rust Conference was held at the National Agricultural Research Center (NARC) in Islamabad, Pakistan from 22-26 March, 2004. More than a hundred participants from 18 countries attended the conference, which was organized by ICARDA, NARC, the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), and the Pakistan Phytopathological Society.

There were 56 oral and poster presentations and the participants discussed general approaches to managing yellow rust, epidemiology, biotechnology, breeding for disease resistance, and

yellow rust monitoring.

Scientists from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also participated in the conference. They made presentations about the activities on yellow rust management carried out in their countries in collaboration with ICARDA specialists.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Badaruddin Soomro, Chairman, PARC appreciated ICARDA's contribution and encouraged collaboration with Pakistan in the future. The next conference will be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 2007.

CACAARI RAIS-CAC WORKSHOP HELD

A Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS) Workshop for Central Asia and the Caucasus was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 27-28 January, 2004. The workshop was the first formal event organized by the recently established CAC Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (CACAARI). In all, 21 participants attended the workshop, including representatives of NARS, GFAR, Regional Fora (AARINENA and APAARI) and ICARDA. The workshop was inaugurated by H.E. Prof. M. Yusupov, First Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan, who emphasized the importance of information and knowledge sharing for agricultural research in CAC region and in particular, in Uzbekistan. The Opening Session was chaired by Dr. Sherali Nurmatov, Chairman, CACAARI and co-chaired by Dr. Raj Paroda, Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC.

During the Working Group sessions, the participants deliberated on assessment of needs and priorities related to agricultural information system, at both national and regional levels, and developed a strategy for future cooperation. During the Plenary Session, the delegates endorsed the following: (i) to establish Regional Agricultural Information System in the CAC Region; (ii) there is a need for a multistakeholder involvement to achieve effectively the national and regional information system in the area of ARD; (iii) to appoint national focal points in charge of improved articulation of the national web information resources, consistently with the requirements of the RAIS and its gateway function; and (iv) each



First Deputy Minister of Agriculture inaugurating the Workshop

NARS to strengthen Agroweb as a relevant initiative enabling the management of national information resources in ARD and gateway function from the regional level facilitating the access to national resources. A working group for establishing Steering Committee meeting and to develop terms of reference (ToR) of National Information Nodal Points (NINPs) was formed to accomplish this task by 1 March, 2004.

ADB MISSION VISITED PFU-ICARDA OFFICE IN TASHKENT

ADB Mission headed by Dr. Katsuji Matsunami, Director, Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Division, ADB visited ICARDA-CAC Regional Office in Tashkent on 11 February, 2004. The Mission was undertaken on the Central Asian Republics Initiative for Land Management (CARILM), which is an outgrowth of the ongoing process to strengthen implementation of the UNCCD in Central Asia.

The members of the mission had an interesting discussion with the scientists of the ICARDA Regional Office concerning ICARDA's role in the CARILM Partnership. Dr. Raj Paroda, Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC provided a brief on the ADB supported activities carried out by ICARDA in collaboration with NARS of the Central Asia region through On-farm Soil and Water Management Project. He also dwelt upon projects that are in pipeline for submission to ADB, including one on Mountain Agriculture in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, developed by ICARDA, and another on Desertification, Drought, Poverty and Agriculture in Asia, developed jointly by ICARDA and ICRISAT, with Uzbekistan included as one of the four countries.

Dr. Katsuji Matsunami showed considerable interest in various new project proposals, underlining that all of them fit well with the concept of CARILM. He emphasized that CARILM would create a framework for centralizing the efforts of Governments, national research institutions, international organizations, donor agencies and civil societies to establish the basis for sustainable agricultural, rangeland, and forestry systems in the region. He felt that ICARDA could be a key member of the initiative to play more important role rather than doing research and networking for information and knowledge exchange. Dr. Matsunami stressed that a transparent monitoring device is crucial for the success of CARILM. For this, quantifiable yardsticks and milestones are to be identified and followed up. In this context, he felt that ICARDA could also play an important role as neutral organization in the monitoring system, and a respective decision is to be taken at a design phase.



Discussion during the meeting

Mr. Mahmood Ul-Hassan, Officer in Charge, IWMI-Tashkent, who also participated in the discussion, felt that IWMI could contribute to strategic research and issues relating to human capacity building. He also provided a set of IWMI publications and explained the importance of work being carried out in partnership with Water Users Associations (WUA).

The participants agreed that specific discussion may be needed at a later stage, after the members of the mission had perused the documents provided to them by ICARDA and IWMI scientists, and especially after the proposed Workshop on Elaboration of the CARILM being organized in Almaty on 21-23 February, 2004, in which Dr. Richard Thomas would participate being ICARDA focal point for Global Mechanism.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM IN KYRGYZSTAN

An International Research-and-Production Conference on Land and Agrarian Reform was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from 12-13 March, 2004. In all, more than 1200 participants, including policy makers, agricultural scientists, NGOs, farmers and international organizations, attended the conference. First day of the conference included five working sections, covering various aspects of agriculture development in Kyrgyzstan, such as modernization of scientific and advisory services, development of seed production and animal breeding, reforming of water management industry, improvement of crediting and investments in agrarian sector, strengthening of Land Reform, and involvement of rural women in Land and Agrarian Reform, etc. Dr. Raj Paroda, Head, PFU-CGIAR and Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC participated in the Section 1 on development of cooperative farms, modernization of scientific and advisory services, processing, marketing, development of seed production and animal breeding, which was chaired by Mr. B. Talgarbekov, Head, Administration of the Prime-Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic and co-chaired by H. E. Dr. A. Kostyuk, Minister of Agriculture, Water Management and Processing Industry. During the session, presentations were made by HE Dr. A. Kostyuk, Representative of GTZ, Mr. Mirzaliev, Head, Kemin District Administration, etc. Dr. Raj Paroda presented an overview on CGIAR activities in Kyrgyzstan. He thanked the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for an excellent support and particularly appreciated the role played by Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Tanayev and Minister of Agriculture Dr. Kostyuk for having organized the Ministerial level meeting in Issyk-Kul in 2001, leading to an important Issyk-Kul Declaration on Agriculture Research for Development. Dr. Paroda congratulated Kyrgyzstan for having moved faster towards privatization of agriculture compared to other countries of Central Asia. He dwelt upon major activities undertaken by ICARDA and

other CG Centers of the Consortium in the Kyrgyz Republic, including germplasm improvement, genetic resource conservation, natural resource management and human capacity building. He also shared with the participants some success stories of Green Revolution and co-operative movement in India and emphasized the need for policy support to agricultural research. Dr. Paroda assured the participants that ICARDA and other CG centers will continue providing further support to NARS of Kyrgyzstan to ensure the success of Land and Agrarian Reform in the country.

(Continued on page 9)



H. E. Dr. A. Kostyuk co-chairing the session

Meetings/Workshops/Conferences Organized

During the second day of the Conference, a Plenary Session was organized under the chairmanship of HE Mr. N. Tanayev, Prime-Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. HE Mr. Askar Akayev, the President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan made a presentation devoted to the decade of the Land and Agrarian Reform in the country. He emphasized new challenges and opportunities in agriculture development in Kyrgyzstan that have emerged during the last ten years. He was also appreciative of the role played by the international donor and research organizations to strengthen the reformation process in agrarian sector of the Kyrgyz Republic.

On 12 March, an agricultural exhibition was organized to demonstrate successful achievements of Kyrgyz scientists and farmers since 1991. Promising varieties of cereal and legume crops developed in close collaboration between NARS of Kyrgyzstan and ICARDA scientists were also displayed, including recently released variety Jamin of winter wheat based on CIMMYT-ICARDA-Turkey program and high yielding and early maturing variety Adel of barley, being in the final stages of testing by the Research Institute of Farming.

NEW AGRICULTURE MINISTER OF UZBEKISTAN

Mr. Saydulla Begaliev has recently taken over as new Minister of Agriculture and Water Management, Uzbekistan. Earlier, he was the First Deputy Minister of Agriculture and had participated in the Issyk-Kul Meeting in June, 2001. Mr. S. Begaliev expressed his great appreciation for the CGIAR Consortium activities in Uzbekistan. During his meeting with Dr. Raj Paroda, Head, PFU-CGIAR, he desired to have continued support for varietals improvement, yellow rust management and the seed development activities, beside support for capacity building and human resource development. He felt that ICARDA's project on soil and water management was very useful for the farmers of Uzbekistan and desired to have continued partnership for crop diversification and water management. He also was happy about the FAO TCP Project that would be facilitated by the ICARDA-PFU office in Tashkent. Mr. S. Begaliev was pleased with the renovation of the Uzbek Genebank and desired to have continued technical backstopping for the renovation of other three medium-term storage facilities for cotton and cereal crops. He also praised the publications brought out by CG Centers relating to their work in CAC region, especially the CAC Newsletter and the Book on Rangelands in Uzbekistan brought out by scientists of ICARDA and Uzbekistan. He assured of his best possible support to the scientists of CG Centers working in the region and



H.E. Mr. Begaliev meets Dr. Raj Paroda

desired to organize a separate meeting with senior officials of his Ministry in order to identify priority areas for future partnership.

WHEAT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STRENGTHENED IN UZBEKISTAN

A meeting on "Wheat development program in Uzbekistan for 2004-2010" was held in the Andijan Research Institute for Grain and Legume Crops (ARIGL) on 16 January, 2004. Directors and staff of the eleven branches of the ARIGL, except for Karakalpakstan, as well as representatives of the Uzbek Scientific and Production Center for Agriculture (UzSPCA) participated in the meeting, which was opened by Dr. R. Syddykov, Director General of the ARIGL. During the meeting, the participants were addressed by Dr. R. Tillaev, Deputy Director General, UzSPCA. He informed them about the status of wheat production in Uzbekistan, emphasizing that

achievement of 5 million ton of wheat grain in 2002 and 2003 was possible due to the large import of elite wheat seed from Krasnodar, Russia. He specifically stressed that due to lack of local wheat varieties, presently, 87% of the total area under wheat in Uzbekistan is sown to 47 different varieties of winter wheat of the Krasnodar breeding program. In this context, Dr. Tillaev highlighted the urgent need to strengthen the activities under the wheat breeding program in Uzbekistan.

Directors of Bukhara, Khorezm, Syrdarya, Fergana, Gallalal and Samarkand branches of the ARIGL reported on the current status of the wheat breeding program at their institutes. In his presentation, Dr. Syddykov also informed the participants about the achievements under the wheat development program at the ARIGL. He was appreciative of the efforts by Dr. S. Teshebaev, Wheat Breeder, who attempts about 1000 crosses annually to produce new wheat varieties suitable for Uzbekistan conditions. He emphasized that the ARIGL has got already a number of promising varieties, being at various stages of breeding process that are high-yielding and resistant to major wheat diseases. Dr. Syddykov also reiterated the important role of legume crops in agriculture in Uzbekistan, especially in light of the Land Reform implying privatization of land by the end of 2005. He stressed that by that time, breeders and seed producers of Uzbekistan must provide farmers with good quality seed of both grain and legume crops. In this connection, Dr. Syddykov emphasized the importance of collaboration with International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs), which are providing Uzbek breeders with valuable genetic materials of grain and legume crops. He also indicated the need to enhance the breeding program on durum wheat, which is getting more popular among the farmers of Uzbekistan.



Dr. R. Tillaev (third from the right) chairing the meeting

(Continued on page 10)

Meetings/Workshops/Conferences Organized

Considering various agro-ecological conditions of Uzbekistan, it was decided to assign responsibilities among all the branches of the ARIGL according to their regional priorities. Thus, Gallaaral, Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya branches will be responsible for breeding drought-tolerant varieties of both grain and legume crops as well as for development of improved varieties of durum wheat, whereas Syrdarya, Bukhara, Khorezm and Karakalpakstan branches will undertake the work on breeding of salt-tolerant varieties.

Dr. Bitore Djumakhanov, Cereal Breeder, ICARDA-CAC participated actively in the meeting. He informed the participants that during the 2003-2004 season, about 2200 lines of wheat, including 734 lines of durum wheat have been provided to Uzbekistan from ICARDA and CIMMYT international nurseries. He assured that ICARDA and other CG Centers of the Consortium for CAC will continue providing their support to strengthen wheat development program in Uzbekistan.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DESIRES MORE SUPPORT FOR FARM WOMEN

Her Excellency Mrs. Svetlana Inamova, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Chairman of Women Committee of Uzbekistan invited Dr. Raj Paroda, Head, CGIAR- Program for CAC and Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC on 17 March, 2004 to have discussions relating to support for women in agriculture. She expressed all the appreciation of the Uzbek Government for the efforts of CG Centers in helping agricultural sector of Uzbekistan.

Deputy Prime Minister specifically requested Dr. Paroda to see if support for control of brucellosis disease in sheep and cow could be extended. She shared with Dr. Paroda that the Government of Uzbekistan is paying special attention to the problems of farmers, especially the farm women. In this connection, she inquired about the small machinery and equipments that can remove drudgery of farm women.

Dr. Paroda thanked the Deputy Prime Minister for her appreciation of CG Centers role in Uzbekistan. He briefed about various Centers activities in the region and especially in Uzbekistan. He highlighted the main achievements in Uzbekistan through collaboration with the Uzbek Scientific Production Center for Agriculture (UzSPCA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management. He assured Her Excellency that ICARDA and other CG Centers would continue supporting the joint research activities and

would lay greater emphasis on training of women agricultural scientists of Uzbekistan.



Mrs. Svetlana Inamova, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan

NEW AGRICULTURE MINISTER OF GEORGIA PRAISES ICARDA



Meeting with Mr. D. Shervashidze, Agriculture Minister, Georgia

Dr. Raj Paroda, Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC had a meeting with HE Mr. David Shervashidze, the new Minister of Agriculture of Georgia on 4 March, 2004 in Tbilisi. He congratulated Mr. Shervashidze for being appointed to this important position and passed on to him personal greetings on behalf of Prof. Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, Director General, ICARDA. Mr. Shervashidze was appreciative of effective collaboration already established between NARS of Georgia and ICARDA. He was particularly happy of ICARDA's support to seed production, genetic resource conservation and human resource development activities in Georgia. He assured of his full support for strengthening research collaboration with international organizations, emphasizing that he had attended the Issyk-Kul meeting personally in 2001 and would like to support fully the Issyk-Kul Declaration and provide support for agricultural research in his country. He was also particularly keen to have more support from other CG Centers such as CIP, ICRISAT and ILRI for Georgia. He also reiterated that ICARDA will always be considered as a main partner for Georgia. Mr. Shervashidze and Dr. Paroda also discussed various opportunities for future cooperation, including one on Feed and Livestock Management and another on Mountain Agriculture.

Human Resource Development

ENGLISH TRAINING COURSE

An English training course of 3.5 months was recently organized by the CGIAR Collaborative Research Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and ICARDA. As in the previous year, the course was organized jointly for the scientists involved in various Program activities representing different countries from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Among the 23 participants, the scientists represented different countries, such as: Uzbekistan (17), Kazakhstan (3), Georgia (2), and Tajikistan (1).

Dr. Sherali Nurmatov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Water Management and Director General, the Uzbek Scientific Production Center for Agriculture (UzSPCA) and Dr. Raj Paroda, Head, CGIAR-PFU, and Regional Coordinator, ICARDA attended the closing function and distributed the certificates on 27 March, 2003. Dr. Nurmatov appreciated the efforts of the CGIAR Program for organizing such an important training activity and congratulated the participants on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Water Management, Republic of Uzbekistan.



Participants of the English Training Course

Dr. Raj Paroda also congratulated the course participants and encouraged them to continue learning English language in order to communicate better with the international scientific community and build their successful career. Already this year, some of the trainees from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan will be going to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Philippines and in South Korea for specialized training on rice production technologies.

The trainees appreciated the excellent opportunity provided to them and thanked PFU, especially Dr. Zakir Khalikulov for his personal care and attention as well as the teachers from the Uzbek Training Company "Business and Staff". They also assured to continue learning English for the benefit of their respective National Agricultural Research Systems.

Miscellaneous News

NEW STAFF MEMBER JOINED CIMMYT-CAC

Economist, Mr. Toni Rogger from German Development Service (DED) has joined recently the CIMMYT team for Central Asia and Caucasus in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The German Development Service (DED) is one of the leading European development services for cooperation. Financed by the federal budget, the DED has the legal form of a non-profit-making, limited liability company owned jointly by the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the working group "Learning and Helping Overseas", a registered association. The DED is financed by the federal budget. One of the major tasks of the DED is to promote understanding for the situation of people in developing countries among the German public and to draw attention to questions concerning the common interests and problems of the One World. The DED places professionally experienced and socially committed specialists at the disposal of developing countries. Since its foundation in 1963, more than 13,000 development workers have committed themselves to improving the living conditions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Almost 1,000 development workers are currently working in approximately 40 countries.

Posted at the CIMMYT-CAC Regional Office, Mr. Toni Roggers will be working on development of seed production system in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and on strengthening private seed companies and NGO's cooperating with the project. He will also



Mr. Toni Rogger, new staff member at CIMMYT-Almaty

organize the activities of Mobile Groups in rural communities to assist the poor and will conduct several training courses and workshops for farmers. Mr. Toni Rogger will also make economic analysis of the different systems in various environments and evaluate alternatives for the currently used cropping patterns and technologies.

PFU-CGIAR for CAC wishes Mr. Toni Rogger all the success in his work in Central Asia.

BOOK ON KAZAKH RANGELANDS BROUGHT OUT IN ENGLISH

A book on Rangeland Management in Kazakhstan was originally published by a group of scientists headed by Academician Kasym Asanov back in 1992. It was approved by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Former Soviet Union as teaching aid for higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan for specialty of Agronomy and Animal Husbandry. Recently, the book was translated into English and published as activity of collaborative research project of JIRCAS and NACAR, Kazakhstan.

Rangelands of Kazakhstan occupy a huge area over 180 million hectares. These lands provide livestock industry with more than 50 percent of forage supply. At the same time, rangelands is also an ecosystem of the country since grazing grounds make up to 67.4% of the total area of the Republic. The specific grazing capacity of rangelands is decreasing with every passing year. That is why, it is

necessary to halt the developing degradation of rangelands and to rehabilitate them, since a loss of grazing grounds would also mean a loss in livestock production, traditional to Kazakhstan such as sheep, cattle and horse breeding. The book contains an overview of range management, describing native flora, together with its ecology, types of rangelands, productivity and quality of rangelands, rangeland rehabilitation technologies, seed characteristics and seed production, technologies of improved pastures and haymaking fields. The book also contains a chapter on rangeland management in Australia.

The book has 424 pages and contains 58 references, 23 illustrations and 36 tables. We congratulate Kazakh scientists and JIRCAS with publication of this book in English, which will serve as an important reference source about rangelands in the region little known to the English speaking international public involved in range science.

(Source: Dr. Mekhslis Suleimenov, ICARDA-Tashkent and Dr. Luis Iniguez, ICARDA-Aleppo)

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS PUBLISHED

The proceedings of the regional workshop on "Bed-planting Technology of Wheat Cultivation", which took place in October, 2003, have been published and are being circulated in the region. The proceedings combine presentations from five countries sharing the data and the experience of bed-planting of

wheat. The Russian version is also available in both hard copies and electronic files. The English version is available electronically. The request for publication can be sent to Mrs. L. Geronina (gtz-cimmyt@nets.kz). The workshop was supported by GTZ-CIMMYT Regional Seed Network Project.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RICE

Rice research helps feed almost half the world and boosts farmers' incomes. In this context, for the first time, the United Nations has declared a year in honor of a crop, marking 2004 as the International Year of Rice with the theme "Rice is life." Scientists and researchers with the CGIAR have long been active in creating rice varieties to meet the needs of people around the world including initiatives to bring better health and sustainable livelihoods to rice farmers and consumers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. To learn more visit <http://www.futureharvest.org>

ISNAR'S RELOCATION

Transitional arrangements for the ISNAR program to be relocated at IFPRI are moving steadily forward, and ISNAR's Board of Trustees has fixed March 31, 2004 as the deadline for ending ISNAR operations in The Hague. The ISNAR-IFPRI program will operate now from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

NEW SCIENCE COUNCIL

The new Science Council, chaired by Dr. Per Pinstrup-Andersen, held an informal meeting at FAO, Rome on 4-6 February, 2004 when they reviewed the Council's potential work program and organization. FAO's Deputy Director General Dr. David Harcharik, together with Drs. John Monyo and Dietrich Leihner, extended a warm welcome to the Science Council Chair and members on behalf of Director General Dr. Jacques Diouf. The CGIAR Chair and Director also welcomed them through a video conference. In addition to the Chair, the Council consists of Drs. Virender Lal Chopra, Ken Fischer, Michael Gale, Richard Harwood, Alain de Janvry, Keiji Kainuma, Onesmo ole-Moi Yoi, Lisa Sennerby-Forsse, and Hans Gregersen (ex-officio). Drs. Alain de Janvry and Richard Harwood are providing the linkage between the interim Science Council and the new Science Council. The Science Council will hold its formal Inaugural Meeting on 12-15 May, 2004 at ICARDA.

GRPC

The Genetic Resources Policy Committee (GRPC) met for its 15th session at IPGRI Headquarters in Rome, from 16-18 February, 2004. This was the first meeting of the GRPC since it was externally reviewed and its mandate renewed in 2003. The new Committee of GRPC now consists of Drs. Carlos Correa (Chair), Bernard Le Buanec, Ronald Cantrell, Benchaphun Shinawatra Ekasingh, José Esquinas-Alcázar (FAO Observer), Emile Frison (Secretary), Michael Gale, Leonardo Montemayor, Juan Lucas Restrepo, Maria José Sampaio, Anil Subedi, and Carl-Gustaf Thornstrom.

CENTER DIRECTORS GENERAL

Dr. Pamela Anderson, CIP's Deputy Director General for Research, has been selected to replace Dr. Hubert Zandstra when he retires on 30 April, 2005. She is a highly regarded entomologist and ecologist who has worked in Latin America for more than 25 years, including over a decade in national agricultural research systems.

Dr. Stephen Hall has assumed duties as Director General of the World Fish Center, also known as ICLARM. He is an eminent fisheries scientist, research scholar, and author. He succeeds Dr. Meryl Williams who provided the World Fish Center and its partners with effective leadership for a decade. CGIAR Program for CAC congratulates both of them and wishes them all the success in their new assignments.

ALLIANCE OFFICE

The Center Directors Committee (CDC) has appointed Dr. Meryl Williams, former Director General of the World Fish Center, as the first Executive Officer of the Future Harvest Alliance Office. The purpose of the Alliance is to give policy and administrative support to collaboration among CGIAR Centers, and to strengthen the contribution of Centers to the CGIAR System. All PFU staff wish Dr. Meryl Williams all the success.

FUTURE EVENTS

REGIONAL POTATO WORKSHOP

The International Potato Center (CIP) through its regional Office for South, West and Central Asia, in collaboration with the PFU-CGIAR for CAC, based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan is conducting a regional workshop on "Identifying Priorities for Research and Development of Potato in the Central Asian and Caucasian Countries". The workshop will be held from 27-30 April, 2004 in Tashkent.

TRAINING ON RICE PRODUCTION

A regional training workshop on Rice Production will be organized jointly by IRRI and PFU-CGIAR for CAC in August, 2004 in Kazakhstan. The workshop will cover the issues of nutrient and water management, seed production and post-harvest technologies. More information about the workshop can be obtained from the PFU Office in Tashkent.

ADB REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Asian Development Bank (ADB) in collaboration with ICARDA Regional Office for CAC will organize a Regional Workshop on Agriculture and Natural Resource Research in the Central Asian Region from 9-11 August, 2004 in Tashkent. Scientists and policy makers from Azerbaijan and five Central Asian countries will participate in this workshop.

INTERNATIONAL BIOECON CONFERENCE

The University of Cambridge, the University College London (UCL), the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) in association with UK DEFRA and DIVERSITAS announce the Sixth International BIOECON conference on the economic analysis of policies for biodiversity conservation. The conference will be held at Kings College Cambridge, 2-3 September 2004. The conference will be of interest to both researchers interested in biological resources and biological processes and to policy makers interested in or working within the field of biodiversity conservation. Papers may be submitted for consideration for presentation within the workshops by sending copies to both Cambridge (Andreas Kontoleon at ak219@cam.ac.uk) and to UCL (Tim.Swanson@ucl.ac.uk) no later than 15 May, 2004. Acceptance of papers will be notified by email by 31st May 2004. Registrations for the conference are due by 30 June, 2004.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN UGANDA

An International Conference on Integrated Agricultural Research for Development Achievements, Lessons Learnt and Best Practise will be held in Kampala, Uganda from 1-4 September, 2004. The conference is organized by National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), Uganda. For more information, contact the NARO Conference Organising Committee: E-mail: naroconf@narosaari.org

ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL COURSE AT IAC

The International Agricultural Centre (IAC) is organizing an advanced-level international course: "Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Processes and Social Learning". The course will take place in Wageningen, The Netherlands from 13 September-1 October 2004. Details are available at: <http://www.iac.wur.nl/iac/courses/module.cfm?code=61/50/2004>

DR. ORUDJOV PASSED AWAY

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the passing away of Dr. Gudrat H. Orudjov, leading researcher of the Azerbaijan Research Institute of Crop Husbandry and National Coordinator for ICARDA Barley Program. He was the author of many new barley varieties and a good friend of ICARDA. May the departed soul rest in peace. Staff of ICARDA and PFU-CGIAR in CAC express their condolences to his family and colleagues to bear this loss with fortitude.