

**MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING ON STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS
IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS**

ISSYK-KUL DECLARATION

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Senior representatives of the Governments of the eight countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan - the Heads of the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of these countries, representatives of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the funding organizations met in Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan) on June 8, 2001, to review the status of agricultural research and further development in these countries and to reaffirm its importance for the sustainable growth and development of the entire region.

The participants consider that the economic growth of the CAC region depends largely on the agricultural sector and, therefore, agricultural research has a critical role to play in achieving the general goals of sustainable economic development, including improvement of livelihood of people through poverty reduction, food security and the arresting of the degradation of natural resources of the region.

Delegates also realize that the agricultural research organizations in the region are facing major constraints that limit their ability to perform more effectively. In this respect, while the situation varies from country to country, common concerns are: inadequate financial resources, inadequately maintained research facilities, obsolete equipment, lack of incentives for the scientific staff, difficulties in attracting young talented scientists and the insufficient scientific linkages at the regional and global levels. Also, inadequate mechanisms of technology transfer need further strengthening and support.

The delegates highly appreciate the new initiatives undertaken by the scientists of the region in partnership with the International Centers of the CGIAR, however the agricultural research outputs could be more effective and enhance the income of rural sector and contribute sustainable economic development of the region.

Therefore, the delegates solemnly call for all concerned stakeholders to take the necessary steps, in their respective spheres of responsibility, to renew the agricultural research systems in each country through the following measures:

- The respective Governments shall pay high priority attention to agricultural research systems in strengthening both the human and financial resources. They also shall support the process of renewal of agricultural research so as to improve its efficiency and cost-effectiveness to meet the new demands of the agricultural sector;
- The policy makers, the Governments, and leaders of the National Agricultural Research Systems are urged to undertake the required reforms to make them more responsive to the specific needs of the farmers and agricultural enterprises, especially the small and resource poor farmers.
- The International Centers of the CGIAR, Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and other Advanced Research Institutions working in the region, shall accept

their responsibility towards this renewal process of agricultural research in the CAC region and to build their strong partnerships for agricultural research for development; and

- The international donor community is urged to give very high priority to support this initiative for agricultural development of the region.

We are fully convinced that the above initiatives will foster overall prosperity through growth and development of the agricultural sector in the States of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan)
8 June 2001