



**Closing Workshop on
the CGIAR Collaborative Research & Capacity Building Program
for the Development of Sustainable and Resilient Agricultural Production
in Central Asia**

PRESS RELEASE

**14-15 December 2016
City Palace Hotel, Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

Tashkent, 14-15 December – In the Central Asian region, research on water-use efficient techniques and appropriate soil and crop management practices was conducted by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and various partners. The research focused on dry areas with insufficient water resources, with a prime objective of providing options for reducing vulnerability and managing risks in the agricultural production system. The research was conducted under the framework of the CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems and was funded by the Russian Government. A workshop on these activities will be held in Tashkent on the 14th and 15th of December 2016, which will bring together more than 80 participants including policy makers, international experts, the private sector and farming communities.

In recent history, Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan -adopted a new course in development by moving towards a market-based economic growth, setting food security as a strategic goal and a high-priority mission. Agricultural innovations paved the way for increased overall productivity of wheat and other major crops in almost all countries. However, substantial efforts are still needed to accelerate dynamic agricultural development which has the capacity to cope with challenges such as a growing population, land degradation, changing socio-economic conditions and climate change. It requires the design and dissemination of resource-efficient and environment-friendly technologies able to increase agricultural productivity to secure economic sovereignty and to ensure sustainable livelihoods for smallholders' households in Central Asian countries.

Governments and donor societies in developed countries are increasingly recognizing the role of agriculture and agricultural innovation systems in Central Asia. To secure income options and stable and healthy food supply, enhanced investments in the development of science and in strong international trade and market access are essential. Connecting local state development programs with global initiatives and advanced innovation centers will strengthen the mutual cross-fertilizations of ideas with other regions and will synergize the efforts of all stakeholders including policymakers, executing agencies, extension services and farming communities. An enabling policy and institutional environment is a key factor to improve access to resources and quality seed materials, and support release and promotion of innovative techniques and approaches.

Via individual presentations and group discussions, workshop participants will explore and discuss the major outputs and outcomes of the Program's research activities in Central Asia over the past four years. Country delegations will have opportunity to present and discuss the program's benefits and gaps.



This workshop is organized by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas in collaboration with other CGIAR and non-CGIAR Centers and partners of the CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems.

For more information on this event please contact Dr. Ram Sharma at (99890) 9742332 or r.c.sharma@cgiar.com

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

The CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems is a global agricultural research partnership to realize the potential of dryland communities. The program brings together eight CGIAR centers, and numerous international, regional, and national partners to engage in integrated agricultural systems research and unique partnership platforms to ensure improved food security, equitable and sustainable natural resource management, and better livelihoods in the world's dry areas.

The main challenge is that the majority of farmers in arid and semi-arid regions of the developing world grow crops or raise livestock on a small scale. They face daunting challenges – from infertile and degraded land, scarce water, and frequent drought to authorities struggling to support them, poor marketing intelligence, and limited opportunities to try out innovations and new technologies. The result is low agricultural productivity that perpetuates a cycle of deep poverty and food insecurity.

Specifically, the Program aims to provide policy makers with the research evidence to develop policies that will benefit marginalized farming communities living in the world's dry rural areas; help smallholder farmers to acquire skills in natural resource management that enable them to adapt to climate change and have better livelihoods and food security; realize the potential of women and youth to improve drylands agricultural livelihoods; encourage equitable access to natural resources and better resources management; diversify production and add value to agricultural production chains; and improve crop and livestock productivity and stabilize agricultural production.

The Program's systems approach looks at agricultural livelihoods systems in an integrated and 'holistic' way. This approach is important because scarce water resources, land degradation, urbanization, commodity price shocks, and climate change will hit dry areas particularly hard.

To fulfil the mission the Program partnering with all actors in agricultural production systems, including scientists, extension workers, farming communities, policy-makers, regional and international organizations, development agencies, and the private sector; fostering innovation platforms to address challenges collectively, and deliver sustainable and inclusive benefits for all.

Testing and validating integrated solutions of a technological, institutional, governance, and policy nature that are specifically tailored to various agro-ecosystems in the dry areas; mainstreaming gender in all its research activities; investing in and promoting youth in agricultural development; and of course, building capacity both within the program and of stakeholders across all research activities.