



The Week at ICARDA

International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas

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4 January 2007

No. 952

ICARDA at AGM06

The Annual General Meeting of the CGIAR for 2006 (AGM06) was held on 27 November to 7 December in Washington, DC in Hilton Washington Hotel and the



Mr Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank, visited ICARDA's booth on 4 December. Dr Mahmoud Solh (right), Director General, briefed him on the Center's work.

World Bank. ICARDA Board Chair, Dr Guido Gryseels, and Director General, Dr Mahmoud Solh, led a team of the Center's senior staff at the meeting including Drs William Erskine, Raj Paroda, Richard Thomas, Sanjaya Rajaram, Ahmed Sidahmed, Elizabeth Bailey, and Surendra Varma, who had specific responsibilities to ensure that ICARDA was well represented in the various events throughout the AGM06. Dr Mustafa El-Bouhssini and Dr Asamoha Larbi were also present to participate in the CSO (Civil Society Organizations) Forum and SLP meeting, respectively. Board members Drs David Sammons and Shinobu Inanaga, who were present on behalf of their respective institutions, also joined the ICARDA team in several events.

A Centers and Members Day was held on 4 December, and a CSO Forum and a Stakeholder Meeting on 5 December. The business meeting took place on 6-7 December.

Centers and Members Day

The day started with opening remarks by Dr Joachim Voss, Alliance Executive Chair, and Dr Katherine Sierra, CGIAR Chair. This was followed by two keynote addresses: "Climate Change and Agriculture: Promising Research and Policy Response—A Perspective from the International Climate Change Community," by Martin Parry of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

CGIAR Award for ICARDA's Innovative Partnership



Drs Mustapha El-Bouhssini (second left), Bruce L. Parker (left) and Margaret Skinner (third right) received the award from Dr Katherine Sierra (second right), CGIAR Chair. Dr Franklin Moore (third left), of USAID, and Dr Ruth Haug (right), Professor and Head of Department at NORAGRIC, Norway, also participated in the award-giving ceremony. Photo: Chas Geer. See story on page 3.

Change, and Cynthia Rosenzweig of NASA; and "Climate Change and Agriculture in the Tropics and Sub-Tropics: People at Risk and Promising Research and Policy Responses," by Robert Zeigler, Director General of IRRI.

Official Opening of AGM06

The AGM06 was officially opened in the afternoon of 4 December. The ceremony included opening remarks by Dr Francisco Reifschneider, CGIAR Director; opening speech by Dr Katherine Sierra, CGIAR Chair; CGIAR update by Dr Reifschneider; and opening remarks by Mr Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank. The opening session also included the CGIAR Awards ceremony (see page 4).

Meetings Co-sponsored by ICARDA Oasis—Systemwide Program to Combat Desertification

This special luncheon meeting on 4 December was co-sponsored by USAID, IFAD, ICARDA and ICRISAT. Dr Franklin Moore of USAID and Chair of the UNCCD Committee to Review Implementation of the Convention, and Dr Rodney Cook, of IFAD, co-chaired the meeting.

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CGIAR Business Meeting

The CGIAR Business Meeting took place on 6-7 December at the World Bank. Dr Mahmoud Solh was invited to introduce himself as the new DG of ICARDA. Dr Solh, in his remarks, said ICARDA's vision is better livelihoods for resource-poor people in non-tropical dry areas. The Center, as a world-class research institution, will emphasize its global mission of addressing the challenges of agriculture in dry areas. Guided by its vision and mission, ICARDA is in the process of developing a new strategic plan in consultation with all stakeholders and taking into account the CGIAR priorities and EPMR recommendations. The paradigm shifts in the strategy will be from the commodity focus, which the Center has emphasized since its inception, to sustainable development of integrated production systems in dry areas, Dr Solh said. He thanked the donor community and the CGIAR Secretariat for their continuous support to, and confidence in ICARDA.

The report of the fifth EPMR of ICARDA was tabled for discussion at the meeting. Dr Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Chair of the CGIAR Science Council (SC), presented the

SC and ExCo comments on the report. Prof. Dr Stephen Baezinger, EPMR member, responded to the comments through videoconferencing. In response to a question whether all socioeconomists will be hosted in one program, Dr Solh said that ICARDA recognizes the importance of having a critical mass of economists and social scientists, and of good integration between biophysical and social sciences at the Center, and will look into this issue when the new strategy is finalized. The issue of capacity building was also briefly discussed. Dr Solh informed the meeting that a succession plan is under implementation and efforts are being made to attract young scientists. He said that emphasis on degree training (MSc and PhD) will increase. ICARDA has already supported graduate training of about 500 students. He thanked the EPMR Panel Chair and members for their useful comments and recommendations.

The CGIAR then endorsed ICARDA's EPMR report, with the new emphasis on a global mission to promote agricultural research and development in non-tropical dry areas.

Meetings Co-sponsored by ICARDA

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The Oasis luncheon meeting in progress. Seated from right to left: Dr Franklin Moore of USAID; Dr Rodney Cook of IFAD; Dr Mahmoud Solh; and Dr Simon Best, Board Chair of ICRISAT. At the microphone: Dr Richard Thomas of ICARDA.

Dr Mahmoud Solh, ICARDA DG, made opening remarks. Drs Richard Thomas of ICARDA and Barry Shapiro of ICRISAT made a joint presentation on the causes and magnitude of desertification, its impact on livelihoods, and the Oasis strategy. Their presentation was well received. Dr Simon Best, Board Chair of ICRISAT, summed up the presentation and discussions. Dr Ken Fischer of the Science Council (SC) presented the SC perspective of the Oasis Consortium. In his closing remarks, Dr Moore appreciated the strategy and program of work of Oasis. The meeting was successful in promoting awareness of the challenges of desertification among donors and other partners.

Collaborative Research Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus

This special meeting, co-sponsored by the World Bank, IFAD, USAID

and ICARDA, was held in the afternoon of 4 December. Dr Mahmoud Solh, as Chairman of the Alliance Task Force for CAC, chaired the meeting. In his opening remarks, Dr Solh thanked the donors and the CAC-Consortium members for their support to the collaborative program and praised the significant achievements made in a short time. He paid tribute to Dr Paroda for his visionary leadership in strengthening partner-

ships and attracting donor attention to promote the program in the region. He said the program partners were sad to see Dr Paroda leave, and wished him happiness in his future endeavors.

Dr Paroda made a comprehensive presentation on the achievements and future aspirations of the program. He highlighted how the partners in the region are appreciating the contributions of the program and extending increased support. His presentation was well received.

The discussion pointed to the need for sustainable support to the program.

To strengthen the program, USAID recently started to sponsor a Collaborative Support Program for Integrated Pest Management in Central Asia (IPM-CRSP). The project is designed to foster development of a comprehensive IPM initiative, using an ecologically-based multidisciplinary systems approach.

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Opening session of the CAC Program luncheon meeting. Right to left: Dr Dana Dalrymple, USAID; Dr Mahmoud Solh; and Dr Raj Paroda.

CGIAR Award for ICARDA's Innovative Research Partnership

ICARDA's collaborative research on integrated management of Sunn pest in West and Central Asia won the CGIAR Award for Innovative Partnership at a competition held on 5 December at the CSO Forum during the AGM06. Dr Mustapha El-Bouhssini, ICARDA entomologist, and Drs Bruce L. Parker and Margaret Skinner, from

Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan. This group promotes implementation of management strategies region-wide to protect wheat from Sunn pest damage. Implementation of these research approaches was supported by the Department for International Development (UK).

Forty-six partnerships from around the world compet-



The Sunn pest team briefing (clockwise, from top right) Mr Paul Wolfowitz, World Bank President; Dr David Sammons, ICARDA Board member; Dr Guido Gryseels, ICARDA Board Chair; and Dr Franklin Moore of USAID.

the University of Vermont, USA, have been leading the partnership for over a decade in collaboration with NARS scientists as well as specialists worldwide. They received the award from Dr Katherine Sierra, Vice-President of the World Bank's recently formed Sustainable Development Network, and the new CGIAR Chair. The award was won in the "People's Choice" category.

Sunn pest is an insect that causes serious losses in wheat yield and quality in West and Central Asia. Over US\$150 million is spent each year on pesticides against Sunn pest and other insect pests. In addition to the high cost of chemical control, insecticides pose a risk to nature's balance, human health, water quality, wildlife, and the environment as a whole. Supported by the USAID Linkage Funds, the Sunn pest research team has developed integrated pest management strategies that are contributing to safeguarding wheat production in the region.

One significant impact of the team's work is that national policymakers are replacing government-supported aerial applications of chemical insecticides by environmentally sound biological control and other IPM approaches. Another important outcome of the partnership has been the formation of a Sunn Pest Advisory Council composed of Ministry-appointed representatives from Syria,

ed in the event. They presented their work for review by scientific jurors and over 750 participants who were present at the AGM. The entries were judged based on achievements and impacts, the novel character of the partnership, the relevance and applicability of the work to other agricultural problems, the evidence of joint decision making by partners, and the significance of the initiative for strengthening capacity.

The Sunn pest team presented their work to Dr Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank, who toured the exhibition after addressing participants at the AGM opening ceremony. Speaking on behalf of the team, Dr El-Bouhssini said they were deeply gratified and honored to receive the award. Despite the progress that has been made towards ecologically sound Sunn pest management, he said, much still remains to be done—and the team is looking forward to using the \$30,000 cash award to expand their collaborative efforts.

Congratulating the winning team, Dr Mahmoud Solh, Director General of ICARDA, said: "The award is an acknowledgement of the hard work and dedication of national scientists who are active members of the Sunn pest team, and of support from donors. The dividends from this research are truly high."

Michigan State University, the University of California, and ICARDA serve as host institutions for implementing this program.

Sida is also planning to support conservation of plant genetic resources with an outlay of about US\$ 25 million. IFAD and other donors were pleased with the progress and all felt that the CAC Challenge Program will help rebuild the R&D system in the CAC region, generate potentially quick impacts, and contribute to achieving the MDGs.

The Global Rust Initiative

Co-sponsored by IFAD and USAID, and co-organized by ICARDA and CIMMYT, this luncheon meeting took place on 5 December. Dr Franklin Moore and Dr Rob Bertram of USAID opened the meeting. Dr Sanjaya Rajaram made a comprehensive presentation in which he traced the history of Ug99, the threat it

High-Value Crops: Research, Policies and Program to Help the Poor

Other than the events co-sponsored by ICARDA, the ICARDA team participated in several side meetings. One of these meetings was on "High Value Crops: Research, Policies and Program to Help the Poor," held on 4 December. ICARDA distributed a brochure at the meeting, which presented a summary of the Center's past and ongoing work in promoting high-value crops and products to diversify cropping systems and income options for farmers in the dry areas. ICARDA offered to be an active partner in the proposed CGIAR Challenge Program on High Value Crops.

This CP will address two critical issues: income generation and livelihoods improvement (including nutrition), with a focus on developing countries.

Meetings with Donors

During AGM06, Dr Solh, along with ICARDA team members, took the opportunity to meet a large number of



Dr S. Rajaram of ICARDA made a comprehensive presentation at the GRI luncheon meeting.



The ICARDA team members in discussion with donor representatives from France.

poses in the future, the areas that are vulnerable to attack, and the strategy and workplan of the Global Rust Initiative (GRI), led by ICARDA and CIMMYT in collaboration with a large number of NARS and other partners. Dr Derek Byerlee of the World Bank also made a presentation, in which he highlighted potential impacts of the GRI. Dr Mangala Rai, Director General, Indian Council for Agricultural Research; and Dr Romano Kiome, Director General, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, reiterated the support of their countries to the GRI.

Dr Mahmoud Solh, ICARDA DG, and Dr Masa Iwanaga, CIMMYT DG, were present at the meeting.

In his closing remarks, Dr Moore appreciated the work and strategy of GRI and wished all partners success in their mission.

GRI benefits from special grants from the governments of Canada, India and the USA; the Rockefeller Foundation and Sasakawa Africa Association; in-kind funding from the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya and Pakistan; and unrestricted funds from the CGIAR membership to ICARDA and CIMMYT.



Dr Masa Iwanaga (left), DG of CIMMYT, in a discussion with Dr Mahmoud Solh (right).

donors and other partners. The discussions helped identify potential sources of funding, and paved the way for developing project proposals for submission to specific donors.

CGIAR Awards

World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, and CGIAR Chair Katherine Sierra, joined former CGIAR Chairs and special guests in presenting the 2006 CGIAR Science Awards to individuals and teams:



Drs Surendra Varma and Ahmed Sidahmed briefing Mr Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank, on ICARDA's work.



Dr Mahmoud Solh briefing senior officials from Tunisia on ICARDA's work.



Dr Mahmoud Solh makes a point to Dr Guido Gryseels (left), ICARDA Board Chair, and Ms Beatriz Avalos-Sartorio (right), Senior Officer, Science Council Secretariat.

for an innovative and highly effective campaign to promote the consumption of micronutrient-rich leafy vegetables in Africa.

The 2006 Crawford Lecture

The 2006 Crawford lecture was delivered by Hon. Anne-Marie Lizin, President of the Belgian Senate and Chairperson of the Senate Foreign Relations and Defense Committee. The Crawford Memorial Lecture has been a part of the CGIAR's Annual General Meetings. It is named in honor of Sir John Crawford, who was a passionate supporter of international agricultural research for development, a founding father of the CGIAR and the first Chair of its Technical Advisory Committee. The lecture, sponsored by the Australian Government, seeks to challenge those involved in agricultural research and development to consider the broader issues and trends that influence their work.

Mme. Lizin spoke on "Food for All: a Challenge for the 21st Century." She underlined the fundamental importance of achieving food security in a world where more than one billion people live in extreme poverty. "Considering that by 2050 it will be necessary to feed a population of about 9 billion people, agricultural research is critical," she noted. Sustainable development, she concluded, must be "based on solidarity between people and between the current and future generations." In their efforts to achieve "a more just and peaceful world, the CGIAR is an indispensable partner."

- **CGIAR 2006 King Baudouin Award:** CIMMYT won this award for outstanding research resulting in stress-tolerant maize varieties for Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Outstanding Scientist Award:** Dr Ram P. Thakur of ICRISAT received this award for developing new disease-resistant hybrid crops (pearl millet and sorghum).
- **Promising Young Scientist Award:** Dr Thomas Dubois of IITA received this award for developing pest- and disease-resistant bananas in the Great Lakes Region of Eastern Africa.
- **Outstanding Senior Scientist:** Dr Bir Bahadur Singh of IITA earned this honor for his work to improve food security, nutrition, and farmers' incomes in the tropics by developing improved varieties of cowpea and sustainable cropping systems.
- **Outstanding Scientific Article Award:** A team of authors led by Malcolm J. Gardner, formerly with the Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR), received this award for their article published in *Science* in 2005.
- **Outstanding Partnership Award:** Eleven CGIAR Centers, including ICARDA, managing genebanks, shared this award for their effective stewardship of more than 600,000 samples of plant genetic resources held in trust for the world community.
- **Outstanding Scientific Support Award:** Luz Marina Alvare of IFPRI and her team of information managers, professionals and researchers across the CGIAR, including ICARDA, received this award for the launch of the CGIAR Virtual Library.
- **Outstanding Communications Award:** Patrick Maundu of Bioversity International received this award

Quote of the Week

"To get the right word in the right place is a rare achievement. To condense the diffused light of a page of thought into the luminous flash of a single sentence, is worthy to rank as a prize composition just by itself...Anybody can have ideas—the difficulty is to express them without squandering a quire of paper on an idea that ought to be reduced to one glittering paragraph."

— Mark Twain