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CDD

CIRDAP Development Digest



CIRDAP

**Centre on Integrated Rural Development for
Asia and the Pacific**

CIRDAP

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is a regional, intergovernmental, and autonomous institution, established in July 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations with support from several other UN bodies and donors. Its member countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh (Host State), Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The main objectives of CIRDAP are to: (i) assist national action; (ii) promote regional cooperation; and (iii) act as a servicing institution for its member countries for promotion of integrated rural development (IRD) through research, action research, pilot project, training, and information dissemination. Amelioration of rural poverty in the Asia-Pacific region has been the prime concern of CIRDAP. The programme priorities of CIRDAP are set under four Areas of Concern: 1) Agrarian Development; 2) Institutional/ Infrastructural; 3) Resource development including human resources; and 4) Employment. Within these Areas of Concern, the thematic areas identified are: Poverty alleviation through participatory approaches with emphasis on social sector development (e.g. health, education and nutrition); Employment generation through microcredit support, infrastructure development and local resource mobilisation; Gender issues; Governance issues; and Environmental concerns for sustainable rural development.

Operating through designated Contact Ministries and Link Institutions in member countries, CIRDAP promotes technical cooperation among nations of the region. It plays a supplementary and reinforcing role in supporting and furthering the effectiveness of integrated rural development programmes in the Asia-Pacific region.

About CDD

CIRDAP Development Digest (CDD) is published four times a year (March, June, September and December). The purpose of the CDD is to highlight various facets of IRD in the Asia-Pacific region. Any uncredited article or information appearing in the CDD may be reproduced without prior permission but with due acknowledgement and a copy to the Editor. The designations employed and the presentation of materials in CDD do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of CIRDAP concerning the legal status of any country, city or area, or of its authorities or boundaries. News items, viewpoints on IRD and related issues are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor.

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Cover photo shows the Director General of CIRDAP (seated in the centre) interacting with the Government officials and other delegates during CIRDAP – SAC Joint Mission for Strategic Planning for Post Disaster Restoration held in Nepal.

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Research News

CIRDAP – SAC Joint Mission for Strategic Planning for Post Disaster Restoration of Agriculture in Nepal

Nepal was struck by a major earthquake (8.1 Ms) on 25th April 2015 killing more than 8,000 people, injuring more than 19,000, and damaging infrastructures and properties. Its epicenter was the village of Barpak, Gorkha district, and its hypocenter was at a depth of approximately 15 km

supports that are critical to the individual farm household are crop seed, livestock, food grains and edible oils.

Natural disasters have become a common and recurrent episodes in most regions and more prominently the impact of tsunami, flashfloods, volcano and cyclones in South-East Asia (SEA) have been extensively detrimental on life and livelihood. The SEA nations have displayed the resilience with potent strategies, policies and actions to bring back the community to vibrant life.



Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in collaboration with SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) and Ministry of Agricultural Development, Government of Nepal organised a Joint Mission for Strategic Planning for Post Disaster Restoration of Agriculture in Nepal during 11-17 December 2016. The mission focused on identification of priority areas of interventions that SAARC and CIRDAP can mobilize through the regional initiatives.

(9.3 mi). It is considered as the worst natural disaster to strike Nepal since the 1934 Nepal–Bihar earthquake. The earthquake affected 15 districts of western and central region (Central- Dolakha, Nuwakot, Dhading, Sindhupalchok, Kavrepalanchok, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Rasuwa, Makwanpur; and Western- Gorkha, Lamjung, Chitwan, Kaski, Tanahun). To add to the miseries of dislodged communities, continued aftershocks occurred throughout Nepal within 15–20 minute intervals, with one shock reaching a magnitude of 6.7 on 26 April. The earthquake and series of tremor triggered another huge avalanche and landslides destroying agricultural land and villages.

The Consultation Meeting was inaugurated on 16 December 2016. A Senior Officer from the Ministry of Agricultural Development, Government of Nepal was present as Chief Guest. Director General of CIRDAP interacted with the Government officials and other delegates, and shared his experiences on earthquake.

As per WFP report (8 May 2015) food stocks in the hills have been severely affected. An estimate from the Ministry of Agriculture and Development indicates that 91,679 mt of food stock, 58,832 livestock, and 629,362 poultry have been lost due to recent earthquake. Considering the remoteness of affected areas and agricultural season, the widespread loss of food has resulted into a humanitarian crisis in the country. Nothing can assist desolation, except the direct support of food, which can help the community sustain and rebuild livelihood system. In disaster situation, two immediate



Experts from the Ministries of Agriculture, Federal Affairs and Local Development, Home Affairs, Livestock and Fisheries, SAARC Secretariat, SAC, International and National NGOs, and CIRDAP attended the mission exercise. The mission was consisted of several events, such as,

discussion meeting with high officials of the Ministries of Agriculture and Federal Affairs and Local Development of Government of Nepal; field visits to the earthquake affected areas of Gorkha, Tanahun and Lamjung districts on 13, 14 and 15 December respectively and briefing session in the last day.

After threadbare discussions, the following plan of action on three categories was formulated:

Category	Autonomous	Planned	Anticipatory
Policy and governance incl. norms, values and practices	- Labor sharing system	- Harmonization of needs and plan - Proper land use policy and planning - Access to resources incl. finance	- Disaster open space - Harmonization of policies among different ministries - Management of Unproductive livestock
Research and Extension incl. technology	- Mainstreaming community based initiatives (seed bank, food bank, kangi house for injured and stray animals)	- Research on early warning system - Piloting of resilient system - Exploration, collection and documentation of local knowledge and technology - Agriculture intensification and diversification - Appropriate technology	- Disaster response squad
Capacity building	- Mobilization of existing local institutions (groups, coops) - Train and mobilization of volunteers	- SME development - Ecosystem-based approach - Awareness on DRR, food safety and quality - Trained HR on DRR - Share the responsibilities	- Disaster curriculum at school and university levels - Disaster learning centers

DG CIRDAP visits BARD, Comilla

At the invitation of the Director General of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Director General of CIRDAP accompanied by Director ICD, Director PPD, Director (A&F) and Asst. Programme Officer (Research) visited BARD during 02 to 03 October 2016 to get acquaintance of the programme activities of BARD and discuss on the future mutual collaboration between the two organisations.

On 03 October 2016, a field visit was organised to Raipur Village adjacent to BARD, the project site of the Comprehensive Village Development Programme (CVDP). The project staff and the CVDP Society members briefed about the programme activities in the village.

After the field visit, Director General of CIRDAP and his team joined in a Consultation Meeting on Academic Collaboration between CIRDAP and BARD.

At the outset, the Chairperson conveyed heartiest welcome to the DG CIRDAP and his entourage to the BARD campus. DG BARD mentioned that CIRDAP started its activities from BARD campus and BARD maintains a good relation with CIRDAP.





DG, CIRDAP thanked BARD authority for inviting him and his entourage and sharing ideas. Introducing CIRDAP he said that CIRDAP is an intergovernmental regional institute of three regions for promoting best practices of member countries.

After his speech, the following discussions were taken place:

- The 32nd TC meeting will be held on March 2017 in Bangladesh. It was informed that the Inaugural session along with a seminar would be organised in Dhaka and the field visit would be organised at project area of BARD. Along with fifteen observers 30 persons from abroad may join the TC meeting. For organising this TC programme effectively BARD and CIRDAP authority will sit together again to finalize the programme, agenda and other administrative matters.
- BARD and CIRDAP can organise at least one regional training workshop every year on the best practices of rural development in Bangladesh on a cost sharing basis. Following the experiences of BARD-AARDO collaboration, CIRDAP can seek nomination from its member countries; bear the cost of international travelling, cost of resource persons and daily allowance of the participants while BARD can make a provision on its revenue budget for bearing the cost of accommodation, food and other cost at the home country. BARD can come forward with a concept paper for further discussion on it.
- CIRDAP can facilitate to organise a seminar/training workshop in collaboration with APO on a cost sharing basis. Generally, APO bears the cost of international travelling and host institute need to bear all local costs. The issue that has relationship with SDGs viz-a-viz productivity improvement can be selected for organising seminar/training programme. Explaining the experiences of BARD-CIRDAP-APO earlier relationship, it was said that BARD facilitated to organize a regional training on the Project Cycle Management (PCM). Following up this training, another training can be organised by updating the contents of the training. DG CIRDAP will talk to the APO authority in this regard.
- CIRDAP will follow up the progress of research proposals made by BARD faculty under RCF fund. It was also discussed that the research areas should be focused on evidence based decision making by using contemporary research methods. Randomize Control Trial (RCT) research method has potential scope for experimentation in collaboration with CIRDAP's link institutions.
- There is a scope for developing collaboration with Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) for organising training, research and action research. BARD and CIRDAP organised several programmes in collaboration with COMSEC. Following these experiences CIRDAP can come forward to revitalize the relationship with COMSEC while BARD can facilitate by providing information and proposals.
- CIRDAP may support some small action research initiatives of BARD. There were several experimental projects with CIRDAP earlier but now a days there is no action research in collaboration with CIRDAP. If there are small amount of fund at CIRDAP to support the cost of action research BARD Faculty can come forward with some innovative proposals.
- Exposure/study visit among the CIRDAP link institutes can be organised on a regular basis to share the best practices and having more collaborative works with them.
- Using the platform of the Comprehensive Village Development Cooperative Societies (CVDCs), BARD can think to experiment eco-tourism and establishing food processing enterprise for adding value to farmer's initiative. CIRDAP may facilitate by providing technical support to this end.
- DG, CIRDAP requested BARD to engage with CIRDAP by sending innovative concept papers by articulating the demand of BARD. CIRDAP will certainly play the role of matchmaker to bring fruitful result of the initiatives. Hoping the meeting will be a milestone for revitalizing the relationship between CIRDAP and BARD he concluded his speech. Finally, thanking DG CIRDAP and his entourage and faculty members of BARD, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed.

Visit to SAARC Agricultural Centre

Director General of CIRDAP accompanied by Director ICD, Director PPD and Asst. Programme Officer (Research) paid a visit to the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) on 02 October 2016 located in Dhaka. Dr. S.M. Bokhtiar, Director, SAC received the delegates in his office.



DG CIRDAP in his introductory remarks expressed his satisfaction to visit the centre and hoped to continue partnership collaboration with the centre. He mentioned that SAC activities are very interesting and may be disseminated to other non-SAARC countries for their benefit. He emphasized on the best practices of SAARC countries. Dr. Tayan Gurung, Senior Programme Specialist of SAC briefed the current activities as well as the future programmes of the Centre. He thanked CIRDAP for organizing the joint programme on agro-processing in Amrita University, India and expressed hope that the project submitted to SDF fund will be initiated very soon in collaboration with CIRDAP.

First and Second Meeting of the Review Committee on Strengthening CIRDAP

CIRDAP has initiated the preparation of a strategic paper on Strengthening CIRDAP as recommended by the policy bodies meetings held in Nadi, Fiji in 2013 and guidelines/suggestions made during the 31st Technical Committee Meeting (TC-31) held in Kuala Lumpur in 2016.

Director General in consultation with CIRDAP Staff has prepared a detailed Term of Reference (TOR) as a guideline for preparation of the strategic plan.

In order to accomplish the activity on time and to prepare a quality policy paper for submission in the forth coming Technical Committee and Executive/Governing Council, Director General constituted a four member committee headed by Dr. Durga P. Paudyal, former Director General, CIRDAP. The other members are: Dr. Somporn Hanpongpantha, IRD expert of CIRDAP, Dr. S. Vijay Kumar, former Secretary, Government of India, and Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, former Governor of Bangladesh Bank as Advisors.

The team is expected to submit the final report by 31 January 2017 before the forthcoming TC meeting to be held in March 2017 in Bangladesh. According to the activity schedule, the committee met in CIRDAP Headquarters during 23-25 October 2016, and finalized the broad outline of the strategic paper on Strengthening CIRDAP.

The second meeting of the Committee met for the second time on 04 December 2016; prepared report taking into consideration the challenges of CIRDAP; and circulated for further review. The committee is expected to meet again during 15-16 January 2017 to finalize the report.





Pilot Projects Update

APO – CIRDAP Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference: Greening the Food Supply Chain

With the support from the Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Region and Transmigration, Government of Indonesia, “Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference: Greening the Food Supply Chain” was jointly organised by Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) and Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) on 26-28 October 2016 at the Grand Inna Kuta, Bali, Indonesia. The conference was attended by participants coming from the member-countries of APO and CIRDAP.

It was one of the approved four projects under the duly signed Memorandum of Understanding between APO and CIRDAP in January 2016 in Tokyo, Japan. The common goals are to increase productivity, design sustainable development interventions that will contribute in poverty eradication and share growth and social development outcomes.

The conference was inaugurated on October 26, 2016 which was followed by the business sessions. The first two paper presentations titled on “Trends in Global Agriculture Production & Food Trade” and “Mainstreaming Green Supply Chains in CIRDAP Member-States’ Rural Development Programs” were presented by the Secretary General of host Ministry, Dr. Anwar Sanusi and Director PPD of CIRDAP respectively. CIRDAP paper was co-authored by

Director General of CIRDAP and Director (PPD). Likewise, the invited resource persons delivered their lectures, and the participants presented their country papers for knowledge generation and sharing relevant to the theme of the conference. The synthesis of the various conference paper



presentations was presented by one of the APO’s resource person, Dr. Louie Divinagracia. The synthesis provided the key messages and recommendations as way forward.



The Director General delivered his inauguration speech with key message of mainstreaming sustainable development in promoting agri-food supply chain in CMC's rural development programmes. He insisted on the categorical role of rural communities becoming dynamic players in the green agri-food supply chains.

The knowledge that was generated and shared among the participants in the conference was envisioned to bring the best practices and policy models that apparently brought positive impacts by having these tailored for replication and scaling up across the member-countries.

APO-CIRDAP Training Course for Women Productivity Tools and Techniques for Improving Productivity of Micro and Small Agro-food Processing Business

The APO-CIRDAP Training Course for Women Productivity Tools and Techniques for Improving Productivity of Micro and Small Agro-food Processing Business was successfully



held from 7-11 November 2016 at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad, India. It was attended by 24 participants coming from the member countries of the APO and CIRDAP.

The training programme was inaugurated on 7 November 2016 by Dr. W.R. Reddy, Director General, NIRD&PR. APO and CIRDAP representatives made their remarks on behalf of the agencies they represented. In the programme, Mr. Mitsuo Nakamura, Program Officer, APO and Ms. Nina Maria B. Estudillo, Chief Technical Expert and APO Certified Productivity Practitioner from the Philippines explained the programme structure that included the pre-assessment of participants' level of knowledge and skills on productivity and agro-food processing.

On the request of DG, NIRD&PR, Ms. Nina Estudillo made a presentation to the selected professionals of NIRD&PR on Kaizen approach for productivity improvement, i.e., the 5S principles within the context of the institute notwithstanding agro-food processing industry. Likewise, the participants attended two special lectures organised as part of NIRD&PR

Foundation Day activities. The lectures were delivered by two renowned women leaders in India viz. Ms. Lalitha Kumaramangalam, Chairperson, National Commission for Women and Ms. B. Vijaya Bharathi, Advisor-member of a civil society (i.e. self-help groups, Orvakal Mahila Podupu Lakshmi Ikykya Sangham). They have shared about the roles of women in different tiers of governance as a policy-maker.

The lectures delivered in the training course have provided two distinct perspectives but equally important in terms of increasing productivity among women in the society. They emphasized the significance of women participation in planning and capacity building that would unchain them from the stereotype perceived roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers. The role of the state was also underlined, which is about creating favorable environment and systems. The hard realities

about women being hindered by culture and religion have to be addressed creatively to unleash the natural skills and resilience of women in the universal goals of achieving economic development that may begin right at their homes, communities with the vision of being able to co-exist with the bigger markets.



APO-CIRDAP-DAR Workshop on Agricultural Insurance Systems

The APO-CIRDAP-DAR Workshop on Agricultural Insurance Systems was held from 28 November to December 2, 2016 in Metro Manila, Philippines. It was attended by selected participants coming from the member countries of the APO and CIRDAP.

The opening programme was inaugurated by the DAR Undersecretary for Support Services Office, Ms. Rosalina L. Bistoyong. Opening remarks were delivered by Mr. Tevita G. Boseiwaqa Taginavulau, Director General of CIRDAP, Mr. Carlos A. Sayco, Jr., Senior Fellow, Productivity Programmes



Field visits were organised for participants outside Metro Manila. The field visits provided empirical evidence how agriculture insurance in the Philippines was institutionalized having its high and low tides in terms of policy implementation.

It is apparent that agri-insurance in the Philippines has been a long running development state policy that was once again highly given importance in light of the growing support for on climate change and sustainable development. The study tour at the national, regional and local community has shown the interactions from all structural levels that included the capacity for self and organizational determination of the cooperative to see real transformation from poverty to sustainable enterprises.

of the Development Academy of the Philippines – National Productivity Organisation, and Mr. Norman R. Cajucom, the Senior Vice President of the Department of Agriculture - Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (DA-PCIC).

There were five [5] major sessions. The invited resource persons, Dr. Olena Sosenko, Mr. Peter Book and Mr. Mayank Dubey, delivered their lectures. The participants presented their country papers for knowledge generation and sharing relevant to the themes of the Course. All the papers were uploaded and accessible at the APO website for the general people. The workshop was co-facilitated by Mr. Tomas A. Cabuenos, Jr., Project Manager of Sustainable Development Solutions, Philippines.





Training Division

CIRDAP – NIRD&PR Collaborative International Training Programme on Social Audit in Rural Development Programmes

With the support from the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, an international training programme on Social Audit in Rural Development Programmes was organised in collaboration with the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) from 09-18 November 2016 at NIRD&PR, Hyderabad, India.

The programme was attended by participants coming from 12 countries, namely: Abid Bin Abdul Jalil from *Malaysia*, Nguyen Thi Yen from *Vietnam*, Rhea Marie P. Betque from the *Philippines*, Elitrisiana Modesianne from *Indonesia*, Jeremaia Navuniwai Buakula from *Fiji*, Sai Soe Htay from *Myanmar*, Ekanath Bastola from *Nepal*, Charupa Khongchana from *Thailand*, N C Ekanayake from *Sri Lanka*, Abdul Hafiz Yaqubi from *Afghanistan*, Abdul Karim from *Bangladesh*, and Khogen and Neerja Upadhyaya from *India*.

The resource persons took sessions in the following Module:

- Module I: Poverty and Rural Development Scenario
- Module II: Social Security Programmes Tool of Transparency and Accountability Measure
- Module III: Transparency and Accountability Measures
- Module IV: Social Accountability Mechanisms and Social Audit
- Module V: Field Visit for Understanding Social Audit

Dr. Vasanthi Rajendran, Director a.i, Training Division, CIRDAP presented the Status of Poverty and Rural Development in CIRDAP Member Countries, and all the twelve member countries were made aware of each status according to the data presented especially on the Human Development Index.

Field visits were organised for understanding of Social Audit. On the first day, participants were taken to the Sub District/Block Headquarter (Mandal) of Momiampat to conduct

mock social audit on Toilet Construction Project. The second day of field visit was to the Naretpally Mandal for observing of the actual conduct of social audit.

The two-day field visits gave an unforgettable experience and understanding that there are poor and vulnerable people who need help and support from the privileged individuals, who may be in public service or NGOs, to enlighten them for their rights and privileges as human beings. It had given insights how the people are hungry for work in order to meet their family needs and to have day to day subsistence.

On the last day of the training programme, the participants attended the address by the Governor of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu on “Governance, Resources and Livelihoods of Adivasis in India: Implementation of PESA and FRA”. After this there was a session on evaluation of the training programme by the participants.

Director General of CIRDAP delivered his valedictory address and handed over the certificates to the participants. The valedictory session was also attended by Dr. Vasanthi Rajendran, Director (ICD & Training a.i), CIRDAP and Dr. C. Dheeraja, Associate Professor, CWEPA, NIRD&PR, and Course Coordinator.





CIRDAP-NIRD&PR Collaborative International Training Programme on Smart Agriculture

Supported by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, CIRDAP in collaboration with the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) organised an international training programme on Smart Agriculture at NIRD&PR, Hyderabad, India from 12-21 December 2016. There were 14 participants from Bangladesh, Fiji, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Objectives of the training programme are to provide participants with a core professional training which integrates the study of concepts IFS and sustainable agriculture; offer a range of advanced courses addressing key policy, agro-climatic approaches, integrating organic farming systems and crop management issues in Sustainable Agriculture; and equip participants with convergence of schemes for land development and improve agriculture productivity through alternative farming systems, value addition for viable agricultural development.

The programme was inaugurated by the Director General of NIRD&PR on 12 December 2016. In his inaugural address, DG, NIRD&PR welcomed the participants and hoped that the participants will gain updated knowledge about Smart Agriculture and acquire hands on experience.

The following presentations were made in the programme:

- Some Facets of Climate Change: Impact and Adaptation Strategies by Dr. J. Devi Prasad, CGG, Hyderabad
- Basic Concepts of Climate Change with Global and Local Perspective by Dr. Ch. Srinivas Rao, Director, ICAR-CRIDA, Hyderabad
- Community based Approaches to Climate Smart Agriculture by Prof. Rajeshwar Jonnalagadda, Hyderabad



- Smart Agriculture in Asia and Pacific Countries by Dr. Vasanthi Rajendran, Director (ICD & Training a.i), CIRDAP
- Geospatial Technologies in Sustainable Land Management for Smart Agriculture by Dr. Obi Reddy, Principle Scientist, NBSSLUP, Nagpur
- Resource Conservation Agriculture by Dr. S. G. Patil, Ex-Director of Education, UASR and Consultant, CIMMYT
- Organic Farming: Visit to Shamshabad by Dr. Suresh Babu and Dr. Siddaya, Associate Professor, NIRD
- Integrated Farming Systems by Dr. Siddaya, NIRD
- Virtual Agricultural Systems by Karthireshan, C-DAC, Virtual Agri. Services
- Innovative Approaches in Application of Biological Control in IPM of Major Crops by Dr. S.J. Rahman, Professor, PJTSAU
- Fish Farming System to meet the growing Demand for Fish by Dr. R. Suresh, Senior Consultant, NFDB
- Water Use Efficiencies in Agriculture by Er. Surrendra, WALAMTARI
- Integrated Fertilizer Management Systems by Dr. Suresh Babu, NIRD
- Impact of Climate Change on Animal Production - Mitigation Options by Dr. Sarat Chandra, Prof. and Head, SPVN Veterinary University

Field visit was organised to the JNTU Rain Water Harvesting and Management Practices and to a farmer's organise field in the outskirts of Hyderabad.

With the issue on Climate Change, the training programme has provided valuable inputs that can be adopted by the participating countries through mitigation and adaptation. The existing dependence of people in the region on agriculture and rural poverty means that careful planning will be required for adaptation to the impacts of climate change. There is therefore a need to explore approaches to reduce



vulnerability of the region's agriculture. This could be in many forms, which include improving the markets, changing agricultural policies, enhancing social protection and preparing for disasters.

Climate Smart Agriculture, Agro-climatic approaches, Integrating Organic Farming Systems, Appropriate Crop Management, as well as convergence of schemes for land development and improve agriculture productivity through alternative farming systems, value addition for viable agricultural development could lead to sustainable agriculture. India setting is ideal for such training as its climatic conditions varies all over the country and has similar condition with the participating CIRDAP countries. Adoption of these technologies that is suitable in each country is highly viable. Technologies can be modified in the actual application in every country to suit its agricultural setting and conditions. It is therefore recommended that similar training programmes be conducted by CIRDAP to sustain the gains of implementing Climate Smart Agriculture in Asia and the Pacific regions.

The training programme was evaluated by the participants on 21 December 2016. Most of the participants on overall aspects of the training programme evaluated very effective. Regarding lecture, discussions on related issues, field visit, transport arrangements, etc. were found very good by the participants. Out of 14 participants 10 rated the training programme very useful. Participants mentioned that the resource persons are high knowledgeable and skilled. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Vasanthi Rajendran, Director (ICD & Training a.i), CIRDAP, Dr. Suresh Babu and Dr. Siddaya, Associate Professors, NIRD.

International Conference on Agricultural Insurance - A Climate Change Adaptation Tool in African, Asian and Pacific Regions to be held

During the TC-31 Meeting of CIRDAP held in Malaysia in May 2016, the Secretary General of African-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO), New Delhi, India, had discussion with the then DG, CIRDAP and proposed to organize a Round Table Conference on "Agricultural Insurance - A Climate Change Adaptation Tool in African, Asian and Pacific Regions by trying to identify knowledge partner on Agri Insurance for this conference. In this context, a 5-day long programme from 29 January to 02 February 2017 will be held at the Institute Penyelidikan dan Kemajuan Pertanian Malaysia (MARDI) (Malaysian Agriculture Research and Development Institute), Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia where common member countries of CIRDAP from Asia and Pacific and AARDO member countries from Africa will participate.



Information and Communication

The 49th Editorial Board Meeting of APJORD

The 49th Editorial Board Meetings of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Rural Development (APJORD) was held on 27



November 2016 at AVS Reddy Conference Hall (General Staff Meeting Room). Several agenda regarding APJORD were discussed in the meeting.

ICD Intern's Presentation

Ms. Rumi Akter, a graduate from the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka worked as intern for the duration of three months in CIRDAP. During her



internship, she was assigned to do a desk research on "Aspects of Rural Development". She delivered a presentation on 02 October 2016 at AVS Reddy Conference Hall where DG CIRDAP along with other CIRDAP professional and general staff were present. She submitted a report on the basis of her findings on the topic. During her internship, she was trained to prepare reports, research citations and presentation.

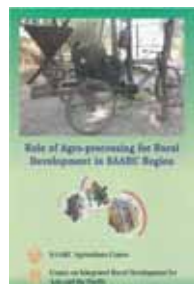
Quarterly CAL E-abstract Service

E-abstracts for December 2016 issue covering the period from October to December has been sent to the insider and outsider stakeholders of CIRDAP for easy access of current literature on Rural Development (RD) and Poverty Alleviation (PA). "CAL E-abstract" is a compendium of newly published articles (abstracts and citation) related to PA and RD in the Asia and Pacific region. These e-abstracts are compiled quarterly and

collected from journals available in open source journals and subscribed journals, and made them available through e-abstract services for CIRDAP's staffs and professionals as well as CMCs.

Recent Publications

- Role of Agro-processing for Rural Development in SAARC Region
- Asia-Pacific Journal of Rural Development (APJORD), December 2016 Issue
- CIRDAP Development Digest (CDD-145)
- CIRDAP Calendar 2017
- CIRDAP Diary 2017



Other News

CIRDAP bids Farewell to Staff

CIRDAP bade adieu to its three staff viz. Mr. Mr. David Hilton, Assistant Programme Officer (PPD), Mr. Md. Akram Ullah, Cashier, and Mr. Samir Kumar Roy, Sr. Secretary (Training). Mr. David resigned from the services with effect from 25 October 2016. Mr. Akram and Mr. Samir were separated from the services upon reaching the age of 60 with effect from 01 January 2017.

New Staff joins CIRDAP



Mr. Shishir G. Saha joined CIRDAP as Finance Assistant on 15 December 2016. Prior to joining CIRDAP, he worked for the Bangladesh Land Developers Association as Deputy Manager (Accounts). He has experience on Financial Management.

Intern at CIRDAP



Ms. Farasha Khan Sayeed, an undergraduate student of the Development Communication, Independent University, Bangladesh, joined CIRDAP on 26 October 2016 as Intern for the duration of three months. She has been assigned to work on compiling information for CIRDAP InfoRD portal.

Staff Participation

■ Four nominated persons from CIRDAP viz. Mr. Md. Shafiqur Rahman, Assistant Programme Officer, Engr. Waliul Hasnat, Computer Programmer, Dr. Usharani Boruah, Librarian, Mr. M. M.H. Kawser Rudro, Assistant Information and Communication Officer, and Mr. Mohammad Abu Saleh Siddique, Publication Assistant participated in the Celebration of 32nd SAARC Charter Day and International Year of Pulses 2016 held on 08 December 2016 at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) auditorium.

■ Publication Assistant of CIRDAP also participated in a session on Emerging New Technologies of the '5th National WUB ComTech Festival' organised by World University of Bangladesh (WUB) on 24 November, 2016 at the Panthapath campus auditorium of the University in Dhaka.

Invitation for Articles

Asia-Pacific Journal of Rural Development (APJORD), a half-yearly academic journal, is a flagship publication of CIRDAP. It is devoted to the issues and discussions on rural development, primarily in the Asia-Pacific region.

The journal provides a platform for the academicians, policymakers, NGOs, research scholars and others interested in integrated rural development (IRD), to exchange and share ideas, opinions, field observations, and empirical findings on various facets of rural development.

APJORD focuses on poverty issues and rural transformation, keeping in view the programme priorities of the Centre, e.g. agrarian development, institutional/ infrastructural development, resource development including human resources, and employment.

Articles are invited for publication in APJORD. All articles are subject to peer review. Articles between 4000-5000 words are preferred. Articles should be sent by e-mail to apjrd@cirdap.org. Notes to Contributors is available on CIRDAP website: www.cirdap.org

Typescripts should be submitted in duplicate on A4 size paper, type written on one side in double space, with margins of at least 2.54cm. Statistical tables, illustrations and charts should be submitted on separate sheet and their positions indicated in the text.

APJORD follows the Chicago Manual of Style for preparing article. A note to the contributors is available at the back page of any issue of the Journal or can be found at our web site www.cirdap.org.sg. For further details please contact the Editor, APJORD.

Help Enrich the CDD

An open invitation to contribute news and write-ups

CIRDAP Development Digest (CDD) is published four times a year (March, June, September and December). The purpose of the CDD is to highlight various facets of RD in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to the regular news updates on the Centre's activities, CDD regularly publishes news items, viewpoints on various aspects of RD and related issues from around the region.

Rural Development Institutions, Practitioners and Academia are humbly requested to provide us with valuable feedback and also to send their views, news and thoughts on various aspects of rural development. CIRDAP would welcome such contributions to the CDD with proper accreditation. All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor (infocom@cirdap.org or vasanthi@cirdap.org)



Building Bridges

EC Chairperson's Mission Visit to Bangladesh

Mr. Meleti Bainimarma, Chairperson of CIRDAP Executive Committee and Permanent Secretary along with Mr. Jone Malupo Bacau, Director, Ministry of Provincial Development and National Disaster Management, Government of Fiji visited CIRDAP from 7-12 December 2016. During his mission visit to Bangladesh, Mr. Meleti had several meetings and exposure visits as follows:

Courtesy Call on Secretary, RDCD, Ministry of LGRD&C, Bangladesh



Mr. Meleti Bainimarma paid a courtesy call on Dr. Prosanta Kumar Roy, Secretary, Rural Development and Cooperatives Division (RDCD), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C), Government of Bangladesh on 08 December 2016 where DG CIRDAP, Mr. Jone Malupo Bacau and a Senior Official from Government of Bangladesh were also present.

Presentation on One House One Farm, Cooperatives Movement and CVDP

Chairperson of CIRDAP Executive Committee along with others participated in the brief presentations on One House



One Farm, Cooperatives Movement, and Community Village Development Programme (CVDP) presented by two Senior Officials from Government of Bangladesh on 08 December 2016 at CIRDAP headquarters, Dhaka.

Meeting with Director General, Dept. of Disaster Management, MoDMR, Bangladesh

The team also met Mr. Reaz Ahmed, Director General, Department of Disaster Management, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief to discuss the disaster management related issues and activities on 08 December 2016 at the Disaster Management and Relief Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka.

Visit to the Project Area of One House One Farm

Led by the Chairperson of CIRDAP Executive Committee, a team visited to the One House One Farm project area in Basail, Tangail, Bangladesh on 09 December 2016.



Visit to Rural Development Academy, Bogra

On 10 December 2016, they also visited the several projects including the Multi-storied Agriculture with Solar Powered Irrigation Model conducted by the Rural Development Academy (RDA).



DG's Mission Visit to the Philippines

■ DG CIRDAP met H.E. Ambassador and Assistant Secretary Bayani S. Mercado, Department of Foreign Affairs – United Nations and International Organizations, Manila. DG briefed about different programmes of CIRDAP as well as about the new strategic framework for 2017-2020 strengthening regional co-operation on rural development in Asia-Pacific region.



■ Mr. Carlos Abad Santos, Assistant Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), National



Development Office-Planning and Policy met DG Tevita during the conduct of the APO-CIRDAP Workshop on Agricultural Insurance Systems in Manila. He explained briefly about the role of NEDA in the government of the Philippines.

■ A dialogue was initiated with Mr. Nathaniel Don Marquez, Executive Director of the Asian NGO Coalition and its Chair Emeritus, Rev. Fr. Francis B. Lucas of the Catholic Media Network. To-date, a draft Memorandum of Understanding was being evolved for a renewed partnership between CIRDAP and the ANGOC.

■ DG Tevita also met Ms. Michiko Katagami, Principal, Natural Resources and Agriculture

Specialist, Concurrent Officer-In Charge of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Asian Development Bank (Headquarters), Manila. Ms. Katagami briefly explained about the ADB-knowledge management and sustainable development operational plan for agriculture and natural resources, promoting sustainable food security in Asia and the Pacific in 2015-2020.



DG moderates a Session in 2nd Asian Public Governance Forum

As invited by the OECD-Korea Policy Centre, Director General of CIRDAP Mr. Tevita G. Boseiwaqa Taginavulau moderated a session in the 2nd Asian Public Governance (APG) Forum on Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and 3rd International Public Procurement Forum held at Beijing, China from 13-14 October 2016.

The programme provided the participants a better understanding on strategies and measures taken by peer countries in meeting the unique needs and circumstances they are in. PPP was viewed as a mode towards economic transformation and resource utilization with an end view of “Value for Money”.





The field visits to China's major PPP project sites gave inspiration to the participants including resource persons and practitioner-moderators. The knowledge exchange was hosted by the China Institute of Public Procurement. Further, the participants had the opportunity to see the best models shown in Guian Economic Development Zone in Hubei Province, Langfang and Clean Water PPP Demonstration Project in Tongzhou District Beijing -- wherein the institutionalisation of the intervention on investing in local economies based on actual needs of people, drawing the best from people's strength as impacts of integrated development have proved to be effective.

Courtesy Call on Honorable Minister of Home Affairs, Government of Indonesia

Director General of CIRDAP rendered a courtesy visit on His Excellency, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Government of Indonesia on 28 October 2016. The courtesy visit created an open discussion on various activities, issues and concerns. DG Informed about the Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference: Greening the Food Supply Chain held during 26-28 October 2016 in Bali, Indonesia. DG also informed about the Strategic Planning of CIRDAP for next four years, and update of its Operation Manual. In this regard, MoHA may assist CIRDAP by sharing its comments, views and observations for strengthening CIRDAP. DG said that



*DG, CIRDAP met H.E. Md. Abdul Rahim Oraz
Ambassador of Afghanistan to Bangladesh on 04 October, 2016.*

CIRDAP would like to invite Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs, Government of Indonesia to attend the GC-31 meeting to be held in Afghanistan in August 2017.

They discussed about the review of the Sub-regional Office of CIRDAP in Southeast Asia (SOCSEA). The Thirtieth Technical Committee (TC-31) meeting of CIRDAP held in Malaysia in May 2016 suggested that SOCSEA should be revitalised to play an active role for the functions of CIRDAP in Indonesia in particular and in South East Asia as a whole.

Courtesy Call on Ambassador of the Philippines to Bangladesh

Director General of CIRDAP Mr. Tevita G. Boseiwaqa Taginavulau paid a courtesy call on H.E. Ambassador Vicente Vivencio T. Bandillo, Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 15 November 2016. They discussed the APO-CIRDAP Workshop on Agriculture Insurance Systems held from 28 November-December 2, 2016 in Manila, Philippines. DG Tevita briefly informed H.E. Bandillo about his recent mission visits to some CIRDAP member countries (such as Indonesia, Myanmar and India) and the OECD Capacity Building Programme. DG emphasised the importance of improving the visibility of CIRDAP across its member countries.

The Ambassador mentioned the significance of consulting with the CMCs what the government needs so as to see the relevance of CIRDAP. He likewise remarked that as compared with other institutions, CIRDAP stands as the common denominator and has to find its place in the global development arena. As the Philippines is going to take Chairmanship by 2017, most of the ASEAN activities will be taking place in the country. H.E. Ambassador Bandillo suggested that it is high time for CIRDAP to build a partnership with the ASEAN through the facilitation of the Philippines. Hence, if CIRDAP is going to participate in the ASEAN Summit as observer, any bilateral talks could be arranged in advance. The Ambassador also suggested considering another window for partnership via the Colombo Plan.



*DG, CIRDAP met H.E. Iwan H.S. Wiranataatmadja,
Ambassador of Indonesia to Bangladesh on 05 October, 2016.*



H.E. Eng. Wassfi Hassan El Sreihin, Secretary General, African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) paid a courtesy call on DG, CIRDAP on 06 October 2016.



DG CIRDAP met Mr. Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, Secretary, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, Nepal on 12 December 2016 and discussed on matters of mutual interest. DG CIRDAP emphasized on in-country programme for Nepal. Mr. Adhikari emphasized on the skill development of community people.



DG CIRDAP had a discussion on productive joint programme with the Chairman, Asia Network of Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB) in Kathmandu, Nepal on 12 December 2016.



DG CIRDAP had a meeting with Dr. J. Devi Prasad (AMRG), Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad, India on 21 December 2016 to discuss jointly organising a conference and conducting a regional study on agro-processing.



DG CIRDAP met Mr. Peter S Carberry, Deputy Director General (Research), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), India on 21 December 2016 to discuss collaboration between two organisations in mutually agreed areas.



DG CIRDAP met Mrs. V. Usha Rani, IAS, Director General, National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, India on 23 December 2016 and discussed offering Online Post-Graduate Diploma in Agri-business to CIRDAP member countries.



Development News

A-Card: A Promising Credit Tool for Marginal Farmers of Bangladesh

A new borrowing window, now being operated at a pilot scale, has emerged with showing promises to better serve the small and marginal farmers so that they could get higher prices by selling their produces at a convenient time.

The new financial instrument known as Agriculture Card (A-Card), introduced under a programme to support the farmers with loans, claimed to have easy terms, for holding their produces for a period after harvesting. Due to lack of access to easy finance, most of the country's small farmers have to sell out their produces immediately after harvesting at throwaway prices to payback loans taken to buy inputs from Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and other informal lenders.

Like many others, Farida, mid-aged woman, could never store her produce for selling at a time when the prices go up as she had to payback the loans for meeting the farming expenses. The small farmers cannot afford to wait for higher prices. But this year, she did not take any loan and rather used the A-Card to buy necessary inputs like seeds, fertilizer and pesticides. "I don't need to sell the crops right now as I purchased the inputs with A-Card credit support that allows a 6-month payback time," said mid-aged Farida while talking to this correspondent at his tiny village home yard at Doyarampur under Gerda union of Faridpur sadar upazila.

Despite good prices even at the harvesting period, she is not willing to sell the crops, rather preferred to keeps those intact, for future use. Like Farida, many small and marginal farmers in Faridpur Sadar Upazila use A-Card services that help their access to agricultural loans through Bank Asia. During the last Aman season, many of the farmers purchased inputs like seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, fuel, etc. from designated sellers using the debit cards.

Earlier, they used to purchase the inputs with loans either from MFIs or traditional moneylenders, and were forced to sell their produces like rice, wheat, jute, etc. at throwaway prices at the beginning of harvesting season to repay the loans. But this time a small section of the farmers, availed the A-Card facilities to procure essential inputs instead of taking loans from traditional money lenders who charge cumulative interest of up to 27 per cent.

The A-Card is a unique scheme for farmers to get credit facility of an amount ranged between Tk. 10,000 and Tk. 20,000 to meet farming expenses. The loan is claimed to be hassle-free. The debit card enables farmers to purchase inputs

with a grace period and make payments at a convenient time. The interest rate is 10 per cent per annum. The USAID Agriculture Extension Support Activity (AESAs) project introduced the new initiative, the first of its kind in the country, in Faridpur Sadar Upazila in August last.

House wife Dolon Zaman and farmer Mukhlesur Rahman also use the A-Card and are impressed with the benefits. They are now waiting to recharge the card and willing to increase their ceiling for further use. Dolon Zaman, who is at her mid thirties, manages her family with two school and college-going children and a minor boy with her small subsistence farming. The debit card helped her substantially as she claimed.

She cultivated Aman paddy on one Acre of land with input supports through the A-card. A substantial amount of her earnings comes from two milking cows, poultry birds and ponds, where she practices pond aquaculture. But she is not satisfied with the card facilities as she cannot buy fish or poultry feeds and fuel for irrigation with this card as the amount is too meagre. Travelled about eight kilometres from her village home at Badarpur under Koijuri union, Dolon was waiting at the AESA Project Office at Faridpur town for renewal of her card.



A farmer showing A-Card

The bank provides NFC (near field communication) debit cards to farmers by which they can purchase inputs from designated retailers on credit. Account to account cash transfer takes place through retailers' smart phones. The AESA project identifies the input retailers with smart phones and oriented them on A-cards. The retailers sell all necessary agro inputs essential for farming. "As the designated retailers were authenticated by the USAID supported Agro Inputs Project (AIP) and SDC, farmers would get a fair price and unadulterated inputs," Bidyuth K Mahalder said.

The card holders, he said, would repay their debts six months after spending the money and that is why they would be in no hurry to sell their produce at throwaway prices at the beginning of harvesting just because of the pressure from traditional loan providers.

Both the farmers and retailers are happy with transactions through A-Cards as the farmers are getting quality products while the retailers are doing hassle-free business with ready cash through the debit cards. To maintain the transactions, both the farmers and retailers have to maintain accounts with Bank Asia through the SDC-operated agent banking system.

*By Ziaur Rahman. The Financial Express.
December 15, 2016. Bangladesh.*

Seeds of Change in Nepal

Community Seed Banks are not only helping farmers in times of dire need, they are also preserving local seed varieties endangered by the influx of hybrid seeds. When the magnitude-7.8 earthquake hit the country last April, over 90 per cent of the mud houses in remote quake-affected villages were flattened.

In the aftermath of the devastating Gorkha Earthquake, local Community Seed Banks (CSBs) set up in various districts to store and promote local seed varieties came as a blessing. Agyauli Community Seed Bank in Nawalparasi district, one of the successful initiatives undertaken by local communities to conserve and protect local seed varieties of different cereal, legumes and vegetables crops, provided seeds to farmers from some of the most worst-hit districts like Gorkha, Tanahun, and Lamjung. Out of total 9.8 tonnes of rice seeds provided to 1807 earthquake-affected households, 5.7 tonnes were from Agyauli alone.

“We donated Sabitri and Ram Dhan rice varieties to the affected families, along with food grains as a part of the relief packages,” said Bhagwati Mahato, 45, founder and former



chairperson of the Agyauli CSB. Like most farmers, Mahato, a resident of the Agyauli village, used hybrid seeds of rice, maize and seasonal vegetables, among others, bought from the local markets. “Everyone was using hybrid seeds as it was easily available in the market. They (sellers) told us that the yield was high from these hybrid seeds,” she said.

Every year, with the promise of another bumper harvest, the farmers were lured to the hybrid seeds, most of which were untested and unauthorised for use by the authorities. This trend, that has been three decades in the making, not just dominated the local market but also entirely displaced local seeds in many rural settings where traditional seed storage was once practiced.

Mahato, represents the Tharu ethnic community that have been engaged in farming for ages, and have practiced the culture of storing local and indigenous rice, wheat and mustard seeds in their deheri—a traditional storage vessel made from a mixture of clay, ash, straw and plantfibre, among other natural materials. “But with the entry of the hybrids, many farmers stopped storing seeds and that led to the slow disappearance of many local varieties, like the aromatic rice Jhinuwa and Ghiupuri,” said Mahato.

In 2010, the local communities were introduced to the CSB approach by the Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development (LI-BIRD), a non-governmental organisation working towards setting up CSB – a local institution managed by farmers to promote conservation and use of a plant’s genetic resources for food and agriculture, to ensure farmer’s rights on seed and food sovereignty by increasing access of the farming communities to quality seeds and planting material at an affordable price and on a timely manner.

The locals were trained for three days on the importance of the practice of storing and conserving local seed varieties that were adaptable to the local environment and had other important qualities like being drought and pest-resistant. “The training was a turning point for us. It prompted us to rethink and revive our old practice of storing local and indigenous seeds. We started collecting whatever we had stored in store, mostly just rice seeds,” said Draupadi Basnet, 43, an active member of the Agyauli CSB that was established in 2011 to preserve the local seed varieties that were fast disappearing.

A farmers’ committee, named Agriculture Development and Conservation Farmers’ Committee, was also formed to operate the seed bank that now has 38 farmers’ groups as members, covering 880 farm-dependent families.

The two-roomed concrete house built in the middle of the village, is now home to 64 varieties of 23 different crop species. From the local aromatic rice variety like Seto Anadi

and Rato Anadi to improved rice varieties developed by the National Agriculture Research Council (NARC) like Sukkha-3, Hardinath-1, RR-20 and RR-22, among others, are now preserved at the seed bank. Both these local and improved varieties are adaptable to the local environment and are climate resilient crop varieties that are adaptable to the environment conditions like droughts, heavy rains and hailstone, unlike hybrid seeds.

One of the successful examples of conserving local seed that was all but extinct was the preservation of the indigenous Pokhareli Jethobudo, an aromatic rice variety in Kaski district. This variety was also the first traditional seed variety that Nepali farmers obtained intellectual property rights for at the international level.

With farming modalities fast-evolving, it was only natural that Nepali farmers gravitated towards hybrid seeds in the past. But if the success charted by the many local seed banks in the country proves anything, it is that sometimes a step back can often amount to a giant leap forward. The Agyauli seed bank, and many others, stand testament.

By Pragati Shahi. The Kathmandu Post. October 1, 2016. Nepal.

Sustainable Harvesting Practices in Fiji

The Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice is an important part of national approach to sustainable forest management, says the Conservator of forests Mr. Eliko Senivasa.

Mr. Senivasa said the code of practice set minimum standards and requirements for all logging operations to follow. "Broadly the code addresses the issues to ensure sustainability to safeguard environmental degradation, health and safety issues of workers as well as social cohesion and equitable sharing of benefits," he said.

He added the logging approval was only allowed once the specification on the code was successfully met by the applicant with due diligence from other important regulatory authority such as Land Trust Act and Environment.

"Principally the Fiji Forest Harvesting Code of Practice is set of guidelines and requirement to ensure sustainable harvesting practices as well as general compliance measures to meet other relevant policy instruments such as the Environmental Management Act, the Land Trust Act and Occupational Health and Safety Act," he said. "The code covers sustainable specifications so it will be beneficial to the resource owners and environment."

Mr. Senivasa said in terms of regulation, the Forest Decree 1992 was being used to enforce the Harvesting Code and awaiting the finalisation of the Forest Bills that was in its

final reading in Parliament. "The code is now in its second edition. The first one was introduced in 1990," he said. "It also highlights that harvesting operations must be well planned and supervised."

Mr. Senivasa said the code also covered OHS which means it also covered for good practices which were beneficial to both the industry and workers. "It also highlights that forest workers and landowners have the right skills and knowledge to achieve good forest practices so overall the benefits are inclusive to the whole economy," he said. "Forest owners benefit from the code through the sustainable use of their forest resources and benefit also includes minimum impacts on the environment."

By Luisa Qiolevu. The Fiji Times. December 15, 2016. Fiji.

Prospects of Poverty and Income Inequality in Afghanistan

Inequality of income is a global phenomenon that has attracted a lot of attention across the world, especially in developing nations. In broader terms, inequality has many aspects but talking specifically about inequality of income, it implies a situation where the wealth is distributed unevenly among the various population groups. This results in creation of huge income gaps between the rich and the poor, thus making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Afghanistan, in spite of considerable economic developments over the last one and half decades, still remains one of the poorest countries where, according to the World Bank report (National Risk and Vulnerability Survey Data in 2007-08 and 2012), 36% of the population lived under poverty line. The World Bank further reported that though the annual GDP rate grew at 6.9% through this period, the Gini index increased from 29.7% in 2007-8 to 31.6% in 2011-12, which remarks a widened gap between living standards of the poor and the rich.

The factors that contribute to eradication of poverty may, at the same time, contribute to reduce income gaps. However, to specifically target income inequality in a society it is important to support development of robust fiscal and monetary systems. While monetary policies direct the countries' financial systems, the fiscal policies enhance proper collection of revenues and rational allocation of public funds.

Afghanistan has had achievements in the fiscal and monetary sectors over the last few years but the country still struggles with a lot of challenges in the areas of revenue generation and collection. Domestic revenue as percent of GDP has been growing but it still constitutes only a minor percentage. According to IMF reports, the percent of domestic revenue to GDP was estimated at about 10.2% in 2015 which is lower than the countries in the region.

Informal payment systems and informal businesses complicate tax-collecting procedures, in most cases making it impossible to track transactions and to tax them. On the other hand, corruption paves the way for tax evaders to pay smaller amounts in bribes and thus avoid payment of large amounts in taxes.

Insecurity is another major issue in the Afghan context that further widens the gap between the various income groups. Private investments are usually halted because of insecure conditions within the country and thus investors prefer to invest their funds in other countries where they feel more secure. Putting aside the fact that the state does not gain any benefit by taxing them, the wealth is not invested so as to create employment for the locals.

Lack of technical skills and educational opportunities for the poor is another major obstacle hindering chances of the poor to gain better living standards. Decent education opportunities are only available for the upper classes of the society while the rest either rely on public education, or are totally deprived of schooling.

In a way, the factors that contribute to income inequality fuel one another and thus causing the gap to further widen. Reducing income gaps require strategic policy reforms, resources, and hard work. Formalization of businesses should further be strengthened in order to heighten the tax base. Besides that, tax policies require to be amended with the intention of targeting the sectors that are under taxed or that are not taxed at all. Financial sector activities need to be further expanded in order to cover maximum financial transactions and thus stop informal and illegal flow of funds within and outside the country. In regards to provision of loans to the general public, though a considerable number of microfinance programs are currently active across the country, expansion of such programs is necessary to respond to the ever-growing demand for low cost loans.

Focusing on education of the poor can create hope for a promising future of their children and therefore must remain a high priority. Additionally, skills development programs for adults are important in providing them with ability to work in more technical occupations and earn better income.

Besides design and implementation of sound macroeconomic policies responsive to eradication of poverty and inequality, there is need for widespread public awareness on how to make sound expenditure decisions and to invest funds in profitable businesses. On the other hand, in areas where people use traditional techniques for earning income, it is essential to enhance their abilities so that they utilize the available resources using modern techniques and thus attain improved efficiency.

*By Farzana Rashid Rahimi. The Daily Outlook Afghanistan.
October 22, 2016. Afghanistan.*

Vietnam prepares Action Plan to tackle Poverty and Inequality

In order to successfully reduce poverty and improve gender equality, education, food security, climate change adaptation and long-term equitable economic growth as committed with the world community, Vietnam must prepare a detailed action plan.

This was the message delivered yesterday by the Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, Nguyen The Phuong, at a workshop in Hanoi that brought together representatives of ministries, UN agencies, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, political and social organisations, province-level agencies and the private sector. “Implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a common business of every one,” he said, calling for responsible contribution of all stakeholders and individuals to ensure that a highly practical and feasible National Action Plan (NAP) is developed.

UNDP Country Director Louise Chamberlain agreed that “Vietnam’s SDGs need to be owned by all people, all ethnic groups, women as well as men, and those who are socially excluded. This further emphasises the need for partnerships with civil society, the private sector, communities and citizens this applies in target setting, planning, implementation efforts and monitoring and evaluation – and requires voluntary and active participation.”

The UN agencies are committed to do its part and to offer experiences, technical expertise, and development solutions to support Vietnam during this process, she said. The consultant workshop on a draft NAP to implement 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was hosted by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the lead agency for sustainable development in Vietnam.

Phuong said the draft NAP was developed based on key development policies, strategies and plans of Vietnam in order to provide a guidance framework for sustainable development goals and coordinate among different stakeholders in implementing them. “This NAP will play a role as the legal



basis for Vietnam to fulfill its commitment to the international community, and to responsibly contribute to the global common efforts to achieve sustainable development,” he said.

Nguyen Le Thuy, deputy head of the MPI’s Department of Science, Education, Natural Resources and Environment, said that draft NAP contains 17 SDGs and 115 targets, including goals on poverty reduction, gender equality, education, food security, climate change adaptation, sustainable economic growth. The plan also assigns tasks to stakeholders to effectively implement the goals over the next 14 years. Thuy said that the MPI plans to set up a fund supporting sustainable growth to mobilise internal and external resources.

The blueprint will be submitted to the Prime Minister by the end of this month. It will be discussed at the 14th National Assembly’s third session in May next year.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. The SDGs build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals and aims to go further to end all forms of poverty.

The Vietnam News. November 11, 2016. Vietnam.

Pakistan Towards Zero Hunger

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goes further and takes the concept of interconnectivity to other areas, based on the three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. In fact, achieving zero hunger is also linked to ending extreme poverty, addressing climate change, fighting inequality, building resilience as well as many other aspects.

The Brazilian Zero Hunger strategy, one of the cornerstones of Luiz Inacio ‘Lula’ da Silva’s presidency, brought together a set of programmes that acted on four pillars: facilitating access to adequate food, agriculture support especially for family farmers, income-generating activities and social protection.

This model can also work well for Pakistan. With strong commitments and political will, achieving zero hunger in Pakistan is possible. For this, the country needs strong political will and an integrated national strategy. It is also important to work close to the beneficiaries, with oversight provided by the communities and civil society. Recent figures estimate that some 30 per cent of the population in Pakistan lives below the poverty line, while 22pc is considered food-insecure.

Population growth is a continuing issue in Pakistan with the current estimate being around 190 million people. As the population continues to increase, concern is mounting on the

ability to increase agricultural production in a sustainable way. Agriculture has been challenged by less predictable and more erratic weather swings which are now attributed to the changing climate. Agriculture itself needs to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Activities include animal health (foot-and-mouth disease and sheep and goat plague control), marine fisheries assessment for management planning, aquaculture development, irrigation development, small farmer agriculture improvement, climate-smart agriculture farmer field schools, kitchen gardens and women empowerment, amongst others. FAO is also working closely with Fata secretariat to support the resumption of agriculture-based livelihoods for the many thousands of formerly displaced farmers returning to the tribal region.

How to ensure that there are no hungry people in Pakistan is a question to which we must find an answer — and the clock is ticking toward 2030, the year world leaders agreed would be the deadline to reach zero hunger and 16 other sustainable development goals.



Farmers harvest tea in Phu Tho province.

Countries acting alone cannot resolve all of the challenges of today. Strong collaboration with other nations, international organisations, NGOs, civil society and the private sector will be key to finding sustainable solutions. And the focus needs to be on the youth of today; with their inquiring minds and access to new technologies and innovations, they will help to lead us to the final goal where we can rightly call ourselves the ‘zero hunger generation’.

This is the right moment to work harder than ever towards these objectives. FAO is committed to supporting efforts which will ultimately lead to a more productive and sustainable future for Pakistan and its people. The time to act is now.

*By Jose Graziano da Silva. The Dawn. October 9, 2016.
Pakistan.*

Calendar of CIRDAP Activities during January 2017 - March 2017

Date	Activities	Venue
06-10 February 2017	CIRDAP - MARDI - AARDO Round Table Conference on Agricultural Insurance - A Climate Change Adaptation Tool in African, Asian and Pacific Regions	MARDI, Selangor Malaysia
12-21 February 2017	CIRDAP - NIRD&PR Collaborative International Training Programme on Rural Technology	MARDI, Selangor Malaysia
6-15 March 2017	CIRDAP - NIRD&PR Collaborative International Training Programme on Human Resource Development for Rural Development	NIRD&PR, Hyderabad India

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