

# VOICE OF CIRDAP

**Empowering The Rural Communities**

ISSUE 6, FEBRUARY 2025



**Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)**

An Intergovernmental & Autonomous Organization Working For  
Strengthening Integrated Rural Development Systems for 15  
Asia and The Pacific Countries.

 [www.cirdap.org](http://www.cirdap.org)

## CIRDAP - Voice of Rural Communities

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is an Intergovernmental, Regional, and Autonomous organization. It was established on 6 July 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations with support from several other UN bodies and donors. The Centre came into being to meet the felt needs of the developing countries at that time as an institution for promoting Integrated Rural Development in the region.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared the date of 6 July as the World Rural Development Day, which is also the foundation day of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), as a recognition of the organizations significant role in sustainable rural development endeavors in its member states in the Asia-Pacific region. The World Rural Development Day will be celebrated every 6 July as to inform and to remind everyone on his/her role and responsibility for collaborative actions on integrated rural development to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

From the original six members, CIRDAP has now grown up as a Centre of 15 member countries. The member-countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh (Host Country), Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The main objectives of CIRDAP are to:

- ❖ Assist National Action;
- ❖ Promote Regional Cooperation; and
- ❖ Act as a servicing institution for its member countries for promotion: 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:

- ❖ Agrarian Development;
- ❖ Institutional/ Infrastructural;
- ❖ Resource development including human resources; and
- ❖ 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.

## Voice of CIRDAP – Monthly E-Bulletin of CIRDAP

Voice of CIRDAP (VoC) is a monthly newsletter published by CIRDAP. The purpose of the VoC is to highlight various facets of IRD in the Asia-Pacific region and activities of CIRDAP with stakeholders.

The designations employed and the presentation of materials in VoC 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.

Dear Esteemed Partners,

**Artificial Intelligence** which is widely debated in the world has huge potential in Rural Development too. In Agriculture, for Precision Farming, Crop Simulation Modules, Market Prediction and Supply Chain Optimization. Whereas in Health Care, has the potential to assist in Remote Diagnosis, Monitoring, Personalized Treatment Plans, Optimizing Resource Allocation and Early Disease Detection. Education sector can utilize AI in Personalized learning, Automated Grading and Feedback system and Resource Management. In Rural Infrastructure Development, AI can assist in Smart Grid Development, Infrastructure Maintenance, Waste Management and Transportation Planning. CIRDAP has made two important initiatives in this direction. Firstly, to sign MoU with University of New Mexico, USA to use Extension of Community Health Organizers (ECHO), a no-cost digital platform to build capacity of Rural Extension Stakeholders. Also organized a webinar on use of AI in Agri supply chain Management which received wide appreciation.



CIRDAP has taken initiative to strengthen **Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises** in Rural areas by organizing an international program at National Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises (nimsme), India which was attended by five member countries.

CIRDAP is closely working with Network for Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific (NEDAC) to strengthen **Agri cooperative's** role in Rural Development through a MoU and planning an international training Program in July 2025. Similarly strengthening **Research-Application** linkage through working with Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (APAARI), An Intergovernmental Organization.

**Impact on the ground** is concerned, CIRDAP Research projects on Gender Responsive Budgeting in Nepal, Transgender Livelihood in India and Women & Youth in Rural Development in Sri Lanka are progressing in right direction.

To have wider impact, I would like to appeal through this platform to CIRDAP Experts and partner Institutions to join hands with CIRDAP to work on impactful projects which also provide policy learnings to member countries

With Warm Wishes

**Dr. P. Chandra Shekara**  
**Director General, CIRDAP**

**LET US GROW AND SERVE TOGETHER BETTER**





The Director General of CIRDAP HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, attended General Body and Executive Committee meeting-2025 of NEDAC-Network for Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific held at Mombasa, Kenya on February 25, 2025 as Special Invitee and Observer. The meeting was also attended by the delegates from Asia and Pacific countries. In his statement, Dr. Chandra emphasized the need for sensitizing Cooperative



members on principles of cooperation, leadership development, strengthening linkages, Integration with Startups, Technology, Entrepreneurship and mainstreaming Cooperatives in developmental programs.

The DG of CIRDAP and Mr. Pankaj Kumar Bansal, Chairman of NEDAC signed a MoU for mutual collaboration for development of Agricultural Cooperative s in Asia and Pacific at Mombasa, Kenya in presence of delegates from Asia and Pacific countries.



Dr. P.Chandra Shekara delivered a talk on Policy Support, Good Practices and Capacity Building of Agricultural Cooperatives in International Seminar on Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives for Sustainable Rural Development organised by NEDAC-Network for Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific and Cooperatives University of Kenya on 26th February, 2025 at Cooperatives University, Nairobi, Kenya in presence of delegates from Asia and Pacific countries.

### DG CIRDAP Visits Agri Cooperatives in Kenya

HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP along with other delegates of NEDAC visited Coffee growers Cooperatives, Federation of Dairy Cooperatives and Headquarters of all cooperatives called SACCO and interacted with farmers, leaders and organization heads. Interesting to know that every citizen of Kenya is member of one or the other cooperative. SACCO is playing important role in positioning citizens in all stages of value chain. The Social Audit system of SACCO is worth following.





## APAARI Executive Secretary Visited CIRDAP, Strengthening Collaboration for Rural Development



Dr. Ravi Khetarpal, Executive Secretary of the Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), visited the CIRDAP headquarter on February 10, 2025. After an insightful meeting with the Director General of CIRDAP HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Dr. Khetarpal toured the CIRDAP office complex, including the CIRDAP International Conference Centre (CICC) and Auditorium. He also took part in the ongoing World Rural Development Day (WRDD) signature campaign, showing his strong support for this important initiative. CIRDAP staff had the opportunity to engage in a productive discussion with Dr. Khetarpal, exploring shared objectives and potential collaborations between CIRDAP and APAARI. The visit concluded with a sapling planting, symbolizing our joint commitment to sustainable development.

## CIRDAP-Nimsme International Training Programme on 'Micro Enterprises for Rejuvenation of Rural Economy: Policies, Programmes and Learnings' at Ni-msme, Hyderabad, India, 24 – 28 February, 2025



The International Training Programme on 'Micro Enterprises for Rejuvenation of Rural Economy: Policies, Programmes and Learnings' was launched on February 24, 2025 at the NIMSME campus in Hyderabad, India. The programme, jointly organized by CIRDAP and National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Ni-msme) brings together 13 participants from 5 CIRDAP member countries (Bangladesh, India, Fiji, Malaysia, and Thailand). In the inaugural ceremony, Dr. S. Glory Swarupa focused on Women empowerment – example of result-oriented Self-Help Group (SHGs), Elimination of Rural poverty, Digitalization, Business Development and Green MSME practices to alleviate the pollution.

The key themes that covered in the training are MSME policies, Leaderships and problem solving skills, Role of Micro Enterprises in reducing poverty, Digital technologies for empowering enterprises, Finance, Strategies for Market access, Innovation and Incubation for Agri-business development, Youth and Women empowerment etc. The programme completed on 2nd March 2025, fostering global collaboration and knowledge exchange for sustainable rural development.

CIRDAP Collaborative International Training Programme, with Network for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific (NEDAC) on 'Startups, Technology, Entrepreneurship and Partnerships for Vibrant Agri-Cooperatives' in Thailand on July 21 to 23, 2025.

For more details, contact: Mr. F.A.M Zakirul Huq, Administrative Officer, CIRDAP. Cell: +8801912432366 and Email: [aocirdap@cirdap.org](mailto:aocirdap@cirdap.org)

### International conference on Unleashing Prosperity through Cooperatives: Digital Innovation and Value Chains, CICTAB, VAMNICOM, Pune, India on February 13-15, 2025

HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General, CIRDAP chaired a plenary session on Sustainability of Cooperatives during International conference on Unleashing Prosperity through Cooperatives: Digital Innovation and Value Chains organized by CICTAB, VAMNICOM, Pune on February 14, 2025. He emphasized on Pro People, Pro Planet and Pro Profit approach for Cooperatives. The conference was attended by more than 100 delegates from different countries. Two of the government officials from the CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs) attended the conference. Mr. Anosack Phengthimmavong, Deputy Director General, and Mr. Phouthone Thidthanichanth, Officer, of the Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry, Lao PDR attended the programme.



Admission in progress for CIRDAP member countries to the one year Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development at The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad, INDIA

### Important Announcement



**National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj**  
Centre for PG Studies and Distance Education Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 50, India

**Join the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management for International In-Service Students (PGDRDM)**

**Programme Overview:**

- Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM);
- Sponsored by CIRDAP/ARDO for international in-service candidates;
- One-year residential program with a focus on rural development.

**Admission Guidelines:**

- Open to candidates working in Agricultural, Rural Development, and allied sectors
- Must have work experience in the rural sector
- Application deadline: To submit CIRDAP contact Ministry by 30th April 2025**

**Programme Components:**

- Classroom teaching and interactive learning.
- Fieldwork (short and long visits)
- Field Attachment (Rural Organisational Internship).

**Selection Process:**

- Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed via teleconferencing/video-conferencing
- Jointly conducted by CIRDAP/ARDO and NIRD&PR.

**Essential Qualifications:**

- Graduate in any discipline

**Financial Support:**

- Provided by the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt of India.

**Contact Information:**

CIRDAP: [admin@nirdpr.org](mailto:admin@nirdpr.org)



Announcement of the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management – National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) for academic year 2025-26 for CIRDAP Member Countries has been released. We are glad to inform that the admissions for the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM) 2025-26: Batch-23 is going on. Five slots are available for CIRDAP Member countries (CMCs).

Last date for receipt of the applications is 30th April 2025. The filled applications may be sent to Mr. F.A.M Zakirul Huq, Administrative Officer, CIRDAP in his email:

[aocirdap@cirdap.org](mailto:aocirdap@cirdap.org) and Cell: +8801912432366

For more update visit: <https://cirdap.org/admission-going-on-for-cirdap-member-countries-to-the-one-year-post-graduate-diploma-in-rural-development-at-nirdpr-hyderabad-india>





As global warming intensifies, farmers around the world especially Filipino farmers face devastating challenges, including typhoons, prolonged droughts, and rising sea levels. These conditions threaten food security and livelihoods across the Philippines, underscoring the need for climate-smart agriculture to help farmers adapt and thrive. The urgent shift towards sustainable farming is crucial not only for adapting to climate impacts but also for mitigating them.

The poignant story of Esther Penunia, the Secretary General of the Asian Farmers Association, provided a reminder of the real-world impact of climate change on agriculture, as her pineapple farm was ravaged by extreme heat. This scenario is all too familiar across the Philippines, where unpredictable weather patterns and shifting climate conditions disrupt planting

schedules, threaten crop yields, and escalate food insecurity. These challenges are not unique to the Philippines. Across the Global South, farmers are grappling with the similar issues, highlighting the need for a concerted global effort to address climate change in agriculture. Key adaptation strategies include crop diversification, soil conservation, and the use of climate-resilient crop varieties. Simultaneously, mitigation efforts like reducing tillage, minimizing methane emissions, and integrating agroforestry are crucial for reducing agriculture's carbon footprint.

Apart from critical role of Finance, the most pivotal role in transforming this drastic and extreme situation is Technology. Companies like Farmonaut, a leading agricultural technology company, are leading the change by providing satellite-based farm management solutions that offer real-time crop health monitoring, AI-driven advisory systems, and resource management tools. These technologies empower farmers to make informed decisions, optimize resources, and adapt to changing climate conditions. Additionally, AI-based systems such as FARMONAUT'S Jeevn AI Advisory System help detect crop diseases, optimize resource allocation, and predict climate risks, further enhancing farmers' ability to respond to challenges. Key benefits of AI in climate-smart agriculture include:

- Early detection of crop diseases and pests
- Optimized resource allocation (water, fertilizers, pesticides)
- Precision planting and harvesting recommendations
- Predictive analytics for climate-related risks

By leveraging the AI technologies, Filipino farmers can make more informed decisions, improving their resilience to climate change while also increasing productivity and sustainability. While technology plays a crucial role in climate-smart agriculture, the importance of sustainable farming practices cannot be overstated. These practices not only help mitigate the effects of climate change but also contribute to long-term soil health and biodiversity conservation.

To ensure a Climate-resilient future, the agriculture sector a multi-stakeholder approach is necessary integration of climate-smart practices with education, policy support, and investment in research. By embracing climate-smart agriculture practices, leveraging cutting-edge technologies like those offered by Farmonaut, and fostering a collaborative approach to problem-solving, a resilient and sustainable agricultural sector can be built.

REFERENCE: [HTTPS://FARMONAUT.COM/ASIA/CLIMATE-SMART-AGRICULTURE-EMPOWERING-FILIPINO-FARMERS-TO-ADAPT-AND-THRIVE-IN-THE-FACE-OF-GLOBAL-WARMING/](https://farmonaut.com/asia/climate-smart-agriculture-empowering-filipino-farmers-to-adapt-and-thrive-in-the-face-of-global-warming/)



CIRDAP organized a webinar titled 'why do Organized and Unorganized Marketing Channels Co-exist? A Case of Milk Marketing in Nepal' on February 12, 2025. The honorable speaker was Binoy Goswami, PhD Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics, South Asian University, New Delhi, India.

This task examined the dynamics of milk marketing channels in Nepal through a case study of 103 milk-producing farmers in Lalitpur district. Marketing channels ensure that agricultural produces reach their target consumers, fetch fair prices, and contribute to the overall profitability of farming enterprises. Particularly for perishable goods like fruits, vegetables, milk, and so on, marketing channels are essential.

The findings reveal that larger milk producers predominantly prefer organized marketing channels, such as milk collection centers operated by cooperatives or the private sector, whereas smaller producers utilize both organized and unorganized channels, including direct sales to households and businesses.

The speaker can be contacted at email: [binoygoswami@sau.ac.in](mailto:binoygoswami@sau.ac.in)

## DG CIRDAP Meeting with the Ambassador of Philippines



DG CIRDAP, HE. P. Chandra Shekara, met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Philippines to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Nina P. Cainglet on 12th February, 2025. The meeting took place at the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Dhaka. Important areas discussed during the meeting were celebration of the World Rural Development Day and Capacity building of Rural Development professionals of Philippines.

## DG CIRDAP HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara also attended two Important Events

- 46th Anniversary of the Victory Day of the Islamic Revolution (National Day) of IR Iran on 7 February, 2025 organized by the Embassy of IR Iran, Bangladesh
- 77th Anniversary of the Independence of Sri Lanka on 9 February, 2025 organized by the High Commission of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh



'Artificial Intelligence in Improving Farmer's Livelihood' by Mr. Sachin Hegdekudgi, Chief Executive Officer, Founder, and Director of Roots Goods Private Limited, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.



CIRDAP organized another important webinar on the topic of the Enhancing Farmer Livelihoods: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Solution's on February 20, 2025. The session aimed at exploring the role of AI deep tech and Bio-informatics driven quality assessment in enhancing agricultural practices and uplifting rural communities, was presented by Mr. Sachin Hegdekudgi, the Chief Executive Officer, Founder, and Director of Roots Goods Private Limited, based in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. Mr. Hegdekudgi provided valuable insights into how AI-driven solutions can be leveraged to address challenges faced by farmers, potentially leading to increased productivity, improved resource management, and enhanced market access.

The speaker can be contacted at email: [hegdekudgi@rootsgoods.com](mailto:hegdekudgi@rootsgoods.com)

## Indonesian Charge d'Affaires Visits CIRDAP



His Excellency Mr. Arif Suyoko, Charge d'Affaires of the Indonesian Embassy in Dhaka, visited CIRDAP on February 16, 2024. He had a fruitful meeting with CIRDAP's Director General, Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, where they discussed the ongoing programs and activities of the organization. Following the meeting, Mr. Arif Suyoko explored the CIRDAP IRD Model Series which is on display at the CIRDAP Exhibitions & Museum on Integrated Rural Development (CEMIRD) and also toured CIRDAP office complex, including the CIRDAP International Conference Centre (CICC), Auditorium, and CIRDAP Library. He also participated in the World Rural Development Day (WRDD) signature campaign and sapling plantation, demonstrating his

support for rural development initiatives.



## ATTENTION TO THE CIRDAP EXPERTS

CIRDAP would like to seek the support of the CIRDAP Experts for their greater involvement in enriching the lives of rural communities on CIRDAP platform.

Experts are invited to contribute in the following ways:

**1.** Provide updated information as indicated below. This reply will be treated as Experts renewed interest in CIRDAP Activities:

Name, Designation, Office, Contact detail, Photo, Country, No. of years of Experience, Areas of Expertise in Integrated Rural Development (Mention only FIVE important areas) and Complete CV.

**2.** A monthly e-bulletin '**Voice of CIRDAP**' has been started by CIRDAP which is reaching 1.18 lakh stakeholders covering member countries every month. Experts are requested to give at least one Innovation on Rural Development with good photos in not more than one page for publication.

**3.** Please provide 2-3 minutes **video on any innovation, experience in Rural Development** which would be added to newly created CIRDAP YouTube Channel.

**4.** CIRDAP will be very happy to process/forward any of your national/International projects on Rural Development to funding agencies through **Project Facilitation Centre of CIRDAP**. If approved, the project will be led by the expert who prepare the project.

**5.** CIRDAP is planning to bring out **Four International Publications** on

- i. 'Rural tourism on Asia and Pacific: Concept, Practice and Opportunities',
- ii. 'Disaster Management and Climate change adaptation in Asia and Pacific: Policies, Programmes, Approaches and Learnings',
- iii. 'Innovations in Rural Development in Asia and Pacific', and
- iv. 'Agri Value Chain Management in Asia and Pacific'

Experts are requested to give an article of around 10 pages. The authorship will be appropriately acknowledged.

You are requested to send all the above information to Ms. Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer, and CIRDAP Email: [communication\\_officer@cirdap.org](mailto:communication_officer@cirdap.org) with copy to [chandradgcirdap@cirdap.org](mailto:chandradgcirdap@cirdap.org)



Facebook



X



Linkedin



Youtube

If you wish to know more and have a update,  
Subscribe and Follow us in  
Social Media





**Chameli House  
The Headquarter of CIRDAP**



**Editorial Board**

Chief Editor : Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General, CIRDAP  
Executive Editor : Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer, CIRDAP  
Associate Editor : Tahsina Tabassum Sajuti, Executive Assistant, CIRDAP

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

Chameli House, 17 Topkhana Road, GPO Box 2883, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

PABX: +88-02-41053923, +88-02-41053924 Office of the DG ||

Phone: +88-02-41053925 || E-mail: [icd@cirdap.org](mailto:icd@cirdap.org)

Website: [www.cirdap.org](http://www.cirdap.org)

**To Follow Us on Social Media**



Website



LinkedIn



Facebook



X