

# The SEARCA DIARY



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## SEARCA, Cambodia MAFF conduct 3rd roundtable on agri competitiveness

SEARCA, in cooperation with Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), conducted the third policy roundtable last 24–25 April in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Nineteen representatives from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV) as well as development agencies from Thailand, South Korea, and Japan attended the roundtable with the theme "Shoring and Sharing Capacities to Improve Agriculture and Its Competitiveness in Transition Southeast Asia."

This year's roundtable aimed to examine and discuss the final draft proposals for national capacity-building programs; obtain agreement on practical measures, concrete time table, and modality for mobilizing resources to implement agreed priority capacity-building programs and activities; and explore possible partnerships between and among SEARCA, CLMV, and organizations from East Asian countries to

collaborate actively in the capacity-building program of these transition countries.

In his welcome remarks, H.E. Yim Voethan, secretary of state of MAFF, highlighted the importance of the roundtable in helping Cambodia finalize its Human Resource (HR) Capacity-building Program in terms of its specific needs and in

obtaining the support from donor agencies. He noted that the value knowledge and experiences shared by external experts would be highly important in coming up with a scientifically drafted HR development program for CLMV.

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## French envoy to RP strengthens France-SEARCA bond



**(R-L) HE Gerard Chesnel, French ambassador to the Philippines, receives a token of appreciation from SEARCA Director Arsenio M. Balisacan and Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, UPLB chancellor and Philippine representative to SEARCA's Governing Board.**

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**Participants of the third policy roundtable held last 24-25 April in Siem Reap, Cambodia.**

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA director, in his opening remarks, reiterated that the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry have indicated their support for this capacity-building program. He emphasized the crucial role of the international donor community in this effort, where contributions are seriously needed to assist the four transition countries. He said that such assistance could be viewed

not only as an investment to secure a better future for the region, but one that is beneficial to the developed country donors as well.

Representatives from development assistance agencies—Japan International Cooperation Agency, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Global Agricultural Policy Institute—shared with the group some funding modalities in their respective

organizations that CLMV may tap for the implementation of the proposal titled “Strengthening Human Resource Capacities for Agricultural Competitiveness of CLMV through Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (TCDC) in Southeast Asia.” This proposal is one of the major outputs of the roundtable series, which has received the endorsement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations–Mission-administered Fund.

Dr. Balisacan said that the roundtable series is a good mechanism for exciting interest and cooperation among CLMV toward capacity building. On the whole, he observed that the series has made some progress and that the third roundtable was the most substantive. The quality of participation has improved and the camaraderie and cooperation among participating member

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**French envoy / from page 1**

The visit of His Excellency, Mr. Gerard Chesnel, ambassador of France to the Philippines, last 3 May to SEARCA brought in potential renewed collaboration between France and the Center.

He was accompanied by Mr. Francois Blamont, counselor for cooperation and cultural affairs, and Ms. Claire Crochemore, scientific attaché, both of the French Embassy in Manila.

The visitors were received by SEARCA Director Arsenio M. Balisacan; Dr. Luis Rey

I. Velasco, chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños and Philippine representative to SEARCA Governing Board; Dr. Gil C. Saguit Jr., SEARCA’s deputy director for administration; and other managers of the Center.

During a brief meeting of SEARCA officials with the French officials, the two groups expressed the commitment to renew partnership. The partnership will zero in on capacity building on food safety and quality. Focus countries are Cambodia, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, all SEARCA member countries.

The major components of the partnership will be on research, graduate degree program, and short-term specialized training. In general, the partnership will cover collaborative research between the Centre de Cooperation Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Developpement (CIRAD) and national research institutions in the focus countries on topics of common interest, short-term specialized training (mainly with CIRAD), and enrichment of graduate degree programs of students in those countries

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## SEARCHA, IPGRI conduct 1st NRM exec course

SEARCHA and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) conducted the pilot offering of the “Executive Course on Natural Resource Management (NRM) in a Globalizing Asia” on 8–12 May at the Center.



**Participants, writing on blue metacards, define environmental leadership.**

Eleven executives involved in environmental management from the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia completed the course.

The training aimed to empower and reequip environmental managers in making sound decisions and contextualize NRM concepts and principles in a globalizing world. Through peer-based learning methods, the course dealt with the relationship of NRM and the Millennium Development Goals, status of the environment and natural resources in Southeast Asia, issues and concerns on NRM across ecosystems, capacity-building needs on NRM, and roles of executives in NRM.

In his opening remarks, SEARCHA Director Arsenio M. Balisacan encouraged the participants to be better analytical thinkers having greater appreciation and understanding of policies governing natural resources in their respective spheres of influence.

The participants came up with individual action plans as the course’s major requirement to address specific NRM issues faced by their respective organizations.

During the closing program, Dr. Percy E. Sajise, IPGRI’s regional director for Asia, Pacific, and Oceania, challenged the participants to become “environmental champions.” He emphasized the need for people who not only talk about environmental



**Dr. Ben S. Malayang III gives a lecture on surfacing regional capacity-building needs and prospects on NRM.**

problems, but also provide better options and do something about them.

Participants came from the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development; Environment Management Bureau; Laguna Lake Development Authority;

Leyte State University; Bureau of Plant Industry; Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau; Mariano Marcos State University; Philippine Federation for Environmental Concern; and Silliman University, all in the Philippines; Southeast Asian Regional Open Learning Centre in Indonesia; and Kasetsart University in Thailand.

Resource persons for the training course were Dr. Percy Sajise; Dr. Ben S. Malayang III, president of Silliman University, Philippines; Dr. Doris Capistrano, director for forests and governance of the Indonesia-based Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); Dr. Nicomedes D. Briones, professor, School of Environmental Science and Management, University of the Philippines Los Baños (SESAM-UPLB); Dr. Ma. Victoria Espaldon, dean, SESAM-UPLB; Dr. Vincent Hilomen, associate professor, Institute of Biological Sciences, UPLB; Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay, program coordinator of the Biodiversity Research Programme, SEARCHA; Dr. Asa Jose U. Sajise, assistant professor, College of Economics and Management, UPLB; and Dr. Jesus C. Fernandez, manager of SEARCHA’s Training Department.

The training course is part of SEARCHA’s Executive Program on NRM, which is envisioned to be a venue for exchanging knowledge and good practices in NRM concerns in the Southeast Asian context. The program will offer other courses such as Governance for Biodiversity Intellectual Property, Resource and Environment Valuation for Environmental Policy Making and Advocacy, Natural Resource Use Negotiation and Decision

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# THE POLICY AGENDA

*(Editor's note: The true worth of research and human resource development can be seen when their results are used to create the desired impact. As SEARCA continues to spearhead programs and projects seen as vital to poverty reduction and food security in the region, it also strives to translate these efforts into policy recommendations and directions. The SEARCA Diary continues The Policy Agenda, a series of policy briefs and articles that provides a venue for the articulation of policy directions, shaping of agricultural research, and provision of inputs to process and regulatory framework development, comparative studies, and policy formulation and design.)*

## Aiming at a never-ending supply of rice

Did it ever occur to you where modern rice come from?

Myths tell us that as early as 4000 years ago, the Chinese cultivated rice. Later, it was introduced to India, where natives started tinkering with this crop for food.

Much later, this rice trekked all the way to America through a certain ship captain who docked in Charleston, South Carolina harbor. The man who received it planted it and in 1726, the place started to export rice. Today, in various parts of the globe, rice has flourished and has become a staple food to many.

In the Philippines and in most Asian countries, rice is part of the day's main meals, 365 days a year.

Aiming at a never-ending supply of rice is not just a simplistic "Let's plant rice today and harvest in 120 days" proposition. There's more to it than meets the eye.

Dr. Robert Zeigler, director-general of the Philippine-based International Rice Research

Institute (IRRI), says that 10 to 20 years from now, IRRI will be facing head on four major challenges. These are poverty alleviation, sustaining and maintaining the environment, human health and nutrition, and scientific capacity to address these challenges.

### Alleviating poverty and maintaining human health

Rice is grown by farmers mostly from rainfed areas which are prone to erratic rainfall, flooding, and ironically, drought. And even if rice would grow and produce grains, the yield would barely enable the farmers to survive until the next cropping.

However, with the present "revolution in genomics" Dr. Zeigler says that much can be done to make rainfed areas more productive. To reduce poverty, Dr. Zeigler says that other cash crops need to be explored. "... We look on the revolution in genomics being a tool to allow us to provide flexibility to farmers and get them out of that poverty trap."

Moreover, large areas in Asia have been reported to be malnourished. By using biotechnology, scientists can enrich the nutritional value of the crop and address malnutrition.

### Sustaining environment

Rice farming needs a lot of water, nutrients, protection from pests, etc. Science's part in lightening the load of rice farming on the environment is to find measures to reduce water, nutrient, chemicals, and green gas emissions to minimize damage on the environment.

Water-saving technologies, nutrient uptake, and environment-friendly pest management practices can be explored. Dr. Zeigler points out that the real challenge then is to understand how to get farmers to go to their fields and monitor their crops; there are many alternatives to their time and the opportunity costs of some of the intensive management systems are going to be a challenge to us.

### Scientific capacity

Aiming at a never-ending supply of rice for the peoples of Asia is an intricate goal. Dr. Zeigler opines that policy issues and concerns "are completely interwoven" with poverty, human nutrition/health, environment, and scientific factors. Thus, "there's a tremendous opportunity and it is absolutely essential for the technical scientists to work very closely with the economists, social scientists, and policy specialists to make sure that we get our technical solutions right

# RP should focus more on agri & rural dev't for sustained economic growth & poverty reduction, SEARCA director says

The Philippines needs to do more than simply grow rapidly; poverty reduction requires access to human development and support services, allowing greater participation of the underprivileged in growth processes.

This point was underscored by SEARCA Director Arsenio M. Balisacan, who is also professor of economics at the University of the Philippines Diliman.

In the “National Executive Workshop on Macroeconomic Poverty Reduction” attended by high-level government officials, Dr. Balisacan explained that poverty problem in the country is not just a problem of low economic growth. Growth benefits all income groups, especially the high-income earners. The weak response of poverty to growth in the country suggests that economic growth alone is not enough to pull the poor out of poverty.

To improve the response of poverty to economic growth, Dr. Balisacan recommended focusing on agricultural and rural development. He stressed that poverty reduction is fastest when agricultural growth is rapid and sustained.

“For growth in agriculture to be sustainable, it has to be rooted in productivity improvements,” he said.



**SEARCA Director Arsenio M. Balisacan explains reasons why poverty persists in the Philippines during the National Executive Workshop on Macroeconomic Poverty Reduction held last 25-26 May in Tagaytay City, Philippines.**

The Philippine agricultural performance for the past two decades has been quite dismal. The country has failed to secure sources of productivity growth and income diversification. Also, the “cost of doing business” in the rural areas is high.

Given this situation, Dr. Balisacan called for an increased and sustained economic growth and investment in rural development. These can be done by boosting support in research and development, rural infrastructure, information, and education. Reversing serious under-investment in rural infrastructure will go a long way, according to the SEARCA director.

The executive workshop was convened by the National Anti-Poverty Commission, National Economic Development Authority, and United Nations Development Programme last 25–26 May in Tagaytay City, Philippines.

Thirteen line national agencies of the Philippines implementing pro-poor programs were represented in the workshop during which they reviewed and affirmed their pro-poor targets.

Dr. Balisacan also shared this report on 20 June 2006 at the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series, a weekly scientific and policy forum. (ARObmerga)

# UPCOMING EVENT

## SEARCA readies yearlong 40th anniversary celebration

It's not "life begins at 40" for this Philippine-hosted Southeast Asian agricultural center; it's "life goes on and thrives at 40."

27 November 2006 marks the 40th year of SEARCA. Since its founding in 1966, SEARCA has assisted the region in strengthening institutional capacities in agricultural and rural development through graduate scholarships, short-term training, research and development, and knowledge exchange. To date, SEARCA has awarded more than 1100 graduate scholarships to nationals of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

At the onset of this fiscal year, 1 July, SEARCA will have commenced its yearlong 40th anniversary celebration, which will be capped by a program on 27 November, featuring Senator Edgardo J. Angara of the Philippines as guest speaker. Senator Angara is referred to as the country's "Father of Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act."

The celebration will also include the conduct of a national

conference on rice concurrent to the launching of a publication that discusses the Philippine rice sector's issues, constraints, and policy directions in September.

The Center is also inviting shutterbugs to join the Southeast Asian photo competition. Five hundred U.S. dollars is at stake for the first prizewinner, which will be awarded on 27 November 2006. The second and third prizewinners will be given US\$300 and US\$150, respectively. The contest is open to all Southeast Asians. Entries should be full color prints from digital or conventional cameras, measure 8" X 10", and mirror SEARCA's tagline: "science and education for agriculture and development." Entries must be sent to SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines not later than 15 October 2006. Participants may send more than one entry. The entries, however, must not have been entered in any other competition.

On 16–17 November, SEARCA will hold an international conference titled "Supermarket Revolution in East and Southeast Asia: Policy Issues, Challenges, and Implications for the

Agrifood Systems."

On top of these events will be the launching of the SEARCA book, "40 Years of Enabling Institutions, Forging Partnerships, Enriching Lives: SEARCA's Journey in Regional Development," which will showcase the Center's milestones in agriculture and rural development in the past 40 years, along with other major publications also in November.

A series of activities in 2007 is also in the pipeline. In February, SEARCA will host an international conference on fisheries and poverty. The Center will also offer training courses on agriculture and natural resource management

For details or queries, please e-mail Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr., SEARCA's deputy director for administration and chair of the 40th Anniversary Committee, at [gcs@agri.searca.org](mailto:gcs@agri.searca.org) or visit [www.searca.org/40thanniversary](http://www.searca.org/40thanniversary). (ARObmerga)



## SEARCA conferred int'l partnership award

The Center received the Aduyon Award for International Partnership from Benguet State University (BSU) during its 90th foundation anniversary celebration last 28 June.

“Aduyon” is an Ibaloi (dialect of an ethnic group in Benguet, northern Philippines) term, which means “working together.” The award was given in recognition of SEARCA’s continuous assistance in strengthening BSU’s faculty development program through graduate scholarship grants to highly qualified BSU faculty members. Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, manager of SEARCA’s Graduate Scholarship Department, represented SEARCA Director

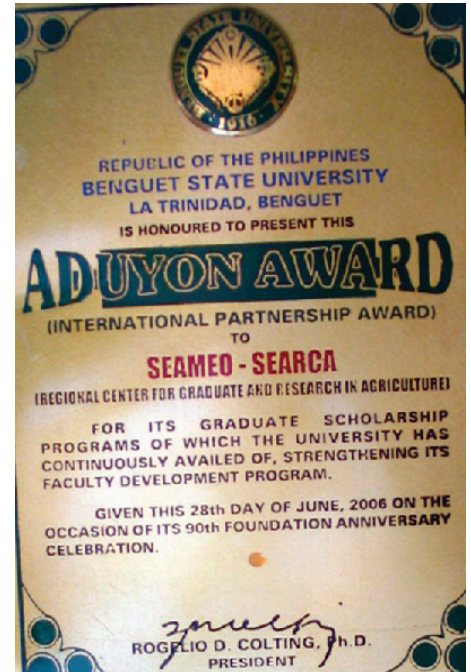
Arsenio M. Balisacan in receiving the award on behalf of SEARCA.

Dr. William D. Dar, director general of the International Center for Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics and a BSU alumnus, was the guest of honor during the celebration. Dr. Dar was bestowed the Kalsa Award for being the Most Distinguished Alumnus of BSU.

Other awardees, institutional partners, alumni, and former university officials also attended the event.

At present, there are four SEARCA fellows who are academic staff at BSU. SEARCA fellows who already retired from BSU include former BSU president, Dr. Cipriano B. Consolacion, and Dr. Rebecca Castillo, Professor IV. Dr. Fortunato A. Battad was also BSU president before he moved to other state universities. Ms. Marissa Parao, Instructor II

at BSU’s College of Forestry, is presently pursuing her PhD in Forest Resources Management as a SEARCA scholar at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. (ECCedicol)



## SEARCA director reappointed

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) reappointed Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, economist and professor, as director of the Philippine-hosted SEARCA.

Starting 14 July 2006, Dr. Balisacan will serve for a second term of three years. Singapore’s minister of education and president of SEAMEO Council, H.E. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, issued the reappointment letter upon the unanimous nomination of the Governing Board of SEAMEO SEARCA and endorsement of the Philippine Department of Education.

For his second term, Dr. Balisacan expressed his commitment to providing leadership to SEARCA in a rapidly globalizing Southeast Asia, especially on the challenges to Southeast Asian agriculture brought about by global and regional liberalization and integration. He also saw the need to focus on



The director in action.

maximizing value-adding returns and intensifying the regional relevance of SEARCA’s programs. He also committed to deepen the implementation of new initiatives as part of SEARCA’s Eighth Five-Year Plan, which the Center’s Governing Board approved in 2003, and continue building up a solid financial base for SEARCA’s sustainability.

With this, Dr. Balisacan expressed his appreciation for the responsibilities entrusted to him by the governing board of SEARCA, SEAMEO’s regional center of excellence for agriculture and rural development.

Professor of economics at the University of the Philippines Diliman

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## IPR experts convene at int'l agri-biotech confab

Intellectual property (IP) experts from Southeast Asia and the Americas gathered on 30–31 May 2006 in Makati City, Philippines to discuss IP rights and its implications on biotechnology, biodiversity, and farmers' rights toward development.

Some 67 experts attended the conference titled "Pathways to Agricultural and Rural Development: IPR and Implications," which underscored the benefits and disadvantages of IPRs to society.

"We are now faced with concerns regarding access and rights to agricultural technologies, resources, and new information resulting from their applications, especially by farmers and farmers' groups," Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA director, said.

"Patents, plant variety rights, licenses, trademarks, and farmers' rights support and sometimes hinder the technologies that underpin agricultural and rural development," Dr. A.H. Zakri of the Tokyo-based United Nations University pointed out in his keynote address.

According to Dr. Zakri, IPRs play an important role in biotechnology because they establish the basis of ownership for a particular

technology. Much of the debates on the role of IPRs in agricultural biotechnology and development have been negative. Consequently, he believes that such research will be concentrated in the hands of a few multinational industrial seed suppliers. Developing countries, according to Dr. Zakri, are also concerned with the possibility of international IP regime being maintained to encourage

"biopiracy" instead of benefit sharing.

The conference was designed to enable the participants to frame the proper perspectives on priority research areas and policy directions toward ensuring fair access to the benefits of harvesting biodiversity and the appropriate property rights regimes that should accompany the sustainable use of biodiversity.

The conference also highlighted the state of IPRs in Southeast Asia, policies and governance issues,



**IPR conference participants (front row, l-r): Dr. Serendra Bhandari, postdoctoral fellow, United Nations University-Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS); Dr. Randy Hautea, global coordinator, International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Service; Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA director; Dr. A.H. Zakri, director, UNU-IAS; Dr. James Roumasset, professor, University of Hawaii; Dr. Edilberto de Jesus, director, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization; Dr. Emil Q. Javier, president, National Academy of Science and Technology; Atty. Silvia Salazar, intellectual property consultant, Costa Rica; Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, manager, Research and Development Department, SEARCA; (back row, l-r) Dr. Tanit Changthavorn, National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Thailand Science Park; Dr. William G. Padolina, deputy director general for operations and support services, International Rice Research Institute; Dr. Reynaldo de la Cruz, professor, College of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of the Philippines Los Baños; Dr. Percy E. Sajise, regional director, International Plant Genetic Resources Institute Asia, Pacific, and Oceania (IPGRI-APO); Mr. Lim Eng Siang, honorary research fellow, IPGRI-APO; Dr. Rey Eborá, executive director, Philippine Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development**



## Participating countries of forest promotions program to start capability-enhancing projects as program ends

It's not yet over for the Small Grants Programme for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests (SGP-PTF); participating countries are still busy preparing their capability-enhancing projects for poor forest communities.

The Center acknowledged the diligence of the programme coordinators and national steering committees during the Fourth Annual Meeting of SGP-PTF held last 29–31 May in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

The programme is fully operational in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Being the youngest member of the programme, Cambodia has lined up its activities for the country's poor forest communities. These activities include innovative technology for biomass charcoal production, energy efficiency for sugar palm process through improved cook stoves, sustainable use of non-timber forest product processing and marketing, community ecotourism, nursery and tree planting, agroforestry, organic farming, home gardens,

aquaculture and livestock, community forestry, community-based water management, environmental awareness, and participatory land use planning.

SGP-PTF Thailand is funding 52 projects with implementation period until November 2006. The projects mainly focus on reviving local knowledge on forest management. PTF Thailand provides workshop on writing technique, forums on lesson learned, sharing, training of trainers for project end preparation, technical consultation and project monitoring, expansion of learning networks, and project management.

Officially launched in January 2003, SGP-PTF Pakistan has 29 projects with more than 100 community beneficiaries. Country programme priorities include joint forest management, alternative livelihood and empowerment, joint action through clustering approach, consolidation of existing projects through mirroring, capacity building, and knowledge management.

Also launched in January 2003, PTF Philippines has 43 projects approved. Project themes range from forest protection and development, livelihood development, organizational strengthening, processing of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title and Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan or other land tenure instruments. Almost sixty percent of these 43 projects are complete.

With PTF Vietnam, thematic focus includes pilot field-based projects, capacity development, networking, and awareness raising. PTF Vietnam has 29

projects implemented in 51 villages. This country programme has established forest use rights by allocating forest land to community, development of Village Forest Management Plan, reforestation carried out by local people in project sites, and support to agricultural production and livelihood initiatives to ensure food security.

Indonesia country programme focused on integrated collaborative community-based forest management, preconditioning for sustainable livelihood, and sustainable livelihood. Training for grantees started in June 2005. Thirty-two projects are on board; project design has been completed. The programme is now focusing on monitoring and evaluation by the PTFC and Karsa.

PTF Malaysia's priorities include replanting of local indigenous tree species, alternative livelihoods,

**Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA deputy director for administration, welcomes the participants of the SGP-PTF fourth annual meeting held last 29 May in Siem Reap, Cambodia.**



**Participating countries**  
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documentation of oral traditions and cultures, and gender empowerment. Out of the 35 proposals, 23 projects have been awarded with PTF funds and are serving 11,000 community members in 91 villages.

Launched in April 2004, Sri Lanka country programme focused on participatory forestry biodiversity conservation, livelihood initiatives, sustainable forest management with community participation, development of forest services and goods through multi-sector partnership, and promotion of the development of alternative forest resource base. PTF Sri Lanka was able to introduce concept on joint forest management with its Forest Department and forest communities.

During the fourth annual SGP-PTF meeting, SEARCA Deputy Director Gil C. Saguiguit Jr. expressed the Center's appreciation for the progress achieved by the programme, which is now on its fifth year. Despite limited time and manpower, the programme has now 247 grant projects on the ground since the first call for proposal in January 2003.

As the program nears its end, Dr. Saguiguit ensured that the lessons learned and knowledge generated are documented, disseminated, and used across the communities during and after the programme. (ARObmerga)

## SEARCA ADSS

The weekly **SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS)** continues to be a venue for dynamic and vibrant discussion of scientific findings, research results, and perspectives within the purview of agriculture and development. It has had high-profile researchers and practitioners from the academe, government, and industry as resource persons. **Open to the public and held at the Center every Tuesday at 4 p.m.**, the ADSS is attended by students, academics, scientists, and other members of the Los Baños community and beyond. The following were the seminars held from **April to June 2006**.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
4 April	Flavonol and Flavanol Contents of Selected Fruits	Prof. Dennis Santiago Food Science Cluster, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB)
18 April	Challenges of Food Product Development for Sweet Potato	Dr. Lilia Collado Asst. Professor, Food Science Cluster, UPLB
25 April	Prospects of Sustainable Plant Disease Management in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam	Mr. Nguyen Dac Khoa Researcher, Department of Plant Protection, Cantho University, Vietnam
2 May	Science Agriculture Reporting: Empowering People for Development	Mr. Rudy A. Fernandez Science/Agriculture Journalist, The Philippine Star
9 May	Forest Governance: Insights for Agricultural and Rural Development	Dr. Doris Capistrano Director, CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia
16 May	To Save a Dying Lake: The Environmental Use Free System of Laguna de Bay	Dr. Nicomedes Briones Professor, School of Environmental Science and Management, UPLB
23 May	Agro Systems Analysis for the Sustainable Development of Lake Buhi	Dr. Cely Binoya Professor, Camarines Sur State Agricultural College
13 June	Information and Communication for Rural Development	Dr. Lorna C. Malicsi Head, Knowledge Management Unit, SEARCA
20 June	Why Does Poverty Persist? Facts, Fancies and Policy Research Directions	Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan Director, SEARCA
27 June	Towards the Improvement of Farm-scale Production of Freshwater Ornamental Fish	Dr. Lourdes Castillo Associate Professor, Institute of Biological Sciences, UPLB

## 21 Southeast Asians awarded SEARCA scholarships

Twenty-one graduate students have recently joined the elite group of SEARCA scholars.

The scholars for school year 2006/2007 are from Cambodia (3), Indonesia (3), Lao PDR (1), Myanmar (3), the Philippines (5), Thailand (2), and Vietnam (4). Nineteen of the new SEARCA scholars will pursue their graduate studies at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), while two scholars will study at UP Diliman.

They are taking development degree programs such as MS in Extension Education, Agronomy, Development Communication, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Forestry, Soil Science, Food Science, and Agricultural Economics and PhD in Community Development, Forest Resources Management, Animal Science, Horticulture, Genetics, Entomology, Extension Education, and Environmental Science.

These new SEARCA scholars are educators, managers, researchers, university administrator, agricultural extension and planning official, and soil surveyor.

Of the 21 new scholars, nine are supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), while the rest are funded by SEARCA. The 21 new scholarship grants bring to 1,149 the total

number of graduate scholarships that SEARCA has awarded to nationals of the 11 Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) member countries, including Timor-Leste. To date, SEARCA has 83 scholars whose graduate programs are ongoing.

Focused primarily on agriculture graduate education and research and development, SEARCA is one of the 15 centers of excellence of SEAMEO, an intergovernmental body founded in 1965 to foster cooperation among Southeast Asian nations in education, science, and culture. SEARCA is hosted by the Philippine government on the campus of UPLB. (LLDDomingo)

## SEARCA has 9 new fellows

Nine SEARCA scholars from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, and Thailand joined the ranks of SEARCA fellows as they completed their graduate programs.

Eight of the nine new fellows graduated from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and one from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

Dr. Kao Sochivi, a Cambodian, finished her PhD in Community Development. Her dissertation is titled "Effectiveness of the Community Fisheries Management Program in Tonle Sap Lake, Kampong Chhnang province, Cambodia." Dr. Sochivi is currently fisheries officer at the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, Cambodia.

Dr. Mochamad Sugiarto, an Indonesian, completed his PhD in Community Development with his dissertation titled "Social integration of cattle farmers in cattle farmer groups in Banjaregara District, Indonesia." Dr. Sugiarto is a lecturer at Universitas Jenderal Soedirman in Indonesia.

Mr. Sengdala Sulinthone, a Laotian, finished his MS in Animal Science. His thesis is titled "Production and marketing of native chicken in Batangas and Iloilo provinces in the Philippines." Mr. Sulinthone is chief of Nongteng Vaccine Production Center, Lao PDR.

Mr. Noel A. Catibog, a Filipino, completed his MS in Plant Genetic Resources Conservation and Management. His thesis is titled "Genetic diversity of wild-type coconuts (*Cocus nucifera* L.) and their *in situ* conservation in Eastern Samar and Surigao del Norte, Philippines." Mr. Catibog is Science Research Specialist II at the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources Research and Development.

Dr. Jocelyn T. Zarate, a Filipino, completed her PhD in Microbiology with her dissertation titled "Comparative molecular analysis of a hypervirulent tomato strain of *Ralstonia solanacearum*." Dr. Zarate is University Researcher I at UPLB.

## SEARCA awards 9 academic bridging scholarships, offers travel grants

SEARCA has awarded scholarships to nine nationals of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam under the Center's Academic Bridging Program for the said countries.

The new scholars will pursue a 10-month graduate diploma program as a requirement for admission to MS in Agro-Biosystem at Khon Kaen University in Khon Kaen, Thailand from June 2006 to April 2007.

The scholars will take undergraduate technical courses to enhance their knowledge in their respective areas of specialization. They will also undertake specialized training

courses to improve their English language proficiency and other technical skills.

SEARCA values not only graduate education but also other forms of scientific knowledge/information dissemination vital to agriculture and rural development in the region, hence the Travel Grants Program.

Southeast Asians working in a development-oriented institution or graduate students of reputable universities in Southeast Asia are eligible to apply for a grant of up to US\$1,200.

Intended to benefit qualified agriculture and agriculture-related professionals, social scientists, and graduate students, the travel grant provides limited support to qualified applicants who will present scientific/policy papers in international or local scientific fora. The topic of the paper must be along the thrusts of SEARCA and have regional relevance.

The travel grant enables grantees to find a venue for discussing with other scientists and scholars developments in their respective disciplines. SEARCA may also produce articles or publications out of the grantee's paper, whenever appropriate and feasible.

Applicants may send a letter of intent to: The Director, SEARCA, Los Baños 4031, Laguna, Philippines.

The application letter must be supported by a recommendation letter from the immediate head/supervisor of the applicant, abstract of not more than 150 words for presentation to the conference, copy of the conference organizer's letter of acceptance of the paper for presentation, copy of the conference program, and applicant's curriculum vitae. The letter and supporting documents must be submitted to SEARCA at least two months before the date of travel. (LLDDomingo)

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### Thesis abstracts / from page 13

The study was conducted primarily to analyze the process and level of social integration in cattle farmers' groups in Banjarnegara District, Indonesia. Specifically, the study aimed to: 1) describe the socio-economic, socio-psychological, and organizational profile of farmers under various organizational development (OD) levels of farmers' groups; 2) identify the variants in the process of social integration in the cattle farmers' groups; 3) determine the level of social integration in the cattle farmers' groups; 4) differentiate the level of social integration among the three OD levels of farmers' groups; and 5) determine the socio-economic, socio-psychological, and organizational factors that influence the level of social integration of farmers' groups. Multi-stage random sampling was used to select 145 respondents from eight farmers' groups. Through structured questionnaires, in-depth

and face-to-face interviews were conducted. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the data analyses.

Results showed three clusters of farmers' groups identified as variants of the social integration process. These variants described the process of social integration based on aspects of adaptation, positioning, interaction, and identification. The level of social integration varied among the different levels of farmers' groups. Advanced farmers' groups had relatively higher level of social integration than beginner and intermediate farmers' groups. Among the socio-economic variables, farming experience and age of members showed significant relationship and influence to the level of social integration. Social sensitivity and attitude toward farmers' group are the socio-psychological factors that had significant relationship to and influence on the level of social integration. Among the

organizational-related variables, leadership performance, group norms, and communication in a group had significant relationship to and influence on the level of social integration. In the beginner farmers' group, group norms must be considered to increase the level of social integration, while in the intermediate farmers' group, focus must be given to social sensitivity and communication in group. Advanced farmers' group must emphasize on leadership performance and institutional support to increase level of social integration. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the farmers' group be supervised more closely and regularly by the Department of Agriculture to develop and increase level of social integration. Other factors affecting farmers' groups should be prioritized to enhance participation, empowerment, and sustainability.

# GRADUATE THESIS ABSTRACTS

## **Efectiveness of the Community Fisheries Management Program in Tonle Sap Lake, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia**



**Kao Sochivi**  
**Cambodia**  
**University of the Philippines**  
**Los Baños**

The study aimed to assess the Community Fisheries Management Program among the stakeholders in the Tonle Sap, Kampong Chhnang Province, Cambodia, and to identify the factors for its effective implementation toward sustainable fishery resources development program.

One hundred twenty respondents were randomly selected in six fishery communities in Kampong Chhnang Province. Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test at 0.05 level of significance was used to determine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

Findings revealed that networking, participation, resource sharing, leadership, law enforcement, and training were extremely important in the development of sustainable fishery communities in Cambodia. Family income, skills, and perception toward environmental issues were also found to be significantly associated with the fishery management scheme in terms of the nature of social relation, level of coordination, and frequency of occurrence of conflict management and resolution.

The program enhanced the level of effectiveness of the fishery resources development program in terms of productivity enhancement, equal access in the use of fishery resources, and use and control of natural resources in the fishing communities.

## **An Analysis of the Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq.) Plantation and Mill Project in Bukidnon, Philippines**



**Jose Hermis P. Patricio**  
**Philippines**  
**University of the Philippines**  
**Los Baños**

The study was undertaken to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed 4,000-hectare oil palm plantation and 10-ton fresh fruit bunches per hour processing mill project in Impasugong, Bukidnon, Philippines. Field surveys, sampling, geographic information system mapping, interview schedules, key informant interview, focus group discussion, and secondary data gathering were conducted from April to November 2004.

The proposed plantation sites are situated in idle grasslands mostly with slopes of 18%–30% and elevation of 600–800 meters above sea level. However, there are dipterocarp forests in the far north and northeast of the plantation sites. These forests are habitats of one endangered and two threatened faunal species. Moreover, most of the plantation and mill sites are located close to Tagoloan River and some of its tributaries. Biophysical characteristics of the project area are generally favorable for oil palm production except for slope of some plantation sites.

The insufficiency of basic social services, relatively low income of project and non-project participant-respondents, and their support for the project in spite of the inadequacy of consultations indicate that the project is essential for the socioeconomic development of the project area. However, the relatively high project development cost, competition from other vegetable oils, and possible occurrence of palm disease and fire in the project area may hinder the realization of potential project economic benefits.

If not properly managed, the project may adversely affect forests, wildlife, soils, hydrology, water and air quality, water and energy supply, health of plantation and mill workers, and existence of indigenous peoples in the vicinity of the project area.

The project can be managed sustainably through zoning of plantation and mill sites, phasing of plantation development, practice of zero burning, adoption of soil conservation practices, optimum and timely application of safe agrochemicals, recycling of water and energy, implementation of appropriate hiring policy, consultation with various stakeholders, active involvement of cooperating agencies, and adoption of appropriate occupational health and safety measures.

## **Social Integration in Cattle Farmer Groups in Banjarnegara District, Indonesia**



**Mochamad Sugiarto**  
**Indonesia**  
**University of the Philippines**  
**Los Baños**

### **SEARCA has 9 / from page 11**

Dr. Ma. Theresa P. Loreto, a Filipino, finished her PhD in Biochemistry with her dissertation titled "Survey, isolation, and characterization of a lectin from *Synapta* sp." Dr. Loreto is Assistant Professor II at Leyte State University (LSU), Philippines.

Dr. Arturo E. Pasa, a Filipino, has a PhD in Forest Resources Management. His dissertation is titled "Assessment of environmental services towards rewarding a community-based forest management project in Midwestern Leyte province, Philippines." Dr. Pasa is assistant professor at LSU.

Dr. Jose Hermis P. Patricio, a Filipino, completed his PhD in Environmental Science, "An analysis of the environmental impacts of the proposed oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq.) plantation and mill project in Bukidnon, Philippines." Dr. Patricio is assistant professor at Central Mindanao University, Philippines.

The fellow who recently completed her MS in Soil Fertility and Management from UPM is Ms. Soontaree Boonme, a Thai. Her thesis is titled "Land suitability evaluation and fertility capability classification in land reform area of Maha Sarakham province, Thailand." Ms. Boonme is a land reform officer at Chantaburi Provincial Land Reform Office, Thailand.

Of the nine fellows who recently completed their graduate programs, six were supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). They were Dr. Sochivi, Dr. Sugiarto, Mr. Sulinthone, Dr. Pasa, Dr. Patricio, and Ms. Boonme.

To date, SEARCA has 983 fellows

(419 PhD, 564 MS): 1 from Brunei Darussalam, 20 from Cambodia, 250 from Indonesia, 12 from Lao PDR, 55 from Malaysia, 13 from Myanmar, 289 from the Philippines, 4 from Singapore, 267 from Thailand, 5 from Timor-Leste, and 67 from Vietnam. (LLDDomingo)

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### **SEARCA, IPGRI / from page 3**

Making for Rural Development, and Integrated and Intersectoral Management of Environment and Natural Resource for the Greater Mekong Subregion.

The training course was conducted in collaboration with CIFOR and with support from the Philippine Sugar Millers Association Inc. (YMGeroleo)

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### **Aiming / from page 4**

so they fit within the policy context and therefore would stand a much better probability of being adopted." (LCMalicsi)

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### **SEARCA director / from page 7**

and former undersecretary for policy, planning, and research of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, Dr. Balisacan is a highly recognized expert on poverty and development in Southeast and East Asia. He

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### **IPR / from page 8**

constraints and opportunities in international platforms in biodiversity, capacity building, and conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources. The participants will come out with a book on IPRs as the output of their workshop

### **SEARCA, Cambodia MAFF / from page 2**

countries and development partner agencies has been strengthened. He hoped that the momentum would be sustained. He committed SEARCA's continued service as a catalyst and coordinator for this capacity-building program.

The fourth roundtable is planned to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam in December 2006. SEARCA and other partner organizations would like to push the discussion to come up with a cross-country theme or training program that cuts across countries.

This roundtable series resulted from a regional workshop that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and SEARCA jointly conducted in March 2004 in Thailand. The aim for which was to examine policy options for averting hunger and poverty in the region. The first was conducted in Myanmar and the second in the Philippines in partnership with FAO. (MLVRavago)

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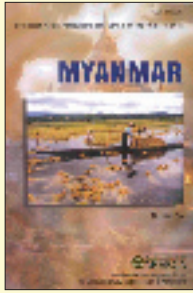
currently serves as president of the Philippine Economic Society and the Human Development Network and chair of the Board of Advisors of the Asian Institute of Management–Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides. (ARObmerga)

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held at the second day of the conference. The book is scheduled for release within this fiscal year (July 2006-June 2007). The two-day conference was organized by SEARCA, International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, and International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications. (ARObmerga)

## PUBLICATIONS

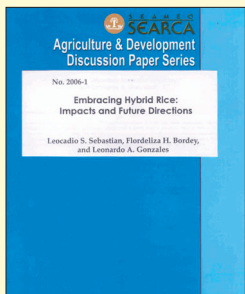
**Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Primer Series: Myanmar**



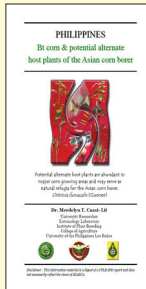
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**Proceedings of the First National Congress on Philippine Lakes**



**Bt Corn and Potential Alternate Host Plants of the Asian Corn Borer**

For more SEARCA publications, price inquiries, and orders, please visit [www.searca.org](http://www.searca.org).

### French envoy / from page 2

by providing the opportunity to conduct research in France.

France is one of the seven associate member countries of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization. (RBTorres)

## SEAMEO Jasper research awardee visits SEARCA



SEARCA officials and staff pose with Dr. Laurens Kaluge (holding gift), recipient of the 2004 Jasper Research Award for his research titled "The Quality Improvement of Primary School Children's Learning through a School-based Program in Indonesia," during his 25 April visit to the Center. Dr. Kaluge teaches at the Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Suribaya, Indonesia.



## SEARCA holds sportsfest cum family day

SEARCAns and scholars took a breather last 9 June when the Center held its annual sportsfest concurrent with the family day at SEARCA quadrangle in the morning and at Argon Resort, Los Baños, Laguna in the afternoon. Among the sports participated in by the staff and scholars were table tennis, volleyball, basketball, badminton, and some Philippine traditional games.

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# SEARCA delegates visit Cambodian gov't officials

SEARCA conducted a series of policy dialogues with Cambodia's government officials in Phnom Penh last 26 April.

The discussion focused on how SEARCA can assist in building human capacities of Cambodia as well as how SEARCA and the ministry could work effectively in choosing and selecting the crème de la crème of Cambodia's aspiring youth to be trained through the SEARCA Graduate Scholarship Program.

The Cambodian officials recognize that developing human resource is an important element to comply with the technical and scientific requirement of the fast-changing global environment. Until now, the country is at a crossroad in its development as it moves away from a post-conflict situation toward a market-oriented paradigm.

In recent years, Cambodia has made important progress in ensuring peace and security, rebuilding institutions, establishing a stable macroeconomic environment,

and putting in place a liberal investment regime. Notwithstanding these achievements, the people living below the poverty line still stand at 36 percent of the country's population of 13 million at 1.81 percent annual growth rate.

H.E. Dr. Yim Voeunthan, secretary of state of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, expressed his sincerest thanks to SEARCA for its efforts in assisting Cambodia in developing its agricultural competitiveness.

At the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), its officials talked about the state of education in RUA while SEARCA delegates identified areas where the Center could further assist the said university in providing graduate scholarship and short-term training to its faculty members.

Dr. Visalsok Touch, dean of RUA's Graduate School of Agriculture Science, presented the University's plan of offering PhD degree in various fields of agriculture to SEARCA delegates.

The SEARCA delegation was composed of Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, director; Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, manager of Research and Development Department (RDD); and Ms. Majah-Leah V. Ravago, RDD project development specialist. (MLVRavago)



**(L-R) Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, H.E. Dr. Kol Peng, and Ms. Majah-Leah V. Ravago. H.E. Dr. Peng is a senior minister of Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.**



**Dr. Visalsok Touch (right), dean of Graduate School of Agriculture Science, RUA presented the University's plan of offering PhD degree in various fields in agriculture to SEARCA delegates, Dr. Garcia (left) and Dr. Balisacan (center).**

## The SEARCA Diary

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