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A PRESSING NEED

Global warming is changing the way we live. With dwindling supplies and rising cost of petroleum products, we need to find ways to satisfy our increasing need for energy from sustainable and renewable sources.



Biofuel development, centerpiece of policy roundtable in Myanmar

Energy security has been a rising concern among governments, particularly in the face of climate change and its far-reaching impacts and globalization. Biofuels development has therefore become an aggressive pursuit, becoming a contemporary strategic area of research and policy. Biofuels production may augur well for agricultural producers due to the new markets that will be potentially available. However, its implications on food security, poverty and environments need to be more closely examined.

It is with this backdrop that SEARCA, the Korea FAO Association, and the Department of Agricultural Planning of Myanmar's Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MOAI-DAP) jointly organized the Fifth Policy Roundtable on Building Capacities for Agricultural Competitiveness of Transition Countries in Southeast Asia held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 1-2 April 2008. The meeting's theme was "Biofuels Development: Challenges and Implications to Food Security in Transition Southeast Asia."

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Participants of the Policy Roundtable held on 1-2 April 2008 at Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

This Policy Roundtable series was begun in 2004. The first roundtable was conducted in Yangon, Myanmar; the second in Manila, Philippines; the third in Siem Reap, Cambodia; and the fourth in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. The idea for the series was born during a regional policy workshop on averting poverty and hunger in Southeast Asia that the Food and Agriculture Organization and SEARCA jointly conducted in March 2004 in Thailand.

The objectives of the Fifth Policy Roundtable were to: (1) have a common understanding of the state of biofuel development in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV); (2) develop a concrete plan of implementation for priority capacity building programs on biofuels development, including a timetable and modality for mobilizing resources for the activity; and (3) explore possible partnerships between and among SEARCA, CLMV governments, and organizations from East Asian countries to actively collaborate in CLMV's capacity building.

The resource person, Dr. Larry Wong, Senior Fellow at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia, gave a presentation titled

"Implications of Global, Regional and National Biofuel Development on Food Security in CLMV Countries: Quo vadis?" His presentation provided a background of the current drive for biofuels development and outlined the policy goals and emerging issues toward developing a decision framework to guide policy, research, and capacity building for CLMV.

The presentation also recommended a decision framework for strategic and national choices on biofuels, which was adapted from the Common Fund for Commodities (2007). He emphasized that pursuing biofuels development is a longterm task requiring sustained government commitment and a continuous balancing act among energy security, rural development, export development, and climate change mitigation.

Two delegates each from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam involved in biofuels development participated in the event, as well as representatives from a number of development agencies in Asia and experts in related fields. The country presentations from CLMV showed common threads of government commitment to CLMV biofuel development efforts, which are mostly in their infancy stage, and higher priority given to food security and poverty alleviation over energy security.

As a follow-up activity to the Fifth Policy Roundtable, MOAI-DAP through its Director-General, Mr. Tin Htut Oo, recommended a focused, results-oriented workshop for a policy and strategic framework on biofuels, which the participants fully supported. This follow-up workshop is expected to result in the development of a tool to help policymakers arrive at appropriate decisions regarding food, feed, and fuel.

The Korea FAO Association through its Chairman, Dr. Sang-Mu Lee, expressed its expectation that the policy roundtable series should be sustained to build consensus and provide CLMV a collective voice on emerging strategic concerns. Dr. Lee committed his organization's continued support for the activity, the planned follow-up workshop, as well as related activities in the future.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, likewise reiterated that capacity building is a long-term concern and must not be sidetracked by short-term issues. "The significant contribution of human resources and institutional capacities to rural development is apparent from the experiences of the countries in Asia and many parts of the world. Thus, attention has to be paid to national capacities, particularly in reference to policy options and strategies. The CLMV countries, which are in various stages of moving into market economies, are becoming less dependent on foreign experts and have become more self-reliant in managing their own destinies," he noted. (CNGRogel)

Latest human development report launched in Manila

Climate change takes centerstage in the Human Development Report 2007/2008, which was launched in Manila on 27 February 2008 by the local United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office.

Titled "Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World," the Report refers to climate change as the defining human development challenge of the 21st century. It warns that failure to respond to this challenge will "stall and then reverse international efforts to reduce poverty. The poorest countries and most vulnerable citizens will suffer the earliest and most damaging setbacks, even though they have contributed least to the problem."

The Report indicates that there is now overwhelming scientific evidence that the world is moving toward the point at which irreversible ecological catastrophe becomes unavoidable and that no country would be immune to the impact of global warming. Underscoring the fact that climate change is not just a future scenario, the Report calls for action now, even as increased

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exposure to droughts, floods and storms is already destroying opportunity and reinforcing inequality.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director and Professor of economics at the University of the Philippines Diliman, was among the panel of reactors during the Report's launch in Manila. Dr. Balisacan is also currently the President of the Philippine Human Development Network. The other reactors were Dr. Rosa T. Perez, former Flood Forecasting Officer in Charge of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical & Astronomical Services Administration; and Mr. Joey Salceda, Governor of Albay Province, Philippines.

Dr. Balisacan's comment focused on the high vulnerability of the poor to climate change. He said that in developing countries, "high levels of poverty and low levels of human development limit the capacity of poor households, especially in rural areas, to manage climate-related risks. With low incomes and meager assets, as well as limited access to formal insurance and safety nets, poor households have to deal with climate-related shocks under highly constrained conditions. Limited strategies for coping with such shocks reinforce deprivation. For instance, when climate disasters strike, without access to formal safety nets, the poor are often forced to sell productive assets, reduce spending for health, take children out of school, and so on. These desperate measures can effectively lock vulnerable households into poverty traps."

The Philippines, for example, experiences an average of 20 typhoons, accompanied by strong winds, intense rainfall, and flooding. Of the four most vulnerable areas, two are among the poorest regions in the country. Dr. Balisacan reported that in 2004-2006, an annual average of about eight million people, mostly in the rural areas (and therefore depending on agriculture for their sustenance and livelihood), had been affected by disasters. Only about one-half of them received assistance from government and private relief institutions. Moreover, the value of the assistance was miniscule, not even representing one percent of the average income during "normal" times of the poorest 30 percent of the Filipino population. Dr. Balisacan noted that the agriculture sector is most vulnerable to the vagaries of climate and weather and to the incidence of pests and diseases. "This is a serious concern considering that disasters often inflict serious damage and losses to property and destroy the only means of livelihood of the poor. Failing to receive assistance, they risk falling into perpetual poverty traps," he underscored.



Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, delivers his reaction to the Human Development Report 2007/2008 at its launch in Manila on 27 February 2008.

Dr. Balisacan, a poverty expert, lamented the fact that while the poor's vulnerability to climate change is amply demonstrated, the discussions on climate change have been dominated by the interests of the rich and big countries. "The big talks," he said, "have often been far too short of actions reflecting the policy imperatives for poor countries." He pointed out that the big disconnect in policy discussions on climate change is that "we know more or less what to do at the global level (i.e., we know our policy handles), but we have much less understanding of what works best for developing countries, especially at the ground level, given their much constrained conditions for addressing many pressing development concerns, including low levels of investment in health and education, lack of infrastructure, poor governance structures, etc. What do we know about these local stressors and their interaction with climate change? What is the nature of the policy tradeoff faced by policymakers in these countries?"

He recommended five actions to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation for the Philippines:

- Recognize the crucial role of the government agencies at various scales: national (macro), regional/provincial (meso), and local (micro). Each scale needs different strategies. The Philippine discourse on climate change adaptation is confined mainly at the national level. The local government units (LGUs) can mobilize resources if they see the importance of climate change adaptation.

- Link climate change adaptation to current problems or issues relevant to policymakers and stakeholders to facilitate uptake, especially by LGUs.
- Prioritize areas with high climatic hazards. The message of adapting to climate hazards is more easily understood in these typhoon-prone regions.
- Arm political champions with science-based messages. Climate change adaptation will receive a fair hearing in the policy discourse if there are champions among them. However, to sustain such advocacy, there is the concomitant need to invest in good science, in research, and in locally contextualized evidence.
- Participate actively in international negotiations and programs. As the Report emphasizes, climate change is a global problem and its solution demands global action.

By way of contributing to the discussion on climate change, especially as it affects biodiversity, SEARCA convened the International Conference-Workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change in Southeast Asia: Adaptation and Mitigation on 19-20 February 2008 in Manila, with funding support mainly from the Netherlands' government. (See story on p.5. (LLTallafer/UNDP Press Release)

Shifting paradigms in the social sciences: New perspectives and directions

“Major transformations, such as urbanization and migration, globalization and trade integration, information access, climate change, biofuels, and change in food and energy prices taking place in the world today, have considerable effects on rural communities,” said Dr. Prabhu Pingali, Head of the Agricultural Policy and Statistics Division of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Dr. Pingali was among the main speakers at a symposium titled “The Changing Role of the Applied Social Science in Agriculture and Community Development” held on 28-29 January 2008 at SEARCA. Organized by the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs (UPLB-CPAf) and supported by SEARCA, the symposium aimed to review the evolving body of knowledge that revolutionizes the role of social science toward agricultural and community development.

In Dr. Pingali’s plenary on the topic “Global change and rural communities: Is sustainable development still possible?” he underscored that global transformations have significant implications to rural communities by way of greater interdependence with the rest of the world, enhanced access to real time information, advantage of modern science and management over traditional know-how, increased risk and shift in vulnerability, and conflict over access to resources.

He cited a forecast by the United Nation’s World Population Assessment (2002) that urban population is expected to outnumber the rural population before 2010. Brought about by the rampant exodus of individuals from the countryside to key cities, this trend does not only imply demographic change but also reorientation of production systems and new opportunities for agro-tourism and other environmental services. Such increases the opportunity cost of labor resulting in relevant remittances and dependable source of rural household income taking 10-20 percent of total household income. “Transfers are the new source of growth,” he said, “and this means increased power for rural communities.”

Dr. Pingali also emphasized that globalization is more than trade liberalization. It includes integration across communities and cultures through travel and communication, easy access to information, and improved economic opportunities. However, it also means



Dr. Prabhu Pingali, Head of the Agricultural Policy and Statistics Division, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

concentration of market power in global value chains that translates to higher transaction costs. To mitigate this, he recommended that rural communities should improve their contractual arrangements, quality and safety standards, and agro-business management skills.

Another implication he mentioned was the widening agricultural trade deficit of less developed countries (LDCs), with total imports being greater than total exports beginning in late 80s. These changing patterns of trade involve rapid expansion of trade in processed goods, limited capacity in meeting sanitary and phytosanitary standards, and low competitiveness of domestic products (e.g., cereal and livestock) in the form of declining commodity prices. Dr. Pingali underscored that trade can contribute to pro-poor growth where complementary policies enabling the poor to take advantage of trade-related opportunities are implemented.

Another global transformation that Dr. Pingali discussed is the increasing link between energy and food prices. That is, as energy prices rise, costs of agricultural inputs increase, putting pressure on prices of agricultural products; thus, the development of alternative energy sources, such as biofuel, become significant. However, increased demand for biofuel production inputs puts pressure on their price making it too expensive as an alternative energy source.

Meanwhile, climate change in tropical communities means higher temperatures and higher incidence of extreme events (i.e., drought, flood, typhoon) causing increased and shifting vulnerabilities making traditional safety nets inadequate.

Dr. Pingali presented recommendations for managing sustainable development under transformational change. These include community-driven management with clear rights

to resources, cheaper and easier access to information, investment in effective early warning systems and safety nets, and empowerment of those left behind.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, speaking at the opening remarks of the event, emphasized that “technology and institutional development may represent the key mitigation and management response to the risk posed to agriculture and human development... In the face of today’s challenges faced by developing countries, especially the need for technological change and inclusive development, higher education plays a critical role.”

Dr. Agnes Rola, CPAf Dean, said that CPAf initiated the symposium to devise theories and methods in development and governance studies in support of national goals in the agriculture and rural sector and communities in transition as well as to provide a learning piece to further refine UPLB’s academic program content.

Academicians, educators, scientists, researchers, and politicians convened in this two-day symposium to present plenary papers under four identified themes. These are: (1) institutions, governance and delivery of services; (2) strategies for community resource management and sustainable development; (3) social development and poverty reduction; and (4) science and technology policy for development.

The symposium, which is part of CPAf’s 10th anniversary and the UP Centennial, provided a venue to discuss this evolution and how UPLB can address future needs. (LGSoliven/RMMDedicatoria)

Biodiversity and climate change link, focus of international conference

The link between biodiversity and climate change is not one-way: just as climate change alters the state of biodiversity, so can changes in biodiversity affect the world's climate. This was the concern put into the limelight by an international conference-workshop initiated by SEARCA held on 19-20 February 2008 in Manila, Philippines.

The conference-workshop, titled "Biodiversity & Climate Change in Southeast Asia: Adaptation and Mitigation" was one of the culminating activities of the Philippine-Netherlands Biodiversity Research Programme (BRP) for Development in Mindanao: Focus on Mt. Malindang and its Environs implemented by SEARCA and funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation (DGIS) since July 2000. It capitalized on the lessons and experiences gained from the BRP.

In the opening program, Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, cited biodiversity and climate change as two contemporary concerns affecting Southeast Asia and all other parts of the world, with more cause for alarm in the tropics which hold most of the world's biodiversity.

He noted that "the less attention grabbing yet potentially more widespread consequences of climate change include lower agricultural yields, increased water stress, spread of infectious diseases, as well as changes in the natural ecosystems, thereby threatening biological species."

He furthered that the projected impacts of climate change on biodiversity have already been heavily discussed whereas the contributions of biological resources to reduce the impacts of climate change on people and agricultural production have not been fully appreciated.

Dr. Balisacan said that climate change and biodiversity issues affect third world economies more and this should be a cause for alarm. This was seconded by Ambassador Robert Brinks of Netherlands in his welcome address. He said that countries like the Philippines are more vulnerable to the threats of climate change and must therefore safeguard their resources. He added that, "Global warming is primarily caused by developed countries which includes my own... From the perspective of the Netherlands policy, human activity causes climate change and we can do something about it."

The keynote speaker, Mr. Ahmed Djoglaf, Executive Director, Convention on Biodiversity, was represented by Dr. Delfin Ganapin, Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme. Mr. Ganapin emphasized that "if temperature increases by 1.5°C to 2°C, 20 percent of our species will be at risk of extinction... already the ecosystem's functions [are disrupted]: bleaching of corals, expansion of arid lands... the stakes are enormous and intergenerational with a very short time... partners across sectors, agencies, and countries [are needed]..."

The conference served as a venue for discussion of opportunities for adapting to and mitigating climate change, while enhancing the conservation of biodiversity in the region. Thematic papers and case studies from participating countries were presented on the first day. The second day featured a workshop or mini-roundtable discussion that identified the elements of a feasible regional research-for-development program on biodiversity and climate change, with short talks by representatives of the donor community on their perspectives in supporting such efforts in the Southeast Asian region.

An alliance to combat climate change through intellectual discourse and research was formed during the conference. A concept note on a regional program on biodiversity and climate change was also created. The participants serve as the initial pool of experts for the said alliance and their different organizations as the leading institutions.

The event, which drew more than 100 participants from 10 countries, was jointly organized by SEARCA, ASEAN Center for Biodiversity, World Agroforestry Centre, Bioversity International (formerly the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute or IPGRI), and Silliman University. (MAFABad)



Participants of the conference-workshop on 19-20 February 2008 pose for posterity.

SEARCA hosts Ronald Coase Institute Workshop

Twenty-six scholars from eight countries participated in the Philippine Workshop on Institutional Analysis held on 9-14 March 2008 at SEARCA. Organized by the Ronald Coase Institute (RCI), the workshop was supported by the Philippine Economics Society (PES), Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), and SEARCA.

One of the highlights of the event was the plenary lecture of Memorial Prize in Economics laureate Douglass C. North on the topic "A New Approach to Economic Development." Underscoring the importance of institutions in economic development. Dr. North said that the root of the gaps between the rich and poor was in the way human societies have evolved institutionally. He added that "elite coalitions instill order by creating

rents or monopolies that are distributed among them to stabilize their base, while the mass of the population has limited or no access to property rights and political power."

Dr. North stressed that grasping social development entails more than imposing "the characteristics of an open access society on a limited access society." Instead, the challenge is to build limited access societies "from being fragile to stable to mature by encouraging the growth of institutions that don't threaten the survival of the elites," allowing them to grow similar to open societies.

RCI started its workshop series in 2001 to promote vibrant exchange among community of scholars on how real economic systems work in the context of institutions. Its pilot was held in the United States of America and was brought to other countries such as Brazil, Spain, and Iceland, among others. The workshop held at SEARCA was its first in the Philippines. (MAFABad)



Dr. Douglass C. North, Nobel Laureate in Economics

Dissertation workshop discusses agrarian transition in SEA

SEARCA hosted an interdisciplinary dissertation workshop on agrarian transition in Southeast Asia held on 30 May to 01 June 2008. Agrarian transition refers to a larger societal transformation from an agrarian society - for which agriculture is the most important source of income, and the largest proportion of the gross domestic product - to one based increasingly on industrial production and services along with urbanization and livelihood changes.

Graduate students from various universities in the world whose dissertation projects deal with some aspects of agrarian transition in Southeast Asia participated in the workshop.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the event, Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, expressed gladness at "the attention that agriculture and rural development are now getting again because as we all very well know, the majority of the world's poor can be found in the rural areas, which invariably depend on agriculture for their existence. In Southeast Asia, that's nearly three-fourths of the world's poor."

The purpose of the workshop is to encourage and assist postgraduate students who are just beginning work on agrarian issues, as well as those who are farther along in their projects.



Participants of the ChATSEA dissertation workshop pose for posterity.

The format of the workshop was noteworthy due to its manner of critiquing projects. The workshop was structured so that the author of the project under discussion does not speak at all during the first day. On the second day, each author whose work was under discussion the previous day was given a half hour to respond to the critiques made on his/her project. On the last day, the faculty led the discussion on issues that surfaced during the workshop.

Workshop participants were selected based on the content of their submitted projects, the potential for useful exchanges among them, and the benefits of including a wide range of

disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and intellectual traditions.

The dissertation workshop was a joint collaboration between the Challenges of Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia (ChATSEA) project, based in the University of Montreal in Canada, and SEARCA.

The ChATSEA project supports leading edge research with true potential for intellectual breakthrough that addresses broad and critical issues of intellectual, social, economic and cultural significance through the effective coordination and integration of diverse research activities and research results. (MAFABad)

SEARCA assists NTU in scholarship recruitment

SEARCA, through its Graduate Scholarship Department and Biotechnology Information Center assisted National Taiwan University (NTU) in selecting Southeast Asian scholars for the 2008 NTU Summer Program on Biodiversity, Agriculture and Culture of Taiwan. Of the applicants, SEARCA endorsed two Filipinos and two Thais to the NTU Selection Committee, which granted them scholarships.

The four grantees were: Wuthipong Pangjai and Eng-Orn Srikeaw, Kasetsart University, Thailand; Decien Ferraren, University of the Philippines Open University, Philippines; and Edwin Returan, De La Salle University, Philippines. They joined the 21 other participants of the program from Japan, USA and Taiwan. The scholars were selected based on potential and immediate impact of the learning from the program on their study programs and careers.

The program, which ran from 13 June to 6 July, consisted of course lectures on agriculture and biodiversity as well as visits to national parks, various experimental forests and farms of NTU, and research institutes. (ECCedicol)

SEARCA Director joins science and technology commission

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, was appointed as one of the six members of the Technical Advisory Council of the Philippine Congressional Commission on Science and Technology (COMSTE). Dr. Balisacan will join other outstanding academe members and experts from different industries and fields in science and technology.

COMSTE aims to provide necessary funding and infrastructure support, and strengthen linkages among the different sectors involved in science and technology in the Philippines. It is also looking into the science education in both in public and private schools at all levels, including the graduate programs and the non-formal system of education.

The commission is headed by Philippine Senator Edgardo J. Angara and co-chaired by Philippine Representative Joseph Emilio Abaya. They are joined by four members each from the Philippine Senate and the Philippine House of Representatives.

Six panels have been convened to address the concerns of COMSTE, namely: (a) Energy and Environment; (b) Information Technology (IT) and IT-Enabled Industry; (c) Electronics and Semiconductor Industry; (d) Health Sciences; (e) Science, Mathematics and Engineering Education; and (f) Agriculture and Food.

Experts have been tapped to serve as panel members. Their tasks are to review and assess the science and technology, and engineering research and development sector of the Philippines. From the findings, COMSTE will propose the necessary improvements and changes through legislation with supporting recommendations to make the Philippines more competitive through science and technology. (ACanubas)

SEARCA Director tapped as adviser of FAO-IFAD Pro-Poor program

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, has been tapped as a member of the Regional Advisory Group (RAG) for a three-year regional program called "Pro-Poor Policy Formulation, Dialogue and Implementation at the Country Level in Asia." The program is being implemented by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP) with support from the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD).

Dr. Balisacan, a professor at the University of the Philippines School of Economics, is an acknowledged expert in poverty studies and development economics.

The FAO-IFAD program seeks to assist eight Asian countries in reducing rural poverty through enhanced institutional capacity to analyze, formulate and implement pro-poor agricultural and rural development policies. The countries covered are Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

The program's key activities are: (1) identification of national partners and key policy issues, (2) analysis and formulation of pro-poor policies, (3) policy dialogue, (4) dissemination of results and sharing of experiences, and (5) support for the implementation of selected pro-poor policies.

The RAG is composed of eminent scholars, policy experts, and representatives of the donor community, national and international nongovernment organizations. Its main functions are to: (1) serve as the regional resource pool for the program, (2) provide broad guidelines and policy inputs to the program, (3) assist in identifying and prioritizing country-specific needs, and (4) oversee the progress made in various aspects of the program.

The group held its first Regional Consultation and High-level Roundtable Meeting in Bangkok on 4-6 March 2008. Aside from the RAG members, the meeting was attended also by representatives of the program's national focal points and high-level government officials and policymakers. Among others, it reviewed and discussed the program's ongoing and planned activities and sought guidance on ways to enhance the program's implementation and impact. (LLTallafer)



Participants of the Regional Consultation and High-level Roundtable Meeting on the project "Pro-Poor Policy Formulation, Dialogue and Implementation at the Country Level in Asia", including Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (2nd row, 2nd from left), SEARCA Director.

Forum tackles Food vs. Fuel issue

Can biofuels be considered as culprit in the recent food price increases? Or can it be considered a liberator from the current skyrocketing fuel prices?

In an executive forum convened by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), international experts tackled the biofuels-food conflict and analyzed and discussed the policy issues and development challenges of biofuel development programs and its emerging industry, especially in the context of developing countries.

With governments and the private sector in the developing world joining the world's biofuel producers for energy and environmental security, SEARCA saw the need for rational decision and policymaking and program planning informed by research and development on biofuel production and its social, economic, environmental, and political implications.

Thus, in collaboration with the Philippine Department of Energy (DOE), National Biofuels Board (NBB) and the USAID Philippines-Energy and Clean Air Project (ECAP) as major partners, SEARCA brought together 33 senior and mid-level decision and policymakers from both government and private sectors in India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Timor-Leste, USA, and Vietnam in the "Executive Forum on Unraveling the Policy Issues and Development Challenges on Biofuels" on 23-24 April 2008 at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Makati City, Philippines.

Currently, there is a keener interest in renewable energy sources, particularly biofuels, mainly due to the influence of the global energy economy, according to Dr. Mark Rosegrant, Director of the Environment and Production Technology Division, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), based in Washington, D. C., USA. The rising fuel prices, growing energy demand, concerns over global from greenhouse gas emissions, and domestic energy security justify the promotion of biofuels as substitute for expensive fossil fuels. As a result, biofuels have opened great opportunity as alternative source of big profit in the agriculture sector.

Biofuels differ from fossil fuels in that they are derived from renewable sources, such as crops and animal wastes. There are three common forms of biofuels, namely: bioethanol, biodiesel, and biogas. Bioethanol is the biofuel substitute for petrol or gasoline and is mainly derived from cereal-based crops (e.g., wheat, maize or corn, soya beans, and sugarcane). Biodiesel, the biofuel

substitute for diesel, is mainly derived from oil seed-based crops like oil seed rape and palm oil. Bioethanol and biodiesel are first generation biofuels – they are derived from raw materials that are normally used in food production. Biogas, a substitute for natural gas, is derived from organic waste materials, including animal wastes and wastes generated from municipal, commercial, and industrial sources through anaerobic digestion. Biogas is a second-generation fuel because it is derived from non-food sources.

According to Dr. Rosegrant, the "food vs. fuel" trade-off is a consequence of slow innovations and technology investments in crop productivity and sole reliance on conventional feedstock conversion technologies to meet future blending requirements (or displacements) of fossil fuels with biofuels. Dr. Rosegrant further noted that global warming and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions are global issues. Therefore, biofuels should also be addressed globally, and not on a per country basis.

Dr. William D. Dar, Director-General of the India-based International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and former Secretary of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, underscored that no less than solid and reliable research should form the basis for any biofuel development program that a government is going to promote. Along with Dr. Larry Wong of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, he cited the current limited research on jatropha and its downsides in mass production for industrial use. These include the varying rates of maturity of the jatropha nut requiring manual harvesting, and the chemical instability of jatropha oil that poses doubt on the feasibility of accumulating and transporting to industrial sites. However, both Dar and Wong noted the merits of jatropha for community-based power needs, e.g., for cooking and lighting right within the locality producing it.

On the other hand, Dar endorsed sorghum, which has been well-researched by ICRISAT, as biofuel feedstock; while Wong cited sweet potato, albeit a food crop, as having high ethanol yield. All the experts were one in asserting that the heart of the matter is to ensure that food security remains a paramount concern. Appropriate government policies to ensure food-fuel balance, especially on proper land zoning, are needed for biofuels stock development, which should be pro-poor, pro-farmer, and pro-poverty reduction.

Overall, forum participants agreed that there is no real competition between biofuels and food. First, there is no economic sense to divert crops that are used for both food and fuel solely for the latter, at present. Second, initiatives to grow non-food biofuel crops (e.g., jatropha) are being

done on previously idle lands and marginal lands that are unsuitable for food production in the first place, thus creating revenue from otherwise unproductive lands. In the long-term, what influences soaring food prices are the burgeoning world population, changing food habits due to rising incomes in countries with growing economies, continued conversion of farm lands to non-farm uses, high cost of farm inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, and escalating costs of energy.

Policy-wise, participants agreed that there is indeed a need for supportive government policies to foster biofuel production. Important issues to look at are as follows: 1) government incentives to encourage small farmers to grow specialized crops (e.g., perennial grasses); 2) financial schemes to reduce financial risks for producing biofuels and speed up the commercialization of next-generation fuels; 3) comprehensive land use plan to ensure food security; and 4) support to functioning institutions (e.g., cooperatives) to make bioenergy pro-poor.

Besides DOE, USAID-ECAP, IFPRI, ISIS Malaysia and ICRISAT, other partners of SEARCA in implementing the forum include World Bank-Philippines, Asian Development Bank, Green Eight Industries, Global Trade Management Consultancy Services, Chemrez Technologies, Inc., San Carlos Bioenergy, Inc., and De La Salle University. (NARamos)

15 complete SEARCA's impact assessment of anti-poverty programs course

Fifteen executives, researchers, and data analysis staff from research institutions, academe, and government agencies based in three countries in Southeast Asia and Taiwan underwent a training course on impact assessment of anti-poverty programs at SEARCA on 24-28 March 2008.

Dubbed "Impact Assessment of Anti-Poverty Programs: Focus on Technology and Capacity Development," the five-day course enhanced the participants' basic knowledge of impact assessment, its issues, tools, and how its results are best communicated. It was designed to enable the participants to: 1) discuss the limits and potentials of impact assessment for R&D programs on technology and capacity development for poverty alleviation; 2) use

15 Complete / to page 9

15 Complete / from page 8

selected methodologies in evaluating the impacts of such R&D programs; and 3) maximize and translate the results of their impact assessment into workable policies.

SEARCA developed the course in response to the increasing concern raised by decision-makers in governments, donor agencies, and other organizations that the resources allocated to research and development ought to bring about meaningful, visible change in the lives of the poor. It has thus become incumbent on researchers and development practitioners to provide convincing evidence that they are making a dent in alleviating poverty through sound and rigorous impact assessment. Through impact assessment, researchers could measure and evaluate changes in the well-being of individuals, households, and communities after a particular project, program, or policy has been implemented.

The course had three modules, namely: An Overview of Impact Assessment (Module 1), Quantitative Methods Used in Impact Assessment (Module 2), and Communicating Results for Policy (Module 3). Workshops were conducted at the end of each module, which enabled the participants to develop an analytical framework for a development project using a logframe matrix, a project proposal using statistical methods for impact assessment, and draft policies based on an impact assessment report.

Dr. Lisa Grace S. Bersales, Dean and Professor, School of Statistics, University of the Philippines-Diliman, served as Technical Course Coordinator

and lead resource person. Her team of resource persons included Dr. Erniel B. Barrios and Dr. Dennis S. Mapa, Professor and Assistant Professor, respectively, of the School of Statistics, UP Diliman; and Ms. Rosemarie G. Edillon and Ms. Sharon Faye A. Piza, Vice-President and Executive Director and Senior Research Associate, respectively, of the Asia-Pacific Policy Center (APPC).

Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA's Training Department Manager, served as the Training Course Manager, with Ms. Nova A. Ramos as Co-Manager.

The 15 participants came from Indonesia (2), Thailand (1), Taiwan (1), and the Philippines (11). Ten of the participants were fee-paying and the rest were sponsored by SEARCA.

This impact assessment course is the third to be offered by SEARCA. In 2004, the Center piloted a training of trainers on impact assessment, with participants from government line agencies, research centers, academic institutions, and nongovernment organizations involved in monitoring and evaluation or policy research in their respective organizations. In 2005, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) supported SEARCA's second impact assessment course, with participants from NAPC, local government units, and the Office of Muslim Affairs/Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Both courses approached impact assessment in the context of effective policymaking and good governance for poverty alleviation. (NARamos)



PARTICIPANTS AT WORK. Participants discuss the analytical framework they will use in their first workshop output using a logframe matrix.

What the participants say:

"The training is very helpful for me...my field is in biotechnology, but the topics discussed in the training will help me and my organization in terms of assessing the impacts of new technologies, especially modern biotechnology, for alleviating farming problems and poverty."



Dr. Boonyanath Nathwong, Researcher 2, National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC), Thailand

"We thank the whole training management staff and resource persons of the course... more than the business side, what we have appreciated most is your personal touch as far as the needs of the participants are concerned...No doubt, it was a worthwhile training and we have gained a lot from it."



Mr. Nazario C. Briguera, Administrative Aide IV, Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Philippines

"Really, it is one of the best training programs that I have attended in my entire government service. The efforts you have done are highly commendable. I learned new things, which help me widen my perspective in terms of evaluating development programs."



Prof. Milagros C. Bales, Associate Professor III, Office of the Vice-President for Research and Extension, Visayas State University, Philippines

Philippine environment and climate change: An assessment of policies and their impacts

Rodel D. Lasco¹, Roberta Gerpacio², Patricia Ann J. Sanchez³, and Rafaela Jane P. Delfino⁴



The Philippines has been considered as highly vulnerable to current, as well as future, risks associated with climate change.

Every year, the Philippines experiences eight to nine tropical cyclones making a landfall, mild earthquakes, recurring landslides and flooding. The country is also periodically affected by the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) that induces prolonged wet and dry seasons, adversely affecting the local economy.

Climate change is thus expected to exacerbate existing stresses in the country, particularly the more vulnerable natural ecosystems and local communities.

Sad to say however, climate change is yet to be mainstreamed into the Philippine development policy arena having reviewed 195 presidential decrees, republic acts, executive orders, government agency administrative orders and memoranda, LGU ordinances and proclamations. Unfortunately, very few of these laws addresses even in the slightest the growing concerns brought about by the increasing trend of climate change, climate variability and risks.

Whenever climate change is recognized or acknowledged, the focus and emphasis of national policy has been more of mitigation, and adaptation to risks associated with current climate variability and extremes. Clearly, national decision makers do not yet see climate change as a high priority issue in the context of national development plans because their attention is focused more on the actual destruction caused by yearly climate hazards.

The Philippine government is nevertheless actively pursuing a number of milestones and activities to address climate change. The most recent one of these is the creation of the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change (PTFCC), which has been tasked with addressing the issue of climate change, mitigating its impacts, and leading in adapting to these impacts.

POLICY REVIEW

Lasco et. al. (2007) examined the existing policies and programs of the Philippine government in terms of their impacts (actual and potential) on the vulnerability of natural and agricultural ecosystems and rural communities to climate change-related risks.

They studied the effectiveness of these policies and programs in promoting practices to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, by getting insights from the government, local non-government organizations (NGOs), the academe, private sector, and other stakeholders on climate change mainstreaming in the country.

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Lasco et. al.'s (2007) review showed that government policies, programs, and activities on natural resource and ecosystems management can positively or negatively impact a sector's vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, mainly depending on how they are implemented or put into action, and on how the respective manners of implementation were monitored and/or regulated, if at all. Sometimes in the end, it appears to become a case of policy "mal-implementation".

With the above realities, the following recommendations to addressing climate change in the Philippines are forwarded:

1. Aggressive yet systematic information, education, and communication (IEC) campaign about climate change, climate variability and risks, for better understanding of the phenomenon, its consequences and appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.
2. Participatory and multi-sectoral/stakeholder approach, bringing together stakeholders from the academe, all government agencies, private sector as well as NGOs, on more concerted and coordinated partnership arrangements and stronger operational links.
3. Climate change technology and policy impact assessment incorporated as part of any technology, program or policy, meant to address climate change, variability and hazards in the Philippines.
4. Sincere political will and commitment complemented by regular fund source and intensified fund generation for climate change-related activities.

IDEAL POLICY DIRECTIONS

Finally, while there is no universally applicable list of climate change mitigation or adaptation policies, programs or practices because each will have to be evaluated for individual agricultural systems and settings, developing countries like the Philippines should begin to seriously factor in climate change issues into the national stream of policymaking and development.

As IFPRI (2006) puts it, the challenge is making climate change mitigation and adaptation in poor countries a higher priority. The countries that are most vulnerable to future climate change tend to be most overwhelmed by immediate development concerns. A logical approach then will be to put across to policymakers the issue of climate change, variability and risks as a current development problem. This means imparting to decision/policy makers that addressing the various difficulties currently confronting the rural communities in many areas -- e.g., droughts, floods, low and erratic rainfall, hot temperatures, inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to markets and credit, and other challenges -- will contribute to current agricultural development and food security while building resilience to future climate change.

Needless to say, the response of the Philippine government should go beyond having "policies-on-paper" and doing the usual lip service. With the clock of climate change continuously ticking, we all hope to be more than ready when the alarm bell rings.

¹ Philippine Program Coordinator, The World Agroforestry Centre-Philippine Office, Khush Hall, IRRI, Los Baños, Laguna

² Project Development Specialist, Research and Development Department, SEARCA, College, Los Baños, Laguna

³ Researcher, ICRAF-TroFCCA Project, The World Agroforestry Centre-Philippine Office, Khush Hall, IRRI, Los Baños, Laguna

⁴ Research Assistant, ICRAF-Asia Pacific Network (APN) Project, The World Agroforestry Centre-Philippine Office, Khush Hall, IRRI, Los Baños, Laguna

Snapshots



Three faculty members of Kasetsart University in Thailand visited SEARCA on 20 February 2008. They are (l-r): Asst. Prof. Dr. Sunchai Pattanasith (second); Dr. Narong Sompong (third); and Dr. Paitoon Srifa (rightmost). Dr. Narong Sompong is a recipient of the Seed Fund for Research and Training Grant. He delivered a seminar titled "A Knowledge Management Model for Natural Resources Management in Southeast Asia" during his visit. They were received by (l-r): Ms. Rhea M. Ledesma (leftmost), SEARCA Special Projects Coordinator, Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia (fourth), Research and Development Manager of SEARCA, Ms. Lily L. Tallafer (fifth), Senior Executive Assistant of the Director.



Faculty and staff of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) visited the Center on 22 February 2008 to know more about SEARCA and find common areas of interest for future collaboration. The UMS delegation was led by Prof. Dr. Ridzawan Abdul Rahman (fourth from left), Dean, School of Sustainable Agriculture. Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (third from left), SEARCA Director, along with other SEARCA officials, welcomed the group.



Dr. Jerry Olsen (left) of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, discusses avenues for collaboration with Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (center), SEARCA Director, and Dr. Arnulfo G. Garcia, Research and Development Manager of SEARCA. He visited SEARCA on 22 February 2008.



Agrobiotechnology students from Tokyo University of Agriculture (TUA) visited SEARCA on 22 February 2008. A visit to SEARCA has been a regular part of the TUA students' exposure trip to the Philippines. Ms. Lily L. Tallafer (inset), Senior Executive Assistant of the Director, SEARCA, led their briefing.



Dr. Sang Mu Lee, Chairman, Mr. Byung Yang Choi, Director, and Miss Hong Ju Eyim, staff member, all of the Korea FAO Association (KFA); and Mr. Yong Kyu Choi, Chairman, and Mr. Bang Hwan Cho, Vice Chairman, both of the Global Agriculture Policy Institute, visited SEARCA on 24 June 2008. They discussed collaborative projects and activities between KFA and SEARCA with the Center's officials and department managers.



Ms. Ines Loge, Scientific Attaché, French Embassy in Manila, and Dr. Jean-Guy Bertault, Regional Director for the Southeast Asian island countries, French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), visited SEARCA on 16 January 2008 to discuss collaboration opportunities. Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., Deputy Director for Administration, and other key officials and staff of the Center met with them.



Mr. Titon Mitra (center, right), Minister Counsellor, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) Philippines, visited the Center on 5 May 2008. Mr. Mitra met with Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, to know more about rural development policies in the Philippines. Mr. Mitra was accompanied by Andrew Cumspton (Economics Adviser) and Greta Cranston (First Secretary - Rural & Private Sector Development).



Development Management graduate students from the Asian Institute Management visited the Center on 16 May 2008. Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, Knowledge Management Department Manager, briefed them about SEARCA and its core programs.



Dr. Nasreen Khundker, Research Director, Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), paid a courtesy call on Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director. Dr. Balisacan briefed her about SEARCA and its activities. They also discussed possible areas of collaboration.



Dr. Maripaz L. Perez, Regional Director (East and Southeast Asia) of the WorldFish Center based in Penang, Malaysia, paid a courtesy call on Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, on 26 June 2008.



Dr. Ian W. Makin, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist of the Asian Development Bank's Southeast Asia Department, met with Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, on 11 June 2008 to discuss the rice price crisis and other related issues. Dr. Makin is an advocate of the Blue Revolution in Agriculture, a movement to value every drop of water, particularly at this time when the threats of climate change are high.

SEARCA Director discusses poverty reduction at UP Centennial Lecture Series

"Poverty reduction in the Philippines has lagged far behind those of its neighbors, particularly Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and China," said Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director.

Occasion was the third lecture of the University of the Philippines (UP) Centennial Series held on 31 January 2008 at National Institute for Science and Mathematics Education Development Auditorium, UP Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Titled "Poverty: Facts, Theories, and Remedies," the lecture was led by three professors from the UP School of Economics (UPSE). Representatives from the business sector, government, and the academe attended the event, which was webcast to the other UP campuses.

The third lecture aimed to shed light on the imperative economic issues that abound. It sought to answer the questions surrounding the nature of the Philippines' poverty problem. The materials for the presentations were drawn from an ongoing study of UPSE and SEARCA.

Dr. Balisacan's presentation on *Poverty Reduction: What We Know and Don't* emphasized that poverty is the single most important policy challenge that the Philippines is facing. However, he noted that the government procedure employed in constructing poverty data does not yield comparable figures

over time and across space. He used an "alternative procedure to quantify the magnitude of absolute poverty over time and across geographic areas or population groups."

He presented the resulting observations: (1) as a proportion of the population, poverty has decreased during the period, although tending to rise in recent years; (2) the number of poor people rose to its highest level in 2006; and (3) poverty increased between 2003 and 2006 despite the quite respectable growth domestic product (GDP) improvement during this period.

Poverty, said Dr. Balisacan, has remained largely as a rural phenomenon with two out of three poor people living in rural areas. Poverty among agricultural households is roughly three times that in the rest of the population.

He furthered "...agriculture is where most of the rural poor eke out a living. Fostering productivity growth in agriculture is thus key to lifting rural inhabitants out of poverty. However, for many of today's rural poor, the route out of poverty often leads out of agriculture altogether. Rural income diversification and migration to productive nonfarm sectors, including overseas migration, offer important pathways out of poverty."

Dr. Balisacan strongly recommended that the Philippines "pursue a strongly pro-poor development agenda in a regime where institutions are initially weak and governance is fragile. It cannot be overemphasized that the quality of our institutions has to be upgraded so that they become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of those in the lowest rung of the social ladder." (MAFABad)

University of the Philippines honors partners

This year, 2008, is the University of the Philippines' (UP) Centennial. As part of its celebration, the university held the UP Centennial Donors' Night on 8 May 2008 at Makati Shangri-la, Makati City, Philippines. The event recognized the many partners of the premier university of the Philippines, among them SEARCA. The Center was acknowledged for its provision of professorial chairs grants, especially to UP Los Baños.

The painting, which features the UP Carillon, was done by Mr. Philip Badon, a Filipino artist, who donated his talent for the UP Centennial. (LLTallafer)



Photo shows Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, receiving a painting from Dr. Emerlinda Roman, UP President. Looking on are Senator Edgardo J. Angara (second from right), Senator of the Philippines and Chair of the UP Centennial Commission, and Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, Chancellor of UP Los Baños.

Planning workshop on Phil aggie productivity project held

The Productivity Growth in Philippine Agriculture (PGPA) project, a collaboration among SEARCA, Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) and Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), held a Planning Workshop on 29 February and 1 March 2008 at SEARCA, Laguna, Philippines.

The workshop presented the study background, methodology, sources of data, and problems of the various research studies to assist study leaders in obtaining feedback on their work. It also sought to agree on a convergent framework for the PGPA studies and to identify approaches for the case studies, agriculture sector study, and PGPA synthesis.

The PGPA project has been awarding since November 2007 study grants regarding the conduct of agricultural productivity studies. Among those involved are experts on agriculture, economics, development and related fields. Most come from the academe and research

institutions. This workshop served as a venue for the study teams to present their ongoing and planned work, and to participate in the project's planning session.

Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, in his opening remarks, said that, "in the last three decades, agricultural productivity growth in the Philippines has been very low or almost nil." As such, the Philippines has been losing its competitiveness while other Asian countries such as China and Vietnam are doing much better in terms of agricultural productivity.

Planning / to page 13

Dr. Balisacan said that there is an urgent need to close the data gaps brought about by non-existent or outdated information on agricultural productivity. Through PGPA, the Philippines will be able to map out its future steps when it comes to agriculture, which is the main livelihood of majority of the population.

Launched in March 2007, the PGPA project aims to determine the nature, sources and causes of agricultural productivity, and to identify policy levers that can increase the productivity growth for the sector. Project outputs include research reports, monographs, journal articles, and a book on the Philippines' agricultural productivity.



The participants listen closely to the opening remarks of Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (inset), SEARCA Director.

Throughout the duration of the project, policy briefs of the ongoing research work will be generated to aid policymakers in making informed

investment decisions. PGPA will run until 2010. (PMVCasal)

Five Southeast Asians get SEARCA travel grants

SEARCA has awarded travel grants to four Filipinos and one Indonesian whose scientific papers were accepted for presentation in international conferences from January to June 2008.

The Filipino travel grantees, the title of their papers and the conference attended, and the conference date and venue are as follows:

Dr. Jean A. Saludadez, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Management and Development Studies, University of the Philippines (UP) Open University; "Taking a Recursive Position in a Communication Study of Research Networks as Temporary Organization," presented at the Qualitative Research in Management and Organization Conference held on 11-13 March 2008 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, United States;

Dr. Ernesto S. Elefan, Associate Professor, Central Philippine University; "Biofertilizers for *Jatropha curcas* L. (Euphorbiaceae) Grown in Different Planting Media," presented at the International Conference on Environmental Research and Technology Scientific Committee held on 28-30 May 2008 in Penang, Malaysia;

Dr. Victor B. Ella, Dean and Associate Professor, College of Engineering and Agro-Industrial Technology, University of the Philippines Los Baños; "Effect of Hydraulic Head and Slope on Water Distribution Uniformity of a Low-Cost Drip Irrigation System," presented at the 2008 Annual International Meeting of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) held on 29 June to 2 July 2008 in Rhode Island, United States; and

Mr. Samuel S. Mamaug, a PhD student at the Marine Institute, University of the Philippines Diliman; "Spatio-temporal Patterns of Abundance, Biomass and Size Frequency Distribution of Groupers in the Philippines," to be presented at

the 11th International Coral Reef Symposium (ICRS) held on 7-11 July 2008 in Florida, USA.

Dr. Ir. Andi Amri, Executive Director, Coastal Community Networks (CCNet) based in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, was awarded the travel grant to present his paper titled "Community Participation and Co-management Strategy: Its Significance on Mangrove Conservation and Coastal Resources Management," presented at the 4th Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Islands: Advancing Ecosystem Management and Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management by 2010 in the Context of Climate Change held on 6-12 April 2008 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The SEARCA 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 has regional relevance. Southeast Asian nationals working in a development-oriented institution or graduate students of reputable universities in Southeast Asia are eligible to apply. (LLDDomingo)

Five Southeast Asians awarded SEARCA PhD research scholarships

SEARCA awarded PhD research scholarships to five Southeast Asians to enable them to conduct their dissertation and complete their degrees on topics focused on the Center's priority thrusts under the broad themes of promotion of agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management.

The awardees are Mr. Victor S. Ticzon and Ms. Lualhati L. Aliño, both PhD students at the Marine

Science Institute, University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD); Ms. Neyrma N. Cabatac, Assistant Professor 4, Southern Christian College, Philippines; Ms. Pamela C. Custodio, Assistant Professor I, College of Development Communication, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); and Ms. Astrid Meilasari-Sugiana, Lecturer, Ahmad Dahlan University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Mr. Ticzon's research is titled "Application of Remote Sensing in Estimating Juvenile Reef Fish Abundance." His research aims to establish a protocol in predicting reef fish recruit abundance using remote-sensed measurements of benthic habitat features. If proven accurate, this approach

presents a more cost-effective and less labor-intensive method of studying interconnectivity between spatially disjunct reefs and in locating potential areas for the establishment of an effective network of marine protected areas.

Likewise, Ms. Aliño is pursuing her PhD in Marine Science at UPD. Titled "Trophic Dynamics Analyses of Coastal Fisheries in Trawlable Areas in the Philippines," her research aims to investigate how and why coastal ecosystems differ in their range of structural (e.g., bathymetry) and functional (e.g., resource productivity) gradients and their responses to varying types and levels of fisheries exploitation.

Five / to page 14

Ms. Cabatac is pursuing her PhD in Environmental Science at UPLB. Her dissertation research is titled "Plant Diversity, Food Availability, and Resilience in the Ingenious Agroforestry System of the Erumanen Ne Menuvu of Cotabato, Philippines." The study aims to analyze the indigenous rice-based agroforestry system of the Menuvu in terms of the resilience of plant diversity-food availability relations. It also intends to reconstruct their local environmental history; describe the general features of the socio-ecological system; determine the general features of the rice-based agroforestry system in terms of plant diversity and the temporal and spatial patterns of crops; determine the availability of edible plants in the rice-based agroforestry system in terms of variety, seasonality, and cultural preferences; and analyze the resilience of plant diversity and food availability relations.

Ms. Custodio is conducting a study titled "Narratives of Participation Emerging from the Practice of Participatory Research and Extension in Sustainable Agriculture." The study is an exploration into the conduct of a development communication research outside of the cybernetic tradition, documenting stories of participation of stakeholders who have been part of participatory research or extension programs/projects in sustainable agriculture.

On the other hand, Ms. Meilasari-Sugiana is working on her dissertation titled "Community Dynamics in the Governance of Indonesia's Coastal Resources: Case Study of North and South Sulawesi." Her research aims to understand the dynamics of power relations and collective action along with their implications for facilitating the devolution of responsibility and the participative and inclusive governance of coastal resources. The research involves case studies of coastal resource governance policies, programs, and projects in North and South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

SEARCA began awarding PhD research scholarships in November 2005 to give more Southeast Asian PhD students the opportunity to use the resources and facilities available at SEARCA and its network of universities for their research. The grant also aims to help the scholar produce quality research papers for publication and enable them to work with SEARCA's R&D personnel on mutually identified areas of concerns/interests in agriculture and rural development.

These five awards bring to 14 the total number of PhD research scholarships the Center has granted as of 30 June 2008. (LLDDomingo)

Thesis Abstracts

ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES TOWARDS REWARDING A COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN MIDWESTERN LEYTE PROVINCE, PHILIPPINES



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Los Baños

The Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Project in Midwestern Leyte Province was studied to assess the following environmental services: 1) carbon stocks or storage, 2) biodiversity conservation, and 3) soil and water conservation. The local people's perspectives on environmental services, rewards, and rewarding mechanisms were also studied.

The CBFM project area has stored an average amount of 333.28 Mg/ha carbon from aboveground biomass down to the soil complex. In addition, a total of 1,903 plants belonging to 325 species and 94 animal species were recorded based from actual survey and ethno-faunal assessment. Soil and water resources of the site were in good condition. Soil had very low bulk density while infiltration rate was high ranging from 326.10 ml/min during the dry season to 68.09 ml/min during the wet season. Surface runoff was minimal while water quality was in superior condition.

Various rewards and rewarding mechanisms were mentioned by the respondents. Accordingly, money or cash was the most preferred type of reward. One of the rewarding mechanisms was the drafting of a barangay resolution to be forwarded to the municipal or local government unit for financial support. Framework for rewarding was developed to widen the opportunities of environmental service providers.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF THE STUNG MEAN CHEY SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SITE IN PHNOM PENH CITY, CAMBODIA



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Strung Mean Chey dumpsite, the only disposal site in the Phnom Penh City, is still being used now

and will be full by 2010. There is an urgent need to manage this dumpsite so that its productive lifespan can be extended while waiting for a new disposal site. This study aimed to: a) describe the existing situation of the Stung Mean Chey (SMC) solid waste disposal site in terms of selected biophysical and socio-economic parameters; b) examine the interactions of the different institutions that are involved in the management of the SMC disposal site; and c) determine the perceived effects impact of the SMC dumpsite on the environmental effects, health, and livelihood of the directly affected communities and the waste pickers. The study's methodology included collection of data and information through household and waste pickers surveys, key informant interviews and primary data collection for selected biophysical parameters.

The analysis of current solid waste management of Phnom Penh City indicated that the system is inadequate and needs improvement from waste generation stage until the final disposal stage. Households in Phnom Penh generate an average waste of 487 g/person/day and the collection rate was 95 percent. The collection method is inefficient due to old and few collection vehicles. There is no waste discharge rule, thus, people throw wastes to any place after the collection service is done.

The average household size of the households and the waste pickers is almost the same, that is, 5-6 members. More illiteracy was found from waste pickers (40%) than the households (28%). Most of the waste pickers come from rural areas. On the other hand, the average monthly income of the household respondents was lower than the average household income in Phnom Penh. Most of the households and the waste pickers were adversely affected by the environmental effects caused by the disposal site. Moreover, the physical environment such as groundwater, leachate, air and noise pollution were also contributing to the environmental problems.

Administratively, the roles and responsibilities of the relevant organizations are not clear. In general, the organizations lack an established system for promoting proper solid waste management including the management of the Stung Mean Chey dumpsite.

During the interim period while the new disposal site is being constructed, the study recommends the promotion of the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle) for the households and strengthening the administrative organizations of the City's solid waste management programs for extending the lifespan of Strung Mean Chey disposal site.

EVALUATION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS AND PARAMETERS FOR NEAR INFRARED SPECTRA OF TOTAL SOLUBLE SOLIDS AND DRY MATTER CONTENT FOR DRAGON FRUIT (*HYLOCEREUS UNDATUS*) AS AN INDEX OF MATURITY



Pham Huu Yen Phuong,
Vietnamese
PhD in Food Science and
Technology
University of the Philippines
Los Baños

The nondestructive technology, near infrared spectroscopy was applied to predict the total soluble solids and dry matter content of dragon fruit (*Hylocereus undatus* [HAW.]). The principle of this technology is the absorption of C-H, O-H, N-H and S-H functional groups provide the indication of the presence of sugar and dry matter in fruit tissue. The distribution of fruit attributes such as total soluble solids, individual sugars, dry matter content, total titratable acidity, total polyphenols and vitamin C were characterized in the first chapter. The purpose of this chapter was to correlate near-infrared (NIR) spectroscopy results to whole fruit properties, detect the differences between maturity stages and to direct sampling for quality standard. The second chapter was to characterize the NIR measurement system in term of integration time, signal to noise ratio, repeatability, effect of changes in sample temperature and light penetration into fruit. The objectives of the third chapter were to develop a procedure to optimize spectral data pre-treatments, and to show the feasibility of building prediction models for the determination of total soluble solid (TSS) and dry matter content (DMC) by NIR spectroscopy of dragon fruit.

36 SEARCA scholars complete graduate programs

Thirty-six SEARCA scholars from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam have completed their graduate programs (21 MS, 15 PhD) during the School Year 2007/2008. Their completion brought to 1,036 (440 PhD, 596 MS) the total number of SEARCA graduate alumni.

Of the new SEARCA alumni, 25 obtained their graduate degrees from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); four from Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia; two from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM); two from Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Indonesia; two from Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand; and one from the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV).

The new SEARCA graduate alumni, the title of their thesis/dissertation, field of specialization, study post, and institutional affiliation are:

CAMBODIANS:

- Ms. Chhim Rumuny, "Environmental Management of the Stung Mean Chey Solid Waste Disposal Site in Phnom Penh, Cambodia," MS in Environmental Science, UPLB. Ms. Rumuny is Lecturer at Kampong Cham National School of Agriculture; and
- Mr. Em Sorany, "Attributes of Knowledge Sharing among Rice Farmers in Ou Saray, Takeo, Cambodia," MS in Development Communication, UPLB. Mr. Sorany is Manager for Publishing and Public Policy at the Cambodian Development Resource Institute;

INDONESIANS:

- Ms. Hermin Pancasakti Kusumaningrum, "Cyanobacteria Isolate and *Dunaliella* sp.: Detection of DXS Gene Supporting by Microbiological, Ecophysiological and Molecular Characterization to Improve Carotenoid Production," PhD in Microbial Genetics, UGM. Ms. Hermin is Lecturer at the Biology Department, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Diponegoro University;
- Ms. Suhartini, "Sustainability Study of Organic and Non Organic Farming in Sragen Regency Central of Java Province, Indonesia," PhD in Agricultural Economics, UGM. Ms. Suhartini is Lecturer at the Faculty of Agriculture, Janabadra University;
- Mr. Rachmad Gunadi, "Blister Blight Disease Forecasting Model Based on the Relationship Between Microclimate and Disease Parameters," MS in Agroclimatology, IPB. Mr. Rachmad is Lecturer and Researcher at the Faculty of Agriculture, UGM;
- Mr. Adiwirman Izhar, "Effects of water availability and improve water use efficiency in mangosteen (*Garcinia mangostana* L.) plant," PhD in Crop Production, UPM. Mr. Adirwiman is Lecturer at the Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, IPB; and

- Mr. Wahyu Andy Nugraha, "Clove Oil as Substitute for Cyanide in Fishing," MS in Fisheries (Fisheries Biology), UPV. Mr. Wahyu is Lecturer at Trunojoyo University, Indonesia.

MALAYSIAN:

- Ms. Noordiana Nordin, "Effects of Organic-based and Foliar Fertilizers on the Growth, Yield, and Quality of Cocoa (*Theobroma cacao* L.)," MS in Soil Management, UPM. Ms. Nordin is Research Assistant at the Department of Land Management, Faculty of Agriculture, UPM.

LAOTIANS:

- Mr. Chantaphone Phon-Asa, "Using Geospatial Technology for the Assessment of Forest Cover Change in Lowland Namtan Watershed, Sayaboury, Lao PDR," PhD in Forest Resources Management, UPLB. Mr. Phon-Asa is Lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry, National University of Laos;
- Mr. Sengmouang Sithivohan, "Monitoring and Evaluation of Water Allocation in Hauy Sone Irrigation Project, Nasaythong District, Vientiane, Lao PDR," MS in Irrigation Engineering, KU. Mr. Sithivohan is Chief of Operations and Maintenance Coordinator, GTZ KFW Watershed Management Project, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Vientiane, Lao PDR; and
- Mr. Bounsou Soudmaly, "Factors Relating Farmers' Adoption of Register Seed Cultivation THA DORKHAM 1 in Saythany District, Vientiane, Lao PDR," MS in Agriculture, KU. Mr. Soudmaly is Technical Officer at the Rice Seed Multiplication Center, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR.

MYANMARS:

- Ms. Ni Ni Tint, "Agronomic and Physiological Responses of Hybrid Rice to Seed Recycling, Nitrogen Level, and Biodynamic Practices," PhD in Agronomy, UPLB. Ms. Ni Ni Tint is Assistant Supervisor at the Myanma Cotton and Sericulture Enterprise;
- Ms. Tin Mar Mar Oo, "Physiological and Agronomic Responses to Organic Fertilization and Row Proportion in Cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum* L.) and Mungbean (*Vigna radiata* L.) Wilezen Intercropping System," PhD in Agronomy, UPLB. Ms. Tin Mar Mar Oo is Assistant Supervisor at the Myanma Cotton and Sericulture Enterprise;

- Mr. Tun Shwe, "Morphological Physiological and Agronomic Responses of Two Groundnut (*Arachis hypogaea* L.) Genotypes to Drought during the Reproductive Stage," PhD in Agronomy, UPLB. Mr. Tun Shwe is Senior Research Assistant at the Oilseed Crops Division, Department of Agricultural Research, Nay Pyi Taw;
- Ms. Aye Aye Thwe, "Physiological, Morphological, and Agronomic Responses of Hybrid High Yielding and Traditional Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) Varieties to Age of Seedling and Spacing," MS in Agronomy, UPLB. Ms. Aye Aye Thwe is Assistant Supervisor at the Myanmar Agricultural Service;
- Ms. Cho Cho San, "Economic Values of Soil Erosion in Inle Lake Watershed at Ngaung Shwe Township, Myanmar," MS in Agricultural Economics, UPLB. Ms. Cho Cho San is Deputy Supervisor at the Myanmar Industrial Crops Development Enterprise, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation;
- Mr. Kyaw Htay, "Economic Efficiency of Rice Farms in the Thitson Dam Irrigation System in Myanmar," MS in Agricultural Economics, UPLB. Mr. Kyaw Htay is Staff Officer at the Settlement and Land Records Department, Myanmar; and
- Ms. Wah Wah Htun, "Determinants of Global Competitiveness of the Dry Bean Industry in Myanmar," MS in Agricultural Economics, UPLB. Ms. Wah Wah Htun is Assistant Manager, Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank.

FILIPINOS:

- Mr. Nathaniel R. Alibuyog, "Development of Pedotransfer Functions for Predicting Soil Hydraulic Properties and Solute Transport Parameters Using Artificial Neural Network Analysis," PhD in Agricultural Engineering, UPLB. Mr. Alibuyog is Assistant Professor 2 at the Department of Agricultural Engineering, Mariano Marcos State University;
- Ms. Jesusita O. Colladilla, "Systems Approach to Exploratory Analysis of Agricultural Land Use Options at the Municipal Level," PhD in Environmental Science, UPLB. Ms. Colladilla is Associate Professor at the School of Environmental Science and Management, UPLB;
- Ms. Marissa R. Parao, "Survival and Growth Responses of Three Tree Species to Mycorrhiza and Fertilizers in the Bioremediation of a Mine Waste Dump," PhD in Forestry (Silviculture and Forest Influences), UPLB. Ms. Parao is Instructor 2 at the College of Forestry, Benguet State University;

- Ms. Mary Ann O. Torio, "Protein Engineering of Sulfhydryl Groups and Methionine in Mungbean [*Vigna radiata* {L.} R. Wilczek] Vicilin and Effects on Its Nutritional and Functional Properties," PhD in Biochemistry, UPLB. She is Assistant Professor, Institute of Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences, UPLB; and
- Mr. Neil C. Tanquilut, "Evaluation of the Hypoglycemic Activity of Spray Dried Banaba (*Lagerhucmia speciosa*) Powder on Alloxan-induced Diabetic ICR Mice," MS in Veterinary Medicine, UPLB. Mr. Tanquilut is Assistant Professor at the Pampanga Agricultural College.

THAIS:

- Mr. Pasuta Sunthornao, "Participatory Land Allocation in Huai Dau Watershed, Nong Phok District, Roi Et Province, Thailand as a Forestry Extension Management Tool," PhD in Forestry, UPLB. Mr. Pasuta is Lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry, KU; and
- Mr. Puvadol Doydee, "Assessment of the Mangrove Forest in Ranong, Thailand for Landscape Biodiversity Resources Planning and Management," PhD in Environmental Science, UPLB. Mr. Puvadol is Lecturer at the Faculty of Fisheries, KU.

TIMORESE:

- Mr. Latino Coimbra, "Body Condition Score and Calf Management in Dairy Production," MS in Animal Science, UPLB. Mr. Coimbra is Researcher at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Timor-Leste;
- Mr. Luis Godinho, "Productivity and Ecological Sustainability of Traditional Homegardens in Bobonaro District, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste," MS in Silviculture and Forest Influences, UPLB. Mr. Godinho is Director at the Department of Forestry and Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;
- Mr. Cristovao Dos Reis, "Analysis of Rice Consumption at Household Level in Yogyakarta, Especial Province, Indonesia," MS in Agricultural Economics, UGM. Mr. Dos Reis is Lecturer at the National University of Timor Lorosa'e, Timor-Leste;
- Mr. Joao Boavida da Cruz, "The Evaluation of the Implementation of IPM-FFS Rice Cultivate Season September to December 2006 in Pare III Sub Village, Sidorejo Village, Godean District of Sleman Regency, Indonesia," MS in Agronomy, UGM. Mr. Da Cruz is Lecturer at the Dili Institute of Technology, Timor-Leste; and

- Mr. Luis Manuel Branco, "The Effect of Tree Pruning and Position Seed in Fruit to Enhance Seeds Quality and Production," MS in Agriculture, IPB. Mr. Branco is Lecturer at the University of Dili, Timor-Leste.

VIETNAMESE:

- Ms. Pham Huu Yen Phuong, "Evaluation of the Distribution of Chemical Constituents and Parameters for Near Infrared Spectra of Total Soluble Solids and Dry Matter Content for Dragon Fruit (*Hylocereus undatus*) as an Index of Maturity," PhD in Food Science and Technology, UPLB. Ms. Phuong is Lecturer at the Faculty of Food Science and Technology, Nong Lam University;
- Mr. Tran Quoc Hung, "A GIS-Based Forest Resources Management System for Gibbon Protected Area in Trung Khanh Nature Reserve, Cao Bang Province, Vietnam," PhD in Forest Resources Management, UPLB. Mr. Hung is Lecturer at the Faculty of Forestry, Thainguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry;
- Mr. Ngo Thanh Son, "Effect of Water Saving Irrigation Practices on Soil Chemical Properties and Rice Yield in Gialam District, Hanoi Province," MS in Soil Science, UPLB. Mr. Son is Lecturer and Researcher at Hanoi Agricultural University (HAU);
- Ms. Nguyen Thi Hong Hanh, "Partial Characterization of Selected Lactic Acid Bacteria from Nem Chua, a Traditional Fermented Meat from Vietnam," MS in Food Science, UPLB. Ms. Hanh is Instructor at the Ho Chi Minh City Technical Teacher Training University;
- Mr. Tran Quang Trung, "Factors Affecting the Decision-making of Farmers and Traders on Corn Storage in Moe Chau District, Son La Province, Vietnam," MS in Agricultural Economics, UPLB. Mr. Trung is Lecturer at the Faculty of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, HAU; and
- Ms. Tran Thi Thu Huong, "Comparative and Competitive Advantages of the Coffee Industry in the Central Highlands of Vietnam under Trade Liberalization," MS in Agricultural Economics, UPLB. Ms. Huong is Lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Rural Development, HAU. (LLDDomingo)

42 Southeast Asians get scholarships



Alma C. Lisay (P)



Amy Soe (M)



Amy Thein (M)



Analinda M. Fajardo (P)



Andres M. Tuates, Jr. (P)



Avakat Touy Phasouysaingam (L)



Bhakti Etza Setiani (I)



Daream Sok (C)



Dethsakda Toun Manikham (L)



Gay D. Defiesta (P)



Joao Xavier Amaral (Ti)



Jonathan Sabiniano (P)



Josefina M. Ocampo (P)



Kallika Taraka (Th)



Lawrence Ramos (P)



Lucille T. Miguez (P)



Mac Nhu Binh (V)



Mateus Da Cruz de Carvalho (Ti)



Mateus De Jesus Gomes (Ti)



May Thinn Khaing (M)



Michelle Grace Paraso (P)



Myo Kyaw Thu (M)



Nguon Samnang (C)



Nyo Mar Htwe (M)



Panumas Kotepong (Th)



Raquel M. Balanay (P)



Rusty Abanto (P)



Seinn Seinn Mu (M)



Singkone Chaiyalad (L)



Siwi Gayatri (I)



Suci Wulandari (I)



Suparat Umnat (Th)



Thin Phirun (C)



Thiwaporn Phadung (Th)



Tran Duc Tri (V)



Trinh Quang Thoai (V)



Vilaphone Kanyasone (L)



Violeto N. Coronacion (P)



Venn Vutey (C)



Wilaiwun Intarachaimas (Th)



Yi Yi Soe (L)



Yoeu Asikin (C)

LEGEND:

C - Cambodia
I - Indonesia

L - Laos
M - Myanmar

P - Philippines
Th - Thailand

Ti - Timor Leste
V - Vietnam

Thai and Filipino SEARCA graduate alumni meet in Thailand

A group of Thai and Filipino SEARCA alumni met in Bangkok, Thailand on 6 March 2008 to discuss possible collaborative projects with SEARCA. Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, and Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager of SEARCA's Graduate Scholarship Department, presented to the Thai alumni the proposal to establish the SEARCA Alumni Annual Fund. This facility is intended to generate resources for alumni activities. In addition, Dr. Balisacan also presented to Mr. Thirapong Tangthirasunan, President, Bank for Agriculture and Agriculture Cooperatives, the proposal for a joint scholarship project on strengthening leadership capacities in financial and public governance in agriculture and rural development for highly qualified Thai candidates.



Thai and Filipino SEARCA fellows/alumni exchanging pleasantries during the dinner meeting.

Dr. Balisacan reiterated his invitation to all the alumni of SEARCA to attend the forthcoming international conference on "Developing Tomorrow's Leaders in Agriculture and Rural Development: Responding to the Challenges of Globalization," on 27-28 November 2008 at SEARCA, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines.

So far, SEARCA has 1,036 graduate alumni from Southeast Asia since the establishment of its Graduate Study Program in 1968. Of this total, 271 come from Thailand. (ECCedicol)



Mr. Thirapong Tangthirasunan (left), BAAC President, presenting a token to SEARCA Director, Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (right).

SEARCA strengthens European partnership

SEARCA gears up for the next five years by strengthening ties with European partners and discussing collaborative programs in capacity building and research. Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr., Deputy Director for Administration, and Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Manager of the Graduate Scholarship Department of SEARCA, represented the Center in a series of activities in France, the Netherlands and Germany from 3 June to 13 June 2008.

They participated in the International Conference on Open Science Network jointly organized on 3 June 2008 in Paris, France, by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) in cooperation with the French Initiative for International Agricultural Research (FI4IAR), a public interest group. The theme was "Partnerships, Innovation, and Agriculture." The meeting was held to stimulate an open international debate and constructive dialogue among the different stakeholders and actors to

mobilize them into identifying research priorities in agriculture, with the hope of initiating future collaborations as well as for the French agricultural research organizations to establish new partnerships and highlight their expertise.

The topics of the meeting focused on the ecology of innovation and the new challenges facing integration. The meeting highlighted the European Union's aim to contribute to the development of agricultural systems in developing countries, the formulation of research results into development programs, the need to strengthen north-south and south-south collaboration, and the consensus for a global coalition for international agricultural research.

Drs. Saguiguit and Cedicol also visited Montpellier SupAgro (Centre International d'Etudes Supérieures En Sciences Agronomiques) in Paris; Wageningen University, the Netherlands, the Netherlands Directorate-General of Development Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Bonn, Germany, to discuss ongoing and future collaborations and assistance projects for Southeast Asia. (ECCedicol)

"Causes of Poverty" authors' workshop conducted

SEARCA organized an authors' workshop for the Center-funded bookwriting project that will revise the UP Press volume, *Causes of Poverty: Myths, Facts, and Policies (A Philippine Study)*,

on 9 and 23 January 2008, at the Madrigal Room of the UP Diliman School of Economics (UPSE), Quezon City, Philippines. Some of the Philippines' recognized experts on the local economy and society gathered at the workshop to present and critically discuss the drafts of the book's chapters.

The team of authors is composed of UPSE Faculty members Solita Monsod, Dante Canlas,

Raul Fabella, Emmanuel de Dios, Ernesto Pernia, Joseph Capuno, Stella Quimbo, Edita Tan, Aleli Kraft, Emmanuel Esguerra, Agustin Arcenas, and Nimfa Mendoza. Dr. Felipe Medalla (former Philippine National Economic and Development Authority Director-General), Dr. Gilbert Llanto and Dr. Aniceto Orbeta (Philippine Institute of Development Studies), Dr. Ramon Clarete and Dr.

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Desiree Desierto (UPSE), and Dr. Michael Alba (De La Salle University) also participated in the workshop as discussants.

Published in 1999, the volume *Causes of Poverty* closely looked at the issue of poverty in the Philippines in the 1990s in light of then policy reforms, structural change and economic fluctuations, developments in world trade and finance, and research findings on the nature and causes of poverty. The book, edited by Dr. Balisacan and Shigeaki Fujisaki (Institute of Developing Economies-Japan), has seen two reprintings and become one of the best sellers of the University of the Philippines Press.

However, significant poverty research and policy developments, both global and local, have taken place since the book's publication in 1999. Specifically, richer data have become available in recent years, providing an opportunity for



Authors of the book "Causes of Poverty" discuss their draft chapters. The book is also UPSE and SEARCA's contribution to the UP Centennial Celebration.

deepening the understanding of the nature and causes of poverty in the Philippines. Thus SEARCA, together with the UP Press, is pleased to support the effort to produce a volume that aims to be an extensively revised (i.e., updated and expanded), authoritative book highly relevant for contemporary development policy in the Philippines. Specifically, the revised edition is

expected to be a valuable resource for students, researchers, and practitioners of development. SEARCA also hopes to contribute the book to UP's Centennial Celebration.

A conference, which is open to the public, will follow in November 2008 to present the results and findings of the studies. (LGSoliven)

SEARCA participates in SEAMEO Council Conference

The 43rd Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Council Conference was held on 13-14 March 2008 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., Deputy Director for Administration, and Ms. Nerissa Eileen J. Fernando, Human Resource Management Unit Head, participated in the event.

Representatives from the 11 SEAMEO member countries and eight associate member countries attended the conference, which was jointly organized by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia and the SEAMEO Secretariat.

The 43rd SEAMEO Council Conference saw the renewal of agreement between SEAMEO and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to cooperate in the areas of education and development in Southeast Asia. Education ministers gathered for a policy forum on "Bridging the Education Gap: Improving Access, Equity and Quality – Southeast Asia and Beyond" to assess the salient concerns on education today.

UNESCO led the discussion on the progress of the Education for All in Southeast Asia, a project started in 2000 to expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education. A policy forum, which was a highlight of the event.

SEAMEO SERVICE AWARDS

Service awardees for 2007/2008 from the regional centers of SEAMEO were recognized during the conference. Initiated in 2004, the SEAMEO Service Award is given annually to exemplary staff members of various SEAMEO units.

One of the awardees is SEARCA's Mr. Eugene Philip S. Boone, Grounds and Building Supervisor. He joined SEARCA in 1980 as an Aircon Operator – Technician and moved up the ladder, becoming the Head of then Grounds

and Building Unit in 1996. After the reorganization of SEARCA in 2003, he became the Grounds and Building Supervisor of the General Services Unit.

The SEAMEO Service Awardees were treated to a visit to Putrajaya and Malacca, Malaysia.

SEAMEO PRESS AND RESEARCH AWARDS

The SEAMEO-Australia Press Award 2007 and the SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award 2007 were also conferred during the conference. Both awardees are Filipinos, namely: Ms. Vinia Datinguinoo-Mukherjee of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, and Dr. Allan B. de Guzman, researcher at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines, respectively.

Ms. Mukherjee wrote "Muslim Classes Come Alive." Dr. de Guzman's research entry is titled "Creating Space for Legitimate Participation of Youth in Education for Sustainability through Service Learning: Toward a 'Liberatory Praxis' for Pedagogy of Sustainability."

The SEAMEO Council Conference is an annual meeting of education ministers of the 11 SEAMEO member countries namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

The 44th SEAMEO Conference will be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in March 2009. (MAFABad with inputs from SEAMEO and SEAMOLEC)



Mr. Eugene Philip S. Boone, SEARCA's 2007/2008 Service Awardee, receives the plaque of recognition from Y.M. Tengku Datin Seri Marsilla Tengku Abdullah, wife of Malaysia's Minister of Education, H.E. Dato' Seri Hishammuddin bin Tun Hussein, while Dato' Dr. Ahmad bin Sipon, SEAMEO Secretariat Director looks on.

SEAMEO Council President visits SEARCA



Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, presents an institutional gift to H.E. Prof. Dr. Bambang Sudibyo, SEAMEO Council President, during his visit to the Center on 8 January 2008. The gift is a wooden replica of the Growth Monument sculpture that can be found in front of the SEARCA building.

A visit to SEARCA from the concurrent SEAMEO Council President and Minister of National Education of Indonesia, H.E. Prof. Dr. Bambang Sudibyo, on 8 January 2008 jumpstarted the year for SEARCA staff and officials.

A short program was held during which Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, SEARCA Director, presented the flagship projects and activities of the Center in line with the Center's priority themes of agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management.

Also present during the visit was Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, University of the Philippines (UPLB) Chancellor and Philippine Representative to the SEARCA Governing Board. The Chancellor expressed his gratitude to H.E. Prof. Dr. Sudibyo for visiting the university and SEARCA. He expressed the hope for "strengthened collaboration in human resource development between Philippines and Indonesia."

H.E. Dr. Sudibyo commended the scholarships granted by SEARCA to Indonesian nationals. He recognizes that through graduate scholarships provided by the Center, more capable manpower are produced impacting positively on agriculture and rural development in Southeast Asia.

He also said that SEARCA has the potential to function as facilitating agent of development in building better Asian communities in terms of economic, socio-cultural, and security aspects. He added that by continuously addressing the problem on food security as SEARCA has done over the past years, development is catalyzed. The Minister likewise expressed his delight at the musical numbers performed during the program.

The Minister was accompanied by Dato' Dr. Ahamad bin Sipon, Director, SEAMEO Secretariat; Prof. Dr. Dodi Nandika, Secretary General, Ministry of National Education; Dr. Ir Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, Head, Bureau of Planning and International Cooperation; Mrs. Yun Widiati, Head of Division of International Cooperation, Bureau of Planning and International Cooperation; Dr. Joko Pratomo, Head, Division of International Facilitation Services; Mr. Mohammad Thohari, Ministry of National Education staff; and Mr. Jonathan Malaya, Assistant Secretary of the Philippine Department of Education.

The Minister and his party also visited the other SEAMEO centers in the Philippines. (RMMDedicatoria)

The inscription on SEARCA's Growth Monument Wooden Replica reads:

"Growth as a process best describes the thrust of SEARCA. It takes different directions, speed, and degree. The Growth Monument, consisting of 11 stylized human figures linked internally on a square base, concretizes the synergy amidst the diversity of the SEAMEO member countries toward a more prosperous Southeast Asia."