

The SEARCA DIARY



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“For a region that is predominantly still agriculture based and facing the formidable task of addressing food security and poverty alleviation amidst an ever growing population... SEARCA’s role and mandate is as pronounced and crucial as ever.” – Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.

Photo by: Anh Tuan

Malaysia hosts 61st SEARCA Governing Board Meeting

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia—The Government of Malaysia, through its Ministry of Education, hosted the *61st SEARCA Governing Board (GB) Meeting* held on 11-13 November 2013 at Putrajaya Marriott Hotel here. This is the seventh time that the country hosted this annual meeting since it joined the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) in 1965 as one of the founding members.

Mr. Ahmad Nazri bin Sulaiman, Undersecretary, Policy and International Division, Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia, keynoted the opening ceremony held on 11 November 2013. Other speakers at the opening ceremony were Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Datuk Prof. Dr. Mohd Fauzi Hj Ramlan, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Malaysia’s Representative to the SEARCA Governing Board; and Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, Deputy Director (Administration and Communication), SEAMEO Secretariat.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Saguiguit expressed the Center’s gratitude to the Malaysian government for hosting this year’s GB Meeting and for providing invaluable support through UPM.

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The participants of the 61st SEARCA Governing Board Meeting and guests at the opening ceremony.

“For a region that is predominantly still agriculture-based and facing the formidable task of addressing food security and poverty alleviation amidst an ever growing population coupled with the effects of climate change and natural resource degradation, SEARCA’s role and mandate is as pronounced and crucial as ever,” Dr. Saguiguit stressed.

For their part, the GB commended SEARCA for its many accomplishments in the past fiscal year. They noted in particular the number of new agreements forged by SEARCA with various international and national organizations.

Equally impressive to the GB was the numerous capacity development activities that the Center had conducted which benefitted various groups of stakeholders in the region. These activities were carried out through SEARCA’s core programs on graduate scholarship, research and development, knowledge management.

Gearing Up for the Tenth Five-Year Plan

This year’s GB Meeting is markedly auspicious as SEARCA presented its Tenth Five-Year Plan (FYP) (2014/2015-2018/2019) for review and approval



Speakers at the opening ceremony were (from left) Mr. Ahmad Nazri bin Sulaiman, Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd Fauzi Hj Ramlan, Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.

of its Governing Board, the Center’s highest policymaking body.

The crafting of SEARCA’s Tenth FYP underwent a rigorous process of consultation with stakeholders, partners, and donors as it will serve as the blueprint of SEARCA’s development agenda and program of work over the next five years.

In its Tenth FYP, SEARCA repositions itself as a proactive enabler and champion of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia. The strategies through which SEARCA intends to realize this vision were presented by Dr. Saguiguit and were well received by the GB as they approved the Tenth FYP in principle and endorsed it to the SEAMEO High Officials.

Dr. Saguiguit said SEARCA is optimistic that its new Five-Year Plan will open more opportunities for the Center to collaborate with SEAMEO member countries on human resource and institutional capacity development, research, and knowledge management for the benefit and development of each country and the region as a whole.

New GB members

At this year’s meeting, SEARCA also welcomed the new GB members, namely: Mr. Saiful Rizal bin Haji Marali, Acting Principal of Wasan Vocational School, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam; Dr. Bounheang Ninchaleune, Dean of Agriculture, Savannakhet University, Lao PDR;

and Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd Fauzi Hj Ramlan, UPM Vice Chancellor, Malaysia.

Other GB members who attended the meeting were Dr. Ngo Bunthan, Rector, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia; Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, Chancellor, University of the Philippines Los Baños; Prof. Prakash Kumar, Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, National University of Singapore, Singapore; Dr. Edmundo Viegas, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, National University of Timor Lorosaé, Timor-Leste; and Dr. Tran Van Dien, Rector, College of Agriculture and Forestry, Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam.

In the meeting proper, Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd Fauzi Hj Ramlan was represented by Dr. Bujang Kim Huat, Dean, UPM School of Graduate Studies. On the other hand, Dr. Chaipreuk Sereerak, Secretary-General, Vocational Education Commission, Ministry of Education (MOE), Thailand and SEARCA GB member, was represented by Mrs. Puttachard Suphalucksana also of the MOE. With her at the meeting was Mr. Witsawa Khongkaew also of MOE.

Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES) Deputy Director, represented Dr. Witaya Jeradechakul, SEAMES Director, as ex-officio member of the SEARCA GB.

The GB members from Indonesia and Myanmar were unable to attend this year’s GB Meeting. (LLDDomingo)

THE SEARCA DIARY

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Cambodia's MRD gets SEARCA support in crafting rural entrepreneurship dev't program

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—SEARCA provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) in the conduct of a stakeholder consultation workshop at the Hotel Cambodiana on 20-21 November 2013.

Support for the workshop is SEARCA's initial response to MRD's request for technical assistance in the crafting of the Rural Entrepreneurship Development Program (REDP) for Cambodia. At the outset, MRD intends to review its current rural enterprises development and management, including policies, regulations, systems, management, financing, partnerships, and institutional mechanisms.

Dr. Pheak Sothea, Director of MRD's Department of Rural Economic Development and a SEARCA alumnus, has been coordinating with SEARCA for this initiative.

In his welcome remarks, Dr. Sothea said the stakeholder consultation workshop is the first initiative of its kind conducted by MRD. He added that he is hopeful that with SEARCA's technical assistance, the consultation workshop would bring a promising future for rural micro and small entrepreneurs in Cambodia.

One of the thematic areas of SEARCA's newly crafted Tenth Five-Year Plan, which will champion inclusive and sustainable rural development (ISARD), is promoting rural entrepreneurship towards off-farm and non-farm businesses. Hence, this rural entrepreneurship development program may provide a momentum for SEARCA to promote ISARD in Cambodia and in the rest of Southeast Asia.

In his keynote address, H.E. Hab Omaly, MRD Undersecretary of State, expressed his profound gratitude to SEARCA for providing MRD the technical assistance in crafting the REDP. He said MRD—being one of the priority ministries in Cambodia—is envisioned to largely contribute to rural productivity through rural micro and small enterprises.

Twenty-two representatives from MRD, nongovernment organizations, and other stakeholders in Cambodia participated in the consultation workshop.

The policies, regulations, and institutional mechanisms, as well as the current programs on rural entrepreneurship in Cambodia were discussed by Mr. Hoeung Chouthang, Chief of the MRD Small Enterprise Office.

Mr. Kiev Vithyea, Vice Chief for Credit of the Rural Development Bank (RDB) of Cambodia, talked about the initiatives of RDB in terms of rural entrepreneurship and microfinance.

Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip, President of the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions, shared his extensive experience and expertise in enterprise development and microfinance in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, Mr. Camilo Casals led the participatory planning workshop on promoting the start-up, improvement, and expansion of rural micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The consultation workshop is the first of a series of multi-stakeholder program development workshops involving concerned national agencies, representatives of local government units, nongovernment organizations, private sector, micro-finance institutions, and other development organizations in Cambodia. (NLDe Leon)



Participants, resource persons, and facilitators of the consultation workshop, including (seated, from left) Dr. Lope B. Santos III, SEARCA Program Specialist and Officer in Charge, Project Development and Management Department; Dr. Pheak Sothea, Director, MRD Department of Rural Economic Development; H.E. Hab Omaly, MRD Undersecretary of State; Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management; Dr. Jaime Aristotle B. Alip, Founding President and Managing Director, Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions; and Mr. Milo Casals (standing, fourth from right), Adviser for Business and Organizational Development.

SEARCA joins ASFN as newest supporting partner

BOGOR, Indonesia—SEARCA has joined the partners of the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) in Phase II initiatives to promote policy and practices of social forestry for sustainable forest management and participation in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

ASFN is a government-driven social forestry network that links government forestry policymakers directly with members of civil society, research organizations, academe, private sector, as well as experts in related fields who share the common vision of growth of social forestry in all ASEAN Member States (AMS). ASFN is funded by the Swiss Agency for

Development and Cooperation (SDC) through the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) program, which is facilitated by the Indonesia-hosted ASFN Secretariat (ASFNSEC) and ASFN implementation partners.

SEARCA was invited to participate in the *ASFCC Operational Planning Workshop for Phase II* organized by the ASFN Secretariat and held on 2-5 December 2013 at Aston Hotel in Bogor, Indonesia. The meeting discussed the accomplishments in Phase I, as well as how the ASFCC research and knowledge generation activities in Phase II will contribute to the ASEAN

Multisectoral Framework for Climate Change and Food Security (AFCC) and ASEAN Strategic Plan of Actions for 2015 and beyond. Participants also identified mechanisms for substantive exchange and peer review, and operational coordination in common research sites.

Phase I launched the AFSCC in 2011 as a support program embedded in and working through the structure of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) to define a conceptual frame and strategy that supports a network (i.e., ASFN), allowing access to and exchange of a variety of social forestry concepts and approaches, and linking them with emerging issues on climate change in the AMS.

SEARCA joins ASFN/ to page 12

Climate change project goes the final stretch with evaluation workshop

SEARCA organized a project evaluation workshop to serve as venue for an end-of-project presentation of key research results of the *Building Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change in Southeast Asia* project funded by the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada. The workshop was held at SEARCA on 26 November 2013.

The 24 workshop participants included representatives from partner local government units in towns of Laguna covered by the project, members of the Philippine project team, and key researchers and representatives from government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region 4A, Provincial Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Office of Laguna, and Laguna Lake Development Authority.

Prof. Maria Emilinda Mendoza, Engr. Vicente Ballaran, Jr., and Prof. Jaimie Kim Bayani-Arias, who comprise the Philippine project team, shared the results of the vulnerability assessment and the economic analysis of adaptation options studies. They also facilitated the impact evaluation of the project in a participatory manner. Lessons learned, gaps, and future directions in the area of capacity-building for climate change and related areas of concern were also discussed.

For their part, the participants identified lessons learned, gaps, and skills acquired from the project. They also shared their realizations and ideas on future research and collaborative projects.



Participants present their evaluation of the project and possible future research and collaborations.

Each of the 12 participating Laguna towns was given a copy of the compilation of GIS maps produced by the project. The compilation contains the project site maps, vulnerability maps for exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity; overall vulnerability maps; and agriculture sector vulnerability maps. These maps are useful references in the development of appropriate climate change adaptation strategies of the communities involved in the project.

The importance of localized climate change adaptation strategies and interventions to ensure that communities can cope with the adverse effects of climate change was underscored by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, in her message to the participants. (PJCRocamora)

SEARCA, LIMASMARINA meet on climate change adaptation

LAGUNA, Philippines—SEARCA and LIMASMARINA River Basin Council, Inc. (LIMASMARINA) had a meeting on 17 October 2013 under the project *Building Capacity to Adapt to Climate Change in Southeast Asia: Philippine Component* funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

LIMASMARINA comprises the municipalities of Liliw, Majayjay, Sta. Cruz, Magdalena, Rizal, and Nagcarlan, all in the province of Laguna.

The results of the project were presented at the consultation and project dissemination meeting. Also discussed were strategies on how to generate funds for the climate change adaptation proposals prepared at the training-workshop on

Adaptation Project Proposal Development and Fund Mobilization held in June 2013.

The meeting was attended by LIMASMARINA officers and members led by the Council President Mr. Edgardo Reyes. Most of them were from local government units. Other participants were focal persons from the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) led by Ms. Marilyn Apacionado, LLDA Community Development Officer for Laguna. LLDA serves as the LIMASMARINA Secretariat. Also present at the meeting was Mr. Valentin Guidote, Jr., Provincial Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Officer (PDRRMO) for Laguna and a dedicated and active stakeholder throughout the conduct of the project.

The project team also came in full force. Present at the meeting were Prof. Maria Emilinda Mendoza, project leader; Engr. Vicente Ballaran, Jr., component leader for GIS and mapping; and Ms. Jaimie Kim Bayani Arias, component leader for economic analysis.

Each municipality represented in the meeting received a compilation of GIS maps prepared by the project team. The compilation includes a map of the project site, vulnerability maps for exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity maps, overall vulnerability maps as well as vulnerability maps for the agriculture sector. The maps are useful references in the development of appropriate climate change adaptation strategies for the communities. (PJCRocamora)



LIMASMARINA River Basin Council officers and members with the project team during the consultation and project information dissemination meeting.

Experts refine umbrella food security program for Southeast Asia

As part of its efforts to address current and anticipated food security issues in Southeast Asia, SEARCA gathered its Senior Fellows and officials in a workshop-meeting held on 1 October 2013 at its headquarters.

The *Workshop-Meeting: Priority Agenda of the Umbrella Program on Food Security for Southeast Asia* was convened to prioritize the collaborative activities and projects on food security for implementation in the next five years by the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) and partner institutions and universities.

The meeting was an offshoot of the July 2013 regional consultation workshop on food security wherein the *Umbrella Program on Food Security for Southeast Asia* was developed.

Participants of the meeting sharpened the focus of the UC-developed Umbrella Program and enhanced its agenda by identifying other priority areas and cutting-edge thinking on food and nutrition security in view of the changing ASEAN and global agricultural landscape.

In welcoming the Senior Fellows, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, stressed how



The SEARCA Directorate and program officers and specialists with SEARCA Senior Fellows, namely: Dr. Percy E. Sajise (front, leftmost), Dr. Doris Capistrano (front, second from left), Dr. William G. Padolina (front, third from left), Dr. Concepcion C. Lizada (front, second from right), Dr. Geronimo M. Collado (front, rightmost), Dr. Paul S. Teng (second row, fourth from left), and Dr. Donato B. Antiporta (second row, fourth from right).

the Umbrella Program can revitalize the UC by tapping and harnessing the expertise within the consortium, and focusing on a pressing issue that is truly regional in scope, that is food security. He also emphasized that SEARCA and the UC must be specific in addressing the issue by filling the gaps that are not being attended to by other international development organizations, and concentrating on where the Center can give the most value.

Specific issues that contribute to food insecurity in Southeast Asia were identified. These include uncontrolled population growth that goes beyond the capacity of struggling economies to provide

basic social services, changing preferences and increasing capacities of countries experiencing high economic growth, technical and non-technical barriers to trade within the region (e.g., restrictions on agricultural food products), information asymmetry, price volatility, and even political instability that can lead to imbalances in supply and demand. How to address the disenfranchisement of producers to food supply and value-added chains, and climate impacts on agriculture were also discussed, as well as the transition from the upcoming deadline of the Millennium Development Goals, to a post-2015

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SEARCA, University Consortium members ink MOU

BANGKOK, Thailand—Leading agricultural universities in Asia and SEARCA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will serve as basis for future collaborations on joint and double degree programs in agriculture,

natural resources, and related sciences. The signing ceremony was held on 19 November 2013 at the main campus of Kasetsart University (KU) here.

Signatories to the MOU are Dr. Herry Suhardiyanto, Rector, Institut Pertanian Bogor; Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, Chancellor, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); Dr. Vudtechai Kapilakanachana, KU President; Prof. Dr. Ir. Sri Raharjo, Deputy for Research, Universitas Gadjah Mada

(UGM), Indonesia; Mohd Fauzi Hj Ramlan, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia; Katsumi Takano, President, Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI), Japan; and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director. All the universities are members of the SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC), while SEARCA serves as the consortium secretariat.



The ceremonial signing of the MOU on joint and double degree programs in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences among UC members and SEARCA.

Under the agreement, two or more UC members may offer dual or joint degree programs through which graduate students will have an opportunity to learn in a more diverse environment, improve their communication skills, and appreciate different cultures. Moreover, these programs are envisaged to provide strong international perspective, which particularly is very advantageous in an increasing global economy. (JSLaranas)

Regional training-workshop tackles climate change adaptation in watersheds

Twenty-three researchers, technical experts, and academics from five Southeast Asian countries convened at SEARCA on 15-18 October 2013 for the *Training-Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation in Watersheds for Water, Food and Environmental Security in Southeast Asia* that was mainly sponsored by the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) and jointly organized with SEARCA.

“Organizing the training-workshop with APAN is important because the sound management of watersheds, which make up the bulk of land area in Southeast Asia, is critical in addressing challenges in water availability for food production,” Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said in his remarks read by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, Deputy Director for Administration.

Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), further underscored the value of healthy, sustainable, and resilient watersheds in soil conservation, biodiversity conservation, and climate change mitigation, which bear upon the health of the economy and of the people of a country. Dr. Cruz is the Philippine Representative to the SEARCA Governing Board. He also served as the Technical Coordinator of the training-workshop.



Mr. Ha Thanh Lan of the Institute of Water Resources Planning, Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development raises a point as others listen.

The four-day event aimed to enable the participants to understand the issues and challenges in watershed management in a changing climate in relation to water, food, and environmental security. It also intended to help them analyze gaps and draw up an agenda for action toward sustainable watersheds for water, food and environmental security in a changing climate within the varying contexts of their work.

The training-workshop featured experts' presentations and discussions on key issues, challenges, and best practices in watershed management amid climate change in Southeast Asia; changes in watersheds due to non-climate stressors; climate change adaptation and assessment tools for watersheds; multi-stakeholder watershed management modes in a changing climate; science-based policy and decision support systems in watershed management in a changing climate; and needs and gaps in research, capacity building, action and practices, and policies.

Aside from Dr. Cruz, the other resource persons were Dr. Hidayat Pawitan of Institut Pertanian Bogor, Indonesia; Dr. Juan M. Pulhin, Dean of the UPLB College of Forestry and Natural Resources; Dr. Mahar A. Lagmay, Executive Director of Project Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards (NOAH) of the Department of Science and Technology, Philippines; and Dr. David Phillip Guertin of the University of Arizona, USA who delivered his lecture via an online seminar.

The participants also went on a fieldtrip to the Makiling Forest Reserve and the Mabitac Municipal Government, both in the province of Laguna. The field visit showcased the Automated Water and Weather Stations (AWWS) as climate change adaptations being operated by scientists together with local government units.

The 23 participants came from 17 organizations including government agencies, higher education institutions in agriculture, a sub-regional organization, and a private firm in Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam. (MCHCadiz)

SEARCA joins 2013 World Food Day Colloquium

STUTTGART, Germany—Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Acting Program Head for Research and Development, attended this year's *World Food Day Colloquium* held on 16 October 2013 in Schloss Hohenheim in this city. Their attendance was sponsored by the Food Security Center (FSC) of the University of Hohenheim (UHOH) as SEARCA is one of the five strategic partners of FSC.

With the theme *Water Efficiency for Food Security*, the Colloquium featured a keynote presentation on *Water for food: Strategies to adapt to global change*, the Justus von Liebig Award for World Nutrition 2013, young scientists' perspectives on “water pricing for water saving,” and insights of selected scientists and experts on how to increase food security by improving water use efficiency.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Judy Libra of the Department of Technology Assessment and Substance Cycles Leibniz-Institut für Agrartechnik Potsdam-Bornim e.V., Germany, discussed the global challenge of improving water productivity of farming systems—that is, “more crop per drop”—to meet food demands of the growing world population.

SEARCA has strong interest on the topic of water efficiency in the agriculture sector in view of its priority thrust on natural resource management and its forthcoming Umbrella Program on Food Security for Southeast Asia. (BMBurgos)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, at the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, Germany for the *World Food Day Colloquium 2013*.

SEARCA participates in int'l conference on conservation agriculture

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia—SEARCA delegates gave a presentation on “Conservation Agriculture and Capacity Building toward Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia” at the *Fourth International Conservation Agriculture Conference in Southeast Asia*. The conference was held at the University of Battambang on 9-13 December 2013.

With the theme *Conservation Agriculture and Sustainable Crop Production Intensification: Producing More while Enhancing Ecosystem Services*, the conference convened experts from Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Americas, and Europe who discussed new and emerging technologies and best practices that are embodied within the principles of conservation agriculture (CA). These include sustainable, organic, and ecological agriculture (SOEA) practices where the basic premise is producing food while mimicking the forest ecosystem and maintaining a high level of biological diversity in agro-ecosystems through minimum soil disturbance, continuous mulching, and diversification of species.

The CA model is an offshoot of the Sustainable Crop Production Intensification (SCPI) concept, which was coined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2011.

SEARCA's presentation was authored by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Acting Program Head for Research and Development; Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, Program Head for Knowledge Management; and Mr. Henry M. Custodio, Program Specialist for Research and Development.

The presentation summarized the results of a review and analysis of various capacity building initiatives of SEARCA in support of or aligned with CA.

Upland agriculture, ecosystems approach to project planning and implementation, sustainable agriculture technologies, agro-ecosystems dynamics, and climate change mitigation and



Participants visiting an upland farm in Battambang, Cambodia were given a demonstration on the improvement of water retention capacity of soils using conservation agriculture practices.

adaptation are some of the relevant focus areas of SEARCA's graduate scholarship, research and development and knowledge management projects and activities that were presented.

Also highlighted in the presentation was SEARCA's upcoming Tenth Five-Year Plan wherein the Center intends to diversify its projects and activities to include action research via ground-level intervention, including CA for addressing food security in an uncertain environment.

During the conference, the participants also visited a number of experimentation plots in the upland farms of Battambang as well as women farmers in Siem Reap who are already practicing CA.

United States Agency for International Development-Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (USAID-SANREM) Project technicians demonstrated how CA practices prevent or minimize soil erosion and surface runoff, increase water retention of soil, and various technologies including mechanized seed planters modified for zero tillage.

Various side meetings were also attended by the SEARCA delegation composed of Dr. Burgos, Dr. Cadiz and Mr. Custodio. These include the

Conservation Agriculture Network for Southeast Asia (CANSEA) Steering Committee Meeting to which SEARCA was invited as an observer and where the Center's possible participation in CANSEA was discussed.

The SEARCA team also met with Dr. Touch Visalsok, Cambodia's Undersecretary of State for Education, Youth and Sports, and author of the second edition of the Cambodia volume of the *Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Primer Series*. Dr. Visalsok briefed the SEARCA team on the progress of the Cambodia primer.

Mr. Jean-Claude Legoupil of the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) and CANSEA and Dr. Puvadol Doydee of Kasetsart University, who is a SEARCA graduate alumnus, discussed the possibility of partnering with SEARCA for a series of training events on CA in some countries of Southeast Asia.

Dr. Manuel R. Reyes, Professor of Biological Engineering at the North Carolina A&T State University, also met with the SEARCA delegation to finalize the details of his team's planned visit to SEARCA in January 2014. (HMCustodio)



Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (standing), SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development, presents SEARCA's paper at the conference.

Snapshots



Dr. Laban MacOpiyo (right), a Kenyan lecturer at the Department of Land Resources Management and Agricultural Technology, University of Nairobi, paid a courtesy call on Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (left), SEARCA Director, on 15 November 2013. Dr. MacOpiyo met with Dr. Saguiguit on the last day of his week-long lecture on *Population, Food, and Governance Issues* at the Food Security Center Summer School hosted and co-organized by SEARCA.



Dr. Qiaoqiao Zhang (right), Director for Memberships, and Dr. Wai-Hong Loke, Regional Director-Southeast Asia, both of the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI) based in the United Kingdom, visited SEARCA on 5 December 2014 to explore areas of common interest for possible collaboration. CABI is a not-for-profit science-based development organization that provides scientific expertise and information on agriculture and the environment. The CABI officials were received by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, along with SEARCA program specialists, namely: Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot of the Graduate Scholarship Department; Ms. Avril DG. Madrid of the Knowledge Management Department; and Mr. Henry M. Custodio of the Research and Development Department.



Dr. Saguiguit, (walking behind the banner), leads the Center's contingent at the Loyalty Day Parade held on 10 October 2013 as part of the 95th Alumni Homecoming and Loyalty Day celebration of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), which hosts SEARCA's headquarters on its campus. The SEARCA contingent comprised the Center's officers and staff as well as SEARCA scholars in their traditional clothes.



SEARCA staff with beneficiaries of the Los Baños-based Madre de Amor Hospice Foundation during their Christmas party held on 13 December 2013. The SEARCA staff in the photo are (from left): Mr. Benigno S. Zamora, Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Mr. Jaymark Warren T. Dia; and (from right): Ms. Eidelmire F. Genosa, Ms. Mary Rose Joy G. Sagabay, and Mr. Eduardo D. Rodriguez, Jr. They turned over the SEARCA staff's personal donations of food baskets for the hospice patients and their families to enjoy over the holidays. SEARCA, through its CSR activities, has long been a benefactor of the hospice, which is a non-stock, non-profit organization that provides community-based palliative care service founded in 1994. Currently, the hospice covers 23 out of the 30 towns in the province of Laguna, Philippines.



Participating SEARCA staff in the 2013 Bañamos Festival Parade await their turn to join the foot march along the national highway to the town plaza together with representatives of other Los Baños-based institutions who participated in celebrating the 398th Foundation Day of the town of Los Baños. "Bañamos" is a Spanish word that means "we bathe" and the festival named for it promotes the town's numerous hot spring resorts and spas.

SEARCA responds to relief needs of Typhoon Yolanda victims

SEARCA joined the international community in efforts to help the survivors of Typhoon Yolanda (also known as Haiyan) which battered the central region of the Philippines, the Center's host country, on 8 November 2013. One of the strongest typhoons ever recorded to make landfall, Yolanda caused catastrophic destruction that left thousands of people dead, injured, and homeless.

SEARCA responded by providing assistance through personal donations of cash, food, toiletries, and used clothes from its staff. These were turned over to the Philippine National Red Cross on 20 November 2013.

In addition, SEARCA's management and staff have decided to forego their anniversary and Christmas parties this year so that the funds for these activities can be diverted to relief efforts. A portion of these funds was used



SEARCA staff load relief goods donated by the Center and its staff for delivery to the Philippine Red Cross office in Alabang on 20 November 2013.

to purchase six tons of rice, which were turned over to the Philippine Red Cross-Rizal Chapter in Muntinlupa City.

Moreover, 17 SEARCA staff members assisted the Philippine Red Cross in repacking relief goods at its Alabang office on 22 November 2013.

Other members of the SEARCA family, including scholars, alumni, and members of its Governing Board, also contributed personal resources to the relief efforts.

Beyond the immediate crisis that required emergency provision of basic necessities, SEARCA plans to set up a rehabilitation project in an area severely affected by the typhoon. (LLDDomingo)



Volunteers from among the SEARCA staff helped the Philippine Red Cross in repacking relief goods at its Alabang office on 22 November 2013.



Representatives of the Vietnam University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association who turned over donations for the typhoon survivors on 27 November 2013 were Ms. Tran Thi Thu Trang (center), Mr. Hoang Ha Anh (leftmost), Mr. Nguyen Duc Truong (second from left), Mr. Mac Nhu Binh (second from right), and Mr. Le Phuong Nam (rightmost). The relief aid was received by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (fourth from left), Deputy Director for Administration; Dr. Editha C. Cedicol (third from left), Program Head for Graduate Scholarship; Ms. Ma. Margaritha B. Romero (third from right), Unit Head for Human Resources Management; and Ms. Adoracion T. Robles (fourth from right), Executive Coordinator and Officer in Charge, Management Services Unit.

SEARCA Director garners 2 awards from UPLBAA

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, received two awards from the University of the Philippines Los Baños Alumni Association (UPLBAA) during the celebration of the 95th UPLB Loyalty Day. He was named 2013



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (center) holds the trophy for the 2013 Outstanding Alumnus in Regional Institutional Development awarded by the University of the Philippines (UPLB) Alumni Association (UPLBAA). Flanking him are (from left) Mr. Simeon A. Cuyson, UPLBAA President; Dr. Sue Liza C. Saguiguit, Director, UPLB Office of Alumni Relations; Dr. Jose Wendell P. Capili, Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs and Director of the Office of Alumni Relations, UP System; and Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, UPLB Chancellor.

Outstanding Alumnus in Regional Institutional Development and given the 2013 Distinguished Alumnus Award for Agriculture and Rural Development during the *UPLB Alumni Homecoming and Fellowship Night* on 9 October 2013.

The UPLB Outstanding Alumnus award recognizes graduates who have transcended their particular fields of endeavor and made an impact in addressing contemporary development issues. Dr. Saguiguit was cited for his significant contributions to the development of institutions working toward agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia. SEARCA's Institutional Development Assistance Program (IDA), his brainchild, focuses on the development of young, strategic agricultural universities located in growth corridors in the region.

On the other hand, the Distinguished Alumnus Award was given to Dr. Saguiguit in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the fields of project and financial management and implementation, fund generation, rural development and extension, and participatory community-based and multidisciplinary research. (EGPandanan)

Bay alliance members learn fish catch data collection

DIPOLOG CITY, Philippines—Local government units (LGUs) that are members of the Iligan Bay Alliance of Misamis Occidental (IBAMO) trained on *Fish Catch Data Collection* on 29-30 November 2013 in this city.

The training was jointly organized by SEARCA, WorldFish, Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Research Regional Office 10 (DA-BFAR 10), and DA-Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (DA-BAS).

It was conducted as part of the European Commission-funded WorldFish-SEARCA project titled *Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to*



Dr. Belen O. Daba, DENR Region 10 Officer in Charge and Regional Technical Director, presents the workshop rationale and the coastal resource management certification process.

Fisheries in Small-Scale Tropical Marine Fisheries (EAF) to support the institutional strengthening of IBAMO in accordance with their plans and programs this year.

The training aimed to align fisheries data collection at the level of the LGUs with the current fisheries data collection process of DA-BAS and BFAR. Moreover, the training was aimed at increasing the fisheries data collection efficiency of LGUs for improved data utilization.

The 31 training participants were from the agriculture and planning and development offices of IBAMO member LGUs as well as representatives from DA-BFAR and Mindanao University of Science and Technology.

The program featured a participatory situational analysis of the different municipal fisheries. It also included a presentation and discussion of the fisheries data collection process of selected LGUs, DA-BFAR, and DA-BAS.

In closing, WorldFish synthesized the various fish catch data processes of stakeholders and

identified actions for integration, particularly recommendations to enhance DA-BFAR Region 10's implementation of the National Stock Assessment Program and DA-BAS' Fish Landing Survey for municipal fisheries.

Hon. Diego Ty, IBAMO Vice Chairman and Mayor of Plaridel, expressed his appreciation of IBAMO's accomplishment of all the needed legalities to support the undertakings of the alliance.

Mr. Doug Beare, Senior Scientist at the WorldFish Headquarters, articulated the different possible benefits that IBAMO can derive from undertaking this project.

Dr. Lope B. Santos III, Program Specialist and Officer in Charge of SEARCA's Project Development and Management Department, and Dr. Len R. Garces, WorldFish Research Fellow, facilitated the two-day training. Ms. Idohna Leah J. Buendia, WorldFish Research Assistant, and Mr. Alvin G. Tallada, SEARCA Project Management Associate, assisted in organizing the training. (AGTallada)

Regulators, experts from 8 Asian countries brush up on communicating biotech and biosafety

BANGKOK, Thailand—Forty-six regulators, biosafety experts, and scientists from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam convened to hone their communication skills and get updated on biotech and biosafety during the *Regional Workshop on Enhancing Knowledge and Communication Skills on Biotechnology and Biosafety* held on 29-30 October 2013 at Century Park Hotel here.

All involved in biotech crops research, the participants were from government biosafety regulatory agencies as well as research institutions in the public and private sectors.



Participants, resource persons, and organizers of the regional workshop held on 29-30 October 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, in his message read by Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management, said the regulators and scientists are in the best position to enlighten stakeholders on the scientific bases of biotechnology and clarify claims about it.

Dr. Mariechel Navarro, Director of the Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), and Dr. Ma. Theresa Velasco, Dean of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Development Communication (UPLB-CDC), conducted

exercises and delivered lectures on effective science communication.

The activity also aimed to enhance the participants' knowledge on biotechnology and biosafety in the global and regional contexts and improve their capability to conduct biosafety and environmental assessment.

Dr. Randy Hautea, ISAAA Global Coordinator and Southeast Asia Center Director, talked about the adoption and future prospects of biotech crops while Dr. Frank Shotkoski, Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSP II) Director, shared the public sector initiatives and experiences in biosafety and development of biotech products.

Researchers and regulators from Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines involved in field trials of biotech crops shared their experiences and best practices in implementation and management.

The workshop was organized by ISAAA, SEARCA, Program for Biosafety Systems Philippines (PBS Philippines), ABSP II, Indonesian Biotechnology Information Center (IndoBIC), Biotechnology Alliance Association (BAA), and Biosafety and Biotechnology Information Center in Thailand (BBIC). (JAPANopio/SMMercado)

Agrarian reform beneficiary organizations trained

NUEVA ECIJA, Philippines—SEARCA conducted the first training course on the *System of Use, Maintenance, Operation, and Troubleshooting of Common Service Facilities (CSFs)* for agrarian reform beneficiary organizations (ARBOs) on 11-12 December 2013 here. Nueva Ecija is one of the two provinces wherein SEARCA implements the project titled *Agrarian Reform Community Connectivity and Economic Support Services (ARCESS)*.

The country's Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) commissioned SEARCA to implement ARCESS in Bulacan and Nueva Ecija.

The ARCESS project provides strategic and sustainable support services (i.e., agri-extension services, business development services, CSFs, farm machineries and equipment) so that agrarian reform beneficiaries can

maximize the productivity of the lands awarded to them and engage in agriculture-related enterprises.

The training had 25 participants composed of managers, machine operators and motorpool supervisors. They came from seven ARBOs, namely: Masaganang Buhay Primary Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MBPMPC), Barangay Development Cooperative (BADECO), Aglipay Producers' Cooperative (APC), Talabutab Norte Primary Multi-Purpose Cooperative (TNMPC), Sitio Sapang Kubo Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SSKMPC), Tanglaw Buhay Multi-Purpose Cooperative (TBMPC), and Farmer Vegetable Credit Cooperative (FVCC).

Officials from DAR Provincial Office led by Ms. Joyce Ramones, Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer, were also present during the activity.



Prof. Jimmy Williams (fourth from left) gives the technicians from P.I. Farms some pointers during the training's hands-on session on 12 December 2013 in Talabutab Norte, General Natividad, Nueva Ecija.

The two-day training provided the participants with additional knowledge on the CSF's technical features, proper use, operations, maintenance, and overall management as well as technical advice on key issues encountered in the operation and management of CSFs.

Dr. Arnold Elepaño, Dean of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Engineering and Agro-Industrial Technology (UPLB-CEAT), served as the lead resource person. He was assisted by two mechanical engineers and seven technicians from the Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers and Dealers Association (AMMDA), the equipment dealer of CSFs in Nueva Ecija.

Other members of the SEARCA project team who were on hand during the training were Professor Jimmy Williams, Project Team Leader, and Professor Mayo Grace Amit, Training Specialist. (SGLQuiñones)

Off the press: 12-volume monograph series on agricultural dev't

SEARCA, the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), and the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) published a 12-volume monograph series that focuses on the improvement of productivity in Philippine agriculture to ensure that it can compete in regional and global trade.

The monograph series on *Productivity Growth in Philippine Agriculture (PGPA)* is the result of a project of the same title that was a joint undertaking of DA-BAR, PhilRice and SEARCA.

The project analyzed the productivity growth in Philippine agriculture by disaggregating the sources of growth over time using analytical approaches appropriate to Philippine conditions.

Each monograph identified policy and investment options that could serve as basis for formulating strategies to stimulate agricultural growth. Moreover, each volume tackles a specific sector of agriculture and analyzes the factors that hasten productivity growth.

The 12 titles in the monograph series are:

- Productivity in the Rice Sector in Philippine Agriculture
- Total Factor Productivity Growth in the Philippine Coconut and Sugarcane Subsectors
- Productivity Growth in the Philippine Hog and Poultry Industries
- Growth of Aquaculture Productivity in the Philippines
- Measuring and Explaining Total Factor Productivity Growth and Patterns in Philippine Agriculture: A Regional Panel Data Framework
- Investments in Research, Development and Extension: Implications on Total Factor Productivity
- The Impact of Infrastructure on Agricultural Productivity
- Agricultural Productivity Growth and Environmental Externalities in the Philippines
- Human Capital and Agricultural Productivity: The Case of the Philippines
- Institutions, Social Capital and Productivity Growth in Philippine Agriculture
- Scenarios and Options for Productivity Growth in Philippine Agriculture: An Application of the Agricultural Multi-market Model for Policy Evaluation (AMPLE) (PMLuis)

SEARCA participates in workshop on embedding KM in ASEAN

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Twenty-five officials and executives from six Southeast Asian countries representing the various stakeholders of the ASEAN Multisectoral Framework for Climate Change (AFCC) participated in the *Workshop Embedding Knowledge Management in the ASEAN* held on 7-8 October 2013 at the ASEAN Secretariat based here. ASEAN stands for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The stakeholders represented include the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC), ASEAN Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN), ASEAN Regional Knowledge Network on Forest and Climate Change (ARKN-FCC), ASEAN Food

Security Information System (AFSIS), ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN), ASEAN Expert Group on Forest Product Development (AEG-FPD), ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Fisheries (ASWGF), ASEAN Technical Working Group on Agricultural Research and Development Group (ATWGARD), and ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN).

Representatives of SEARCA and the Coral Triangle Centre (CTC)—both strategic partners of AFCC—also joined the workshop. SEARCA was represented by Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay, Unit Head for Knowledge Resources, Knowledge Management Department.



Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay (second from right), SEARCA Unit Head for Knowledge Resources and Coordinator of SEARCA's Knowledge Center for Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management in Southeast Asia (KC3), shares SEARCA's experience in knowledge sharing and networking during the mapping exercise.

The workshop was organized by the ASEAN Agriculture Industries and Natural Resources Division (AINRD), and sponsored by the ASEAN-German Programme on Response to Climate Change (GAP-CC) of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on

Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC). It built on the discussions and developments from the *2nd Meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Committee on Climate Change and Food Security* held in May 2013.

The participants discussed the importance and relevance of knowledge sharing to the committee's Strategic Plan of Action (SPA); the importance of networking for knowledge generation, exchange, and peer-to-peer learning; and the emphasis on the need to manage web portals and other information systems.

The workshop aimed to enhance the capacities of AFCC stakeholders in strengthening national and regional knowledge sharing, communication, and networking on climate change and food security. It was facilitated by resource persons from the United Kingdom-based Institute for Development Studies (IDS) Knowledge Services who incorporated a range of participatory methodologies (e.g., open spaces, mapping, group work, and reflection) for ease of sharing and learning.

At the end of the workshop, the participants came up with a tentative KM Roadmap for the ASEAN which identified emerging KM priorities for the coming years, action points, and lead working groups. (MVTicsay)

SEARCA joins ASFN/ from page 3

Phase II will continue the program for another three years toward three defined outcomes: Policy Development, Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building, and Learning Interventions.

The workshop was attended by the focal persons of implementation partners, namely: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Non-Timber Forest Product-Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) South and Southeast Asia, Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), and World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) (a new implementation partner); and SEARCA as new supporting partner.

ASFN Strategic Response

As a new supporting partner, SEARCA presented the ASFN Strategic Response Fund (ASRF), a flexible funding mechanism to enable AMS focal points to quickly respond to emerging issues and challenges and articulate policy recommendations and directions on the network's common concern.

The ASRF will be implemented on a pilot basis, initially for 18 months, to fund projects relevant to ASFCC and ASFN objectives and priority themes, addressing gaps or issues of strategic importance in the interrelatedness of food security, poverty,

and climate change concerns. These projects may be classified as quick "turn-around" studies, exploratory reviews, meta-analysis/analytical studies and think pieces, study tours, dialogues/roundtable discussions, position or background papers as inputs to policy debates and decision-making, and very strategic training scholarships.

ASFN focal agencies in AMS may apply for the grant. The mechanics of the grant (criteria for selection, fund disbursement, and other institutional arrangements) are yet to be fine-tuned by a Program Steering Committee. (MVTicsay)

Experts refine/ from page 5

development agenda of Sustainable Development Goals. Concerns about food safety and nutrition were also raised by the Senior Fellows.

Dr. Paul S. Teng, Dean of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and SEARCA Senior Fellow, served as

the overall workshop facilitator. The other Senior Fellows who participated in the workshop were Dr. Donato B. Antiporta, Former Senior Policy Adviser for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Dr. Doris Capistrano, Regional Advisor to the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change; Dr. Geronimo M. Collado, international consultant for multi-lateral organizations and Senior Faculty at the Development Academy of the Philippines;

Dr. Maria Concepcion C. Lizada, Professor Emeritus in Food Science at the University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD); Dr. William G. Padolina, Academician and President, National Academy of Science and Technology of the Philippines; and Dr. Percy E. Sajise, Honorary Research Fellow, Bioversity International and Adjunct Professor, UP Los Baños-School of Environmental Science and Management and former SEARCA Director. (BMBurgos/HMCustodio)

32 media practitioners learn about biotech reporting in SEARCA workshop

BOGOR, Indonesia—Media practitioners from six countries in Southeast Asia trained on reporting and communicating biotechnology in relation to food security and sustainable agriculture at a workshop held at the Novotel Bogor Golf Resort and Convention Center on 12-13 November 2013.

The *Biotechnology and Biosafety for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture: A Regional Workshop for Media Practitioners* was jointly organized by SEARCA, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP), International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSP II), and the Indonesian Biotechnology Information Center (IndoBIC).

Participants of the workshop were 32 print, radio, TV, and online journalists as well as representatives from public research agencies and the private sector from Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The workshop aimed to enhance the knowledge of media practitioners in the region on the basics, trends, and advancements of biotechnology and biosafety, and their current and potential contributions to food security and sustainable agriculture. The workshop also added to the knowledge and capacities of the media in communicating crop biotechnology and biosafety issues and in promoting responsible biotech reporting in the region.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, in his opening remarks read by Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay, SEARCA Unit Head for Knowledge Resources, said that objective, science-based, and evidence-based reporting is the key to helping stakeholders understand what is in store for them and for the world when biotechnology is used and realized.

Dr. Saguiguit also emphasized that the media is key in the proper communication and dissemination of accurate information to educate and help people make informed decisions.

He said it is high time for agriculture and environmental issues to be highlighted by the media so that various stakeholders can be well-informed not just about the science of biotechnology, but also about experiences and trends on their use worldwide.

According to Dr. Irdika Mansur, BIOTROP Deputy Director for Resources and Management, the right technology and package is necessary to achieve the targets of the Indonesian government for the country's agricultural development.

"Biotechnology can be a tool to strengthen agricultural development in Indonesia," Dr. Mansur said.

He added that the country's National Biosafety Commission has approved 14 genetically modified (GM) products and that in two to three years, Indonesia will enter the commercialization phase for biotech products.

The workshop covered topics that included the role, status, impact, and benefits of biotechnology for food security and sustainable agriculture by Dr. Hautea; the perspectives of the public and private sectors on current developments on biotech and biosafety by Dr. Frank A. Shotkoski, ABSP II Director, and Dr. Tantono Subagyo, Seed Regulatory Affairs Director, respectively; the basic concepts of biotech by Dr. Antonius Suwanto, Bogor Agricultural University professor; and experience-sharing on successful biotech farming by Pangasinan, Philippines biotech corn farmer-leader Ms. Rosalie Ellasus.

Perspectives, insights, and experiences in biotech communication in the context of the media were also shared by Dr. Ruben L. Villareal, Filipino National Academician and scientist, and Mr. Paul Icamina, Filipino news writer and editor.

For her part, Dr. Mariechel J. Navarro, ISAAA Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology Director, talked about effective biotech communication and led a writeshop on biotech reporting.

The market prospects and opportunities of the upcoming biotech crop in the Philippines, the insect resistant Bt eggplant, were presented by Ms. Agnes Chupungco of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs (UPLB-CPAf).

On the other hand, Ir. Adig Suwandi of PT Perkebunan Nusantara XI, a state-owned plantation company in Indonesia, presented the status and opportunities of another biotech crop in the pipeline, the drought tolerant sugarcane.

In his closing message, Dr. Randy A. Hautea, ISAAA Global Coordinator and Southeast Asia Center Director, told the media practitioners that "the most important gene is the gene for perseverance."

He said that in the very challenging task of communicating GM technology or biotech, it is the consistent perseverance and willingness to learn, communicate, engage, and build trust that will eventually allow people to communicate much more effectively. (JAPanopio/SMMercado)



Participants, resource persons, and organizers of the regional workshop for media practitioners held on 12-13 November 2013 in Bogor, Indonesia.

Alumni Notes

SEARCA ALUMNI HOLDS MEET ON SMALLHOLDER CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FOOD SECURITY, CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

VIENTIANE, Lao PDR—The SEARCA graduate alumni have long recognized that climate change is a serious issue in the region as it affects smallholders and eventually food security. This was affirmed in the Regional SEARCA Fellows Association's (RSFA) holding of the *1st RSFA Regional Conference on Food Security and Climate Change* with the theme *Enhancing smallholders' capacity towards food security and climate change adaptation in Southeast Asia* on 4-5 December 2013. The conference was hosted by the National University of Laos (NUOL) at Don Chan Palace Hotel in the country's capital.

RSFA is the federation of SEARCA alumni associations in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

The conference drew 34 participants, including SEARCA graduate alumni from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. Also among the participants were officers and staff of NUOL, SEARCA, and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

An offshoot of the *SEARCA-DAAD Alumni Associations Regional Consultative Workshop* organized and hosted by SEARCA on 28-29 May 2013, the conference enabled SEARCA's graduate alumni to share research and extension initiatives and other best practices towards building capacities of smallholders in achieving food security and climate change adaptation in Southeast Asia.

The conference was formally opened by Associate Professor Lammai Phiphakkhavong, NUOL Vice President.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, in his message read by Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Scholarship, affirmed the urgency of the situation and stressed that “we should not postpone looking at how to secure sufficient, nutritious, and safe food amidst the impacts of climate change.”

He further asserted that “we should now keep on finding solutions and employ the best strategies to combat the effects of climate change, to capacitate the smallholders to adapt to it, and to ensure that the people in our respective countries are ready to face these challenges and know what to do when adversities strike.”

Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon, President of the Southern Luzon State University, Philippines and RSFA, reiterated the importance of the conference theme, remarking that Typhoon Haiyan—the recent catastrophe that struck the Philippines and the strongest storm to have made landfall—is also proof of what climate change can do.

The highlight of the opening program was a keynote presentation of Dr. Sitha Khemmarath, Vice President of Savannakhet University (SKU), Lao PDR and a SEARCA alumnus. He said his country needs location-specific research and development projects that will provide the foundation for strategic initiatives toward food security.

A paper on a Conservation Farming Village (CFV) project was presented by Dr. Wilfredo

M. Carandang, Assistant to the Chancellor and Professor at the UPLB College of Forestry and Natural Resources. The CFV is an agroforestry-based community development initiative that aims to improve the resilience of communities to adapt to climate change.

Other presentations were given by SEARCA alumni, who shared their innovative projects and initiatives that focus on assisting smallholders among their countrymen to improve agricultural production toward food security in the face of climate change threats.

The conference also served as occasion to form the Laotian SEARCA Alumni Association, who are composed of 28 Laotians who completed their graduate programs under SEARCA scholarship. The RSFA facilitated the formation of said alumni association and the election of its first set of officers, namely: Dr. Oudom Phonekampheng, Dean of NUOL Faculty of Agriculture, as President; Mr. Keopeth Phoumphon, Training Expert, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, as Vice President; Dr. Poutthasone Sibounnavong, Lecturer, NUOL Faculty of Agriculture, as Secretary; and Mr. Linglong Sithixay, Technical Officer Planning Division, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, as Treasurer. (JSLaranas)

DOMINGO, GOMEZ NAMED 2013 UPLB DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Two Filipino SEARCA graduate alumni were among the 2013 Distinguished Alumni Awardees of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

Alumni Notes/ to page 15



The SEARCA alumni among those standing are Dr. Daud Samsudewa (leftmost), Dr. Rahim Darma (second from left), Dr. Josefina T. Dizon (third from left), Mr. Em Sorany (fourth from left), Dr. Monton Jamroenprucksas (sixth from left), Dr. Lorenzo C. Lapitan, Jr. (eighth from left), Dr. Mohd. Salleh bin Haji Hassan (ninth from left), Dr. Oudom Phonekampheng (ninth from right), Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon (eighth from right), Dr. Chantaphone Phon-asa (seventh from right), Dr. Hoang Van Phu (sixth from right), Ms. Phouttasone Sibounnavong (fifth from right), Mr. Bounmy Phommakone (fourth from right), and Mr. Natalino Babo Martins (second from right). Those seated are (from left) Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Scholarship; Mr. Lammai Phiphakkhavong, NUOL Vice President; and Dr. Sitha Khemmarath, SKU Vice President and SEARCA alumnus. Also in the photo are Ms. Jesselle S. Laranas (standing, third from right), SEARCA Program Specialist for Graduate Scholarship; Ms. Nixia Tenriawaru (fifth from left); Mr. Khamchane (seventh from left); Mr. Bounheuang Ninchaleune (tenth from left); Dr. Wilfredo N. Carandang (eleventh from left); and Dr. Rahmadani (rightmost).

Thesis Abstract

THE SELF-DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (SDS) FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED): THE CASE OF TAIS PRODUCTION IN DILI DISTRICT, TIMOR-LESTE



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The study was conducted to analyze the Self-Development Strategy (SDS) as implemented in the Tais industry in Dili District, Timor-Leste. Tais is traditional woven cloth made by Timorese women. The study determined the SDS as a means to enable local communities to build a more viable local economy; described the socioeconomic characteristics of local entrepreneurs, benefits and costs, and obstacles in Tais industry cluster; determined the business performance of the Tais industry; and determined the critical variables (i.e., individual and organizational characteristics, collective behaviors).

Data were gathered from 30 respondents from the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry office in Dili District, the local government of Dili District, and Alola Foundation, a nongovernment

organization that was involved in the program. Structured questionnaire was used in conducting in-depth and face-to-face interviews. Basic statistical methods such as percentages and frequency distribution were used to analyze numerical data.

Results showed that SDS is implemented in the development programs of the Tais entrepreneurs. The SDS created a variety of jobs and these increased agricultural productivity; improved infrastructure, including those that were labor-intensive initiatives; and promoted private sector development, including enhancing the Dili residents' access to microfinance.

The major obstacles for SDS were found to be inadequate and unstable demand, and financing constraints in terms of credit schemes. Knowledge, skills, market orientation, and business experience were found to influence business performance of the Tais industry.

The study also found that leadership performance and linkages were key influences for good business performance of the Tais industry. While participation and cohesiveness also influenced business performance, skills was found to be the most important factor in improving business performance, followed by knowledge and market orientation. The study showed that, in general,

SDS enables local communities to build a viable local economy.

The study's recommendations were as follows:

- The government should develop entrepreneur-related skills in organization and planning and employ strategic entrepreneurial communication.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry should continue its support to the Timorese women who produce Tais.
- To promote entrepreneurship, the government should promulgate policies that are neutral and provide no special advantages to the large firms.
- The industrial agency's district office should continue establishing high morale and strengthen efforts in developing the capabilities of Tais entrepreneurs to produce high-quality products with best prices and services.
- The Tais industry should have a well-articulated skills promotion programs, including the use of up-to-date technologies among the Tais entrepreneurs, as well as competent leaders in the business group and focal government agencies to lead development projects to promote business expansion.
- More research of market trends should be undertaken to improve the business performance of the Tais industry players.

Alumni Notes/ from page 14

Dr. Clarissa Yvonne J. Domingo was named Distinguished Alumna for Veterinary Research by the UPLB College of Veterinary Medicine, while Dr. Romeo A. Gomez, Jr. was named Distinguished Alumnus for Academe by the UPLB School of Environmental Science and Management.

Dr. Domingo was a SEARCA PhD research scholar who completed her PhD in Public Health at UP Manila in 2010. She is currently an Associate Professor and Head of the College Research Council, College of Veterinary Science and Medicine, Central Luzon State University in Nueva Ecija, Philippines.

She was cited for her achievements as Researcher in Veterinary Public Health and Epidemiology. She established the incidence and risk factors of zoonotic protozoa among smallholder farms in Aurora Province, specifically cryptosporidiosis affecting goats, buffalos, and humans. Cryptosporidium, a protozoan parasite causes the disease which affects the intestines and causes acute infection.

In addition, Dr. Domingo established the epidemiology and ecological factors of fascioliasis, an infection caused by flatworms, and co-authored the *Expert Panel Recommendations for Surra Control in the Philippines*. Surra is a life-threatening infection of the blood of vertebrates caused by protozoans. Dr. Domingo also helped identify the endo- and ectoparasites of the Philippine rice field rat.

On the other hand, Dr. Gomez completed his PhD in Environmental Science at UPLB in 2003 under full SEARCA scholarship. He is a Professor at the Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences, Benguet State University in Benguet, Philippines while also serving as Assistant Director of BSU's Open University.

Dr. Gomez was recognized for his distinct and distinguished contributions in the field of environmental science education. He was also cited for his "leadership in implementing research programs that highlight landscape change as shown in his studies in the Ifugao Rice Terraces."

Dr. Domingo and Dr. Gomez received their awards during the Alumni Fellowship and Awards Night held on 9 October 2013 as part of the celebration of UPLB's 95th Loyalty Day and Alumni Homecoming. (LLDDomingo with report from JSLaranas)



Dr. Clarissa Yvonne J. Domingo (center) and Dr. Romeo A. Gomez, Jr. (right) with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, who is also an awardee.

SEARCA, FSC hold summer school on food security

A four-week summer school on *Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development for Food Security* held on 1-30 November 2013 was jointly organized by SEARCA and the Food Security Center (FSC), of which SEARCA is a strategic partner in Southeast Asia.

The Summer School is an activity of the FSC, one of the excellence centers for exchange and development cooperation at the University of Hohenheim under the Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation (Exceed) program of the German government. The FSC provides innovative and effective scientific contributions to reduce hunger and achieve food security. It has six strategic partners based in Costa Rica, the Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, and Uganda.

For 30 days, SEARCA served as home to 13 scholars from Asia, Africa, and Latin America who were chosen by FSC and SEARCA to participate in the summer school.

The program offered a combination of class lectures delivered by professors and resource persons, educational field trips, group work, and field practice.

Dr. Cecilio R. Arboleda, a Filipino Professor of Animal Science who also actively participated in sustainable agriculture extension programs at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), served as lecturer on *Sustainable Agriculture and Food Production Systems* in the first week. Dr. Romulo G. Davide, 2012 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee, joined him as guest lecturer, sharing his experience in spearheading the Farmer-Scientist Training Program (FSTP) in Cebu, Philippines. The lectures were complemented by a field visit, facilitated by Dr. Blesilda Calub of the UPLB Farming Systems and Soil Resources Institute (FSSRI) to the Tayabas Integrated Farming and Research Center in Quezon Province where the class observed “on-the-ground” sustainable agriculture through organic farming in the area.

Dr. Laban MacOpiyo, a Kenyan GIS expert who teaches at the Department of Land Resources Management and Agricultural Technology, University of Nairobi, served as resource person the following week. He talked about *Population, Food, and Governance Issues*. His lectures were supplemented by a trip to Barangay Kaybagal South, Tagaytay City, which has been

recognized by the National Nutrition Council of the Philippines to have innovative and effective nutrition programs, particularly for women and children in the village.

Dr. Friederike Annette Bellin-Sesay, a German researcher and lecturer at the German Institute of Human Nutrition, delivered the lectures in the third week. She discussed the concept of nutrition security and related topics in the *Food and Nutrition Quality and Safety* module. The class visited the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

In the final week, Dr. Luis Felipe Arauz, a Costa Rican Professor of Plant Pathology at the University of Costa Rica whose current research focus is on weather-based decision-making for plant disease control, served as an online lecturer who discussed *Climate Change Adaptation for Rural Development and Food Security*. The lecture was supplemented by a trip to the town of Mabitac in the province of Laguna which showcased a program on disaster risk and reduction management. The program included eco-friendly initiatives such as fabrication of hollow blocks using shredded plastic as one of the raw materials.

An integration of the four modules by Dr. Percy E. Sajise, SEARCA Senior Fellow, Adjunct Professor at the UPLB-SESAM, and Honorary Research Fellow at Bioversity International, capped the month-long summer school.

In his remarks at the closing program, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said the success of the summer school serves as an important input to the Center’s efforts toward inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia.

In addition to learning from the classroom lectures and discussions and field tours, the summer school was an opportunity for the students to appreciate and share different cultures, and establish networks and collaborations, making the program a rewarding and life-changing experience altogether.

This was affirmed by Mr. Jorge Tortos Barquero, a participant from Costa Rica, when he said, “We have gained new friends between and among us scholars and with organizers of the summer school as well.” (JSLaranas)



The participants of the FSC Summer School 2013. Seated, from left: Mr. Chuck Chuan Ng, University of Malaya, Malaysia; Ms. Doris Arianna Leyva-Trinidad, Colegio de Postgraduados, Mexico; Mr. Adelotola Olubanke Olugbile, Federal University of Agriculture, Nigeria; Ms. Micah Dee Roque and Joseph Pagtananan, both of the University of the Philippines Los Baños; Standing, from left: Mr. Gashahun Bino Binora, Hawassa University, Ethiopia; Mr. Agostinho Da Costa Ximenes, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Timor-Leste; Mr. Yohannes Yona Legide, Hawassa University; Dr. Outhai Soukky, Northern Agriculture and Forestry College, Lao PDR; Mr. Daniel Tetteh Otuh Amanquah, University of Ghana; Mr. Arturo Valenciano Sequeira, University of Costa Rica; Mr. Jorge Tortos Barquero, University for Peace, Costa Rica; and Mr. Jose Manuel Huesca Mariño, Colegio de Postgraduados.