

The SEARCA DIARY



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WOMEN AND THE WOODS

An estimated 1.2 billion people rely on agro-forestry farming systems. In many places in Southeast Asia, women remain primarily responsible for collecting fuel wood for the household.

Photo by Ye Naung

SEARCA tapped to manage ASEAN funds

Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will benefit from a new funding mechanism for projects that address food insecurity, poverty, and climate change.

The funding mechanism will be implemented by SEARCA, which officially joined the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) Phase II as one of the implementing partners that support the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN). SEARCA recently signed an agreement with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the funding agency for the ASFCC.

ASFN aims to integrate social forestry into the climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies of ASEAN Member States (AMS). It promotes the inclusion of communities, women, and vulnerable groups in said measures.

The ASFCC Phase II seeks to build on gains of Phase I and increase the flexibility and adaptability of the AMS Focal Points through a flexible funding mechanism. The external review findings on ASFCC Phase I highlighted the need for AMS to “act, react, and pro-act more flexibly to emerging needs in partner countries,

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Food Security Center renews partnership with SEARCA

STUTT GART, Germany—Recognized for its many food security-related initiatives in Southeast Asia, SEARCA was engaged anew for another five years as Southeast Asian Coordinator of the Food Security Center (FSC), a global project of the University of Hohenheim (UHOH) here.

SEARCA joined the Center management team and other strategic partners in the annual planning meeting held on 5-6 May 2014 at the FSC headquarters on UHOH campus. Among the participants were the new FSC Director and new SEARCA focal person for FSC.

Professor Hans Konrad Biesalski is now the FSC Director. He succeeded Dr. Manfred Zeller effective 1 May 2014. On the other hand, SEARCA was represented by Dr. Maria Cristeta Cuaresma, SEARCA's new Program Head for Graduate Scholarship, having succeeded Dr. Editha C. Cedicol.

Dr. Cuaresma presented the FSC-related accomplishments of SEARCA, including the successful conduct of the four-week Summer School in November 2013 at SEARCA which had 13 participants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

SEARCA has been a strategic partner of FSC since it was launched in 2009. The FSC is supported

by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany. Since then, SEARCA and FSC have jointly implemented non-degree training courses and international learning events on various food security-related topics. (LLDDomingo with report from JSLaranas)



Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (fourth from right), Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, represented SEARCA in the FSC's annual planning meeting. With her in the photo are the FSC management team and representatives of other strategic partners.

SEARCA tapped/ from page 1

which have a strong effect on policy adaptation, capacity increase at the national level, and assessment of applied research results feeding into policies.”

As a new supporting partner of ASFCC, SEARCA will implement the ASFN Flexible Funding Mechanism, which was launched during the 8th ASFN Annual Meeting held on 27-28 May 2014 at the Sabah Forestry Department Office in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

Also called ASFN Strategic Response Fund (ASFN-SRF or ASRF), the flexible funding mechanism supports in-country initiatives that will enable the AMS Focal Points to quickly respond to emerging issues and challenges, and increase

their ability to articulate policy recommendations and directions.

The ASRF will finance projects relevant to ASFCC and ASFN objectives and priority themes, and impactful by addressing gaps or issues of strategic importance on the issues of food security, poverty, and climate change.

These projects may be quick “turnaround” studies, exploratory reviews, meta-analysis/analytical studies and “think” pieces, study tours, dialogues/roundtable discussions, position or background papers as input to policy debates and decision-making, and strategic training scholarships.

The implementing partners of the ASFCC Phase II are the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Non-Timber Forest Product-Exchange Program (NFTP-EP) South and Southeast Asia,

Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC), World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), and SEARCA together with the ASFN Secretariat in coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat.

The ASRF Program Steering Committee chaired by Dr. Doris Capistrano, ASFCC Advisor and SEARCA Senior Fellow, convened after the formal launch to discuss priority areas for awards based on agreed ASFN priorities and plans of actions and schedules of call for proposals. Other members of the PSC are Madam Wan Hasmah Wan Mohammad, ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF) Leader of Malaysia and current Chair Country of ASFN; Mr. Zaw Win, ASOF Leader of Myanmar and incoming Chair Country of ASFN; Dr. Pham Quang Minh of the ASEAN Secretariat; Dr. Juergen Blaser, representative of the Swiss government through the SDC; Mr. Wiratno, ASFN Secretariat Chairperson; and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director. (Reports from BMBurgos)

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The ASRF Program Steering Committee members with Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (fourth from right), SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development, and Ms. Amy Lecciones (rightmost), ASRF Regional Program Coordinator.

ADB commissions SEARCA to support Japan-funded green growth project

SEARCA, in collaboration with the CTI Engineering International Co., Ltd., Woodfields Consultants, Inc., and ERGONS Project Marketing Consultants, was tapped by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support the implementation of the *Technical Assistance (TA) on Climate Resilience and Green Growth in Critical Watersheds*. The project is funded by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) through ADB, while the Climate Change Commission (CCC) serves as the implementing agency on the part of the Philippine government. It officially began on 5 May 2014 and will run until 31 October 2016.



Signatories to the project contract signed on 21 April 2014 at ADB were (from left) Mr. Julius Francisco, Vice President of Woodfields Consultants, Inc.; Ms. Teresita V. Pascual, Managing Director of Ergons Project Marketing Consultants; Dr. Ancha Srinivasan, ADB Principal Climate Change Specialist; Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Ms. Hiet Tran, ADB Procurement Specialist; and Ms. Nelfor Atienza, Business Development and Marketing Advisor of CTI Japan. Looking on were (standing) Ms. Nancy De Leon-Landicho, Program Specialist, and Dr. Lope B. Santos III, Program Specialist and Officer in Charge, both of the SEARCA Project Development and Management Department.

- High demonstration potential for integrating climate resilience and green growth into local development at both policy and operational levels.

The project will create plans for green growth and resilience in each of three critical watersheds by considering five dimensions, namely: economic development; resilience to climate change; biodiversity, ecosystems, and social development; greenhouse gas emissions; and poverty alleviation.

National agencies will collaborate with local government units (LGUs) and other stakeholders on the development and delivery of outputs through dialogues and training activities. With increased awareness of potential benefits of climate actions, funding opportunities, and other incentives, it is expected that the participating national agencies and LGUs will remain committed to implementing locally appropriate measures for green growth and resilience, and integrate them into local development plans.

The consulting team will be led by Dr. Candido A. Cabrido, Jr. as the National Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Specialist. The other team members are Dr. Teodoro Villanueva, Deputy Team Leader; Dr. Juan Pulhin, International Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Specialist; Dr. Takayaku Hatano, International Natural Resource Management Economist; Dr. Florencia Pulhin, International Climate Change Mitigation Specialist; Dr. Hector Sales, Natural Resource Management Economist; Dr. Esteban Godilano, Global Information System Specialist; Dr. Paulo Pasicolan, Capacity Building Specialist; Ms. Ma. Emelinda Mendoza, Gender Mainstreaming Specialist; Ms. Antonieta Arceo, Multimedia, Communication, and Knowledge Management Specialist; and five sectoral vulnerability and impact assessment specialists, namely: Dr. Nicomedes Briones (Agriculture), Ms. Teresita Pascual (Water Resources), Dr. Asuncion De Guzman (Coastal Resources), Dr. Amiel Nazar Consigna Bermudez (Health), and Mr. Randolph D. Carreon (Transportation and Energy).

In a meeting of ADB and the SEARCA-led consortium held on 9 May 2014, Dr. Ancha emphasized “visibility, collaboration, and project ownership.” Moreover, he stressed that the stakeholders, especially the LGUs, must buy-in and own the project. He also encouraged the consultants to “keep communication channels open, be pro-active in helping the LGUs covered by the project, and be visible not just in the social media but create an impression that the consultants are there to help.”



Dr. Ancha Srinivasan (fourth from left), ADB Principal Climate Change Specialist, with the team of consultants led by Dr. Candido A. Cabrido, Jr. (5th from left), Team Leader, during the meeting at ADB on 9 May 2014.

In June 2014, orientation workshops for the nine LGUs were conducted. At each orientation workshop, Forester Alexis Lapiz and Ms. Ma. Lovella Segayo of the CCC discussed the green growth and eco-town framework. They emphasized the importance of natural resource accounting and vulnerability assessment in updating or formulating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and mainstreaming the country’s Climate Change Act and Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) in the local development plans. They also presented the draft Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the LGUs’ important role in the project implementation. Also clarified at the meeting were arrangements and expectations between the team of consultants and CCC as implementing agency. (Reports from AJArceo)

3 SEAMEO centers co-organize regional food safety seminar

BOGOR, Indonesia—Twenty-five representatives of the agriculture and health ministries, agriculture universities, and the private sector from six Southeast Asian countries discussed food safety principles and ways forward in the seminar-workshop *ASEAN 2015: Strengthening the Regional Food Safety System* held here on 2-6 June 2014.

SEARCA organized the event together with Regional Center for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP) and Regional Center for Food and Nutrition (RECFON), both Indonesia-based centers of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).

The event is a cooperative undertaking among three SEAMEO centers in the same spirit of regional cooperation espoused by ASEAN as it supports the region's moving towards One ASEAN Economic Community, said Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director in his opening remarks read by Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management.

Dr. Bambang Purwantara, BIOTROP Director, said in his welcome remarks that increased regulatory cooperation and convergence within ASEAN is essential, along with strong governance structures to enforce food standards consistently, fairly, and

predictably. Dr. Drupadi Dillon, RECFON Director, added that regional centers and members of the ASEAN community are challenged with the need for a regional food safety regulatory framework in the face of divergent capacity among member states in promoting and controlling compliance with food safety standards and regulations.

The five-day seminar-workshop was designed for participants from government agencies involved in formulating food safety policies, standards, and regulatory procedures, including those from food industries (production/manufacturing), consumer groups, and the academe. It aimed to enable participants to (1) demonstrate an enhanced appreciation of the underlying principles in the liberalization of and specific arrangements/agreements in food trade; (2) identify capacity- and institution-building programs essential to managing and controlling compliance with voluntary and mandatory food safety standards and regulations; and (3) identify regional, national, and sectoral bodies and agencies engaged in food safety programs and formulate mechanisms for effective networking with and among these organizations.

Led by Dr. Maria Concepcion C. Lizada, Professor Emeritus at the University of the Philippines and SEARCA Senior Fellow, the resource persons



Dr. Raphael Duboz, CIRAD researcher, explains how a participatory technique called "companion modelling," which supports CIRAD's one health approach, may be applied to food safety.

included 21 food safety regulators and experts from the agriculture and health ministries of Thailand and Indonesia, universities in Vietnam and Indonesia, and private sector leaders in the region and in Indonesia. Knowledge partners included the French Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD), Food Industry Asia (FIA) and ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance (AFBA), and the Indonesian Food and Beverage Alliance (GAPPMI). (MCHCadiz)



Organizers, resource persons, and participants of the regional seminar at SEAMEO BIOTROP in Bogor, Indonesia.

SEAMEO-Australia Education Links Award now open

Nationals of the 11 member countries of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) may now apply for the *SEAMEO-Australia Education Links Award 2014*, which recognizes and rewards innovative projects or proposals that showcase education cooperation between Australia and Southeast Asia.

Eligible entries could be capacity development for teachers, support for development of curriculum and educational materials, research consortium, advocacy and networking, media collaboration, or community-based development work. However, proposals should not be activities that may be supported by the Australian Government's "Australia Awards" such as scholarships or research in Australia.

The award is a joint initiative of SEAMEO and the Government of Australia to promote education links between SEAMEO and Southeast Asia and beyond.

The closing date of application is 6 March 2015. For more information, visit www.seameo.org/seameo-australia-award.

Biotech for food security forums gather policymakers, media practitioners

HANOI, Vietnam—Policymakers and media practitioners from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam (CLMV), and the Philippines gathered in two parallel learning events held here on 26-27 May 2014 to discuss and get updated on crop biotechnology developments in the region.

Spearheaded by SEARCA, the *11th Policy Roundtable on Building Capacities for Agricultural Competitiveness in Transition Southeast Asia* focused on “Modern Biotechnology for Food Security in a Climate Change Scenario and ASEAN Integration” while the *Regional Workshop for Media Practitioners* centered on “Communicating Biotechnology for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture.”

The state and commitment of CLMV in developing and regulating modern biotechnology products were discussed in the policy roundtable. Also tackled were the impacts of biotechnology on agriculture, food security, and poverty in the region. Possible areas for collaboration in the development of biotechnology products as adaptation strategy for climate change were also explored. The policy roundtable was facilitated

by Dr. Saturnina C. Halos, Chair, Biotechnology Advisory Team, Department of Agriculture, Philippines. The participants were representatives of Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia; Ministry of Science and Technology, Lao PDR; Food Security Working Group, Myanmar; and Institute of Agricultural Genetics, Vietnam.

On the other hand, the media workshop was a venue for media practitioners in CLMV and the Philippines to share their experiences on how biotechnology is reported in their respective countries. It also imparted lessons for more accurate and science-based biotech reporting. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Rhodora R. Aldemita, Senior Program Officer, International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), and Ms. Maria Monina Cecilia A. Villena, Special Project Coordinator, SEARCA Biotechnology Information Center (BIC), and attended by print, TV, and online journalists from five countries.

Modern biotechnology brings hope to the challenge of feeding a growing population amidst widespread poverty and a changing climate

scenario, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said in his opening remarks delivered by Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management. He also cited the importance of unbiased, evidence-based reporting through the media that would stir the interest of key stakeholders, especially the policymakers, to look deeper into the technology’s nuances and potentials in achieving food security in the region.

A study on the economic and environmental benefits of biotech crops was presented by Mr. Graham Brookes, Fellow at PG Economics, United Kingdom. He said insect-resistant technology has delivered high yield and increased productivity and return to farmers. Herbicide-tolerant technology helped mostly in the reduction of farm costs (no tillage) and contributed to greenhouse gas (GHG) emission savings. Both technologies have also contributed to increasing world production in all four major biotech crops (i.e., soybean, corn, cotton, canola).

In his presentation, Dr. Muhammad Herman, Senior Researcher, Indonesian Center for Agricultural Biotechnology and Genetic Resources Research and Development (ICABIOGRAD), explained the need for modern biotech. He said with the unfavorable effects of climate change in agriculture, modern biotechnology is a highly beneficial tool in tackling problems that cannot be addressed by conventional plant breeding such as acquiring some specific desired crop traits (e.g., resistance to pests or diseases) needed to adapt to the changing climate.

These back-to-back activities were co-organized by SEARCA along with ISAAA, CropLife Asia, AGBiotech Vietnam, and the Agricultural Genetics Institute (AGI) of the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences. (SMMercado)



Participants, resource persons, and organizers of the policy roundtable and media workshop. (Photo courtesy of HNTV)

5 Southeast Asians awarded SEARCA Professorial Chair

In April 2014, the SEARCA Regional Professorial Chair was awarded to five outstanding academics. Recognized for their contribution to agricultural research and development were a Malaysian and four Filipinos.

The awardees, their institutional affiliation, and the title of their public lecture are as follows:

- Dr. Mohd. Razi Ismail, Senior Professor and Deputy Director, Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), “Managing Plants under Climatic Stress: A Challenge for Food Security”
- Dr. Victor B. Asio, Professor of Soil Science and Dean, College of Agriculture and Food Science, Visayas State University (VSU), Philippines, “Bio-physical Characteristics and Sustainable Management of Marginal Uplands in the Philippines”
- Dr. Orville L. Bondoc, Professor of Animal Breeding at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), “Organic Livestock Farming and Breeding towards Food Security of Smallholder Farmers in the Tropics”
- Dr. Virginia C. Cuevas, Professor of Botany at UPLB, “Ecological Succession in Areas Covered by Mine Tailings in Mankayan, Benguet”
- Dr. Dinah Pura T. Depositario, Associate Professor at the UPLB College of Economics and Management, “Climate Change Adaptation Strategies of Philippine Agribusiness Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)”

The award harks back to 1974 when the SEARCA Professorial Chair was given only to outstanding UPLB faculty. It was expanded in the early 2000s to other campuses in the UP System and further expanded to Southeast Asian universities in 2011. It recognizes exemplary Southeast Asian academics who have made significant contributions in the field of agriculture and related sciences. The award carries with it a US\$5,000 endowment.

As SEARCA gears up for a new strategic five-year agenda, its Regional Professorial Chair now recognizes academics who have championed inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development through instruction, research, and extension activities in their respective countries and in the region. (JSLaranas)

Southeast Asian primer series authors convene anew

MANILA, Philippines—Fourteen authors of the second edition of the 11-volume *Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Primer (SAADP) Series* gathered on 10-11 June 2014 at Dusit Thani Manila. They come from universities, ministries, nongovernment organizations, and development agencies in their respective countries. Among them was Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) of the Philippines, who is the principal author of the Philippines volume.

In the a workshop meeting organized by SEARCA, publisher of the SAADP Series, the authors discussed their progress in preparing the primers and identified common issues, challenges, and opportunities. Lessons were drawn from each country's experiences in developing the country reports, and specific recommendations and strategies to address the issues were put forth. These are all inputs to the second edition, which focuses on cross-cutting agricultural and rural development issues in the region (e.g.,

food security, self-sufficiency, rural poverty, climate impacts on agriculture) within the context of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC 2015). The theme of the new edition is *Policy Reforms and Institutional Innovations in Agriculture: Experiences, Impacts, and Lessons*.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said the integrated volumes on each country will be one of the Center's modest contributions to AEC 2015. He also gladly noted that one primer is ready to be published, while most of the others are in the final stages of technical review.

Dr. Geronimo M. Collado, SEARCA Senior Fellow and agribusiness strategy and development policy consultant, and Dr. Flordeliza A. Lantican, Professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Economics and Management and agricultural marketing and price analysis specialist, served as resource persons at the two-day workshop. (HMCustodio)



Philippine Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and National Economic and Development Authority Director-General Arsenio M. Balisacan (front row, third from left) joined his fellow authors of the 2nd edition of the *Southeast Asian Agriculture and Development Primer (SAADP)* series in a meeting-workshop convened by SEARCA on 10-11 June 2014. SEARCA's top officials, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (front row, third from right), SEARCA Director, and Dr. Virginia C. Cardenas (front row, center), SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, also attended the workshop, while Dr. Geronimo Collado (second from right) and Dr. Flordeliza Lantican (rightmost), served as resource persons.

SEARCA urged to do more inter- and transdisciplinary research

SEARCA, its scholars and other grantees should implement more interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary food security projects.

This was the key recommendation of Dr. Dinah Pura T. Depositario, Department Chair for Agribusiness Management and Entrepreneurship of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Economics and Management and SEARCA Adjunct Fellow, who conducted the *Meta-Analysis of SEARCA's Food Security Initiatives* when she presented the study's results to the SEARCA management and program staff on 8 May 2014.

To complement and facilitate this new approach, Dr. Depositario suggested the conduct of training courses that will enhance the skills of current and potential interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary project leaders and researchers. She added that

outstanding frameworks and models that could be replicated and up-scaled may be identified by reviewing previous and current interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research projects of the Center.

She discussed in her paper titled "SEARCA Research Thrusts and Programs through the Years: The Way towards Food Security," which describes the evolution and paradigm shift of SEARCA's research thrusts and programs from 1969 to 2012. The emphasis was on how food security was mainstreamed in the Center's research initiatives through the years—from being discipline-based, to multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, and shifting towards transdisciplinary research in recent years.

The meta-analysis examined all the food security-related projects and activities conducted

by SEARCA from 2000 to 2012. Dr. Depositario analyzed trends and patterns exhibited in the initiatives, drew insights and lessons from the research results and outputs, and identified research gaps in the Center's capacity development and knowledge management activities.

During the presentation, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, stressed that the study's recommendations can be used to pin down specific topics that SEARCA needs to concentrate on in the next five years, and in so doing, fill the gaps in the food security continuum that Dr. Depositario uncovered in the meta-analysis.

He also discussed how SEARCA can establish institutional linkages on food security with other strategic partners, involving scholars in collaborative research programs on food security. (HMCustodio/AKMerep)

SEARCA joins global forum on building resilience for food, nutrition security

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia—Represented by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., Center Director and two officials, SEARCA tuned in to global discourse on resilience for food and nutrition security at the sixth conference of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) toward the latter's 2020 Vision "family" of conferences that explore emerging food policy issues to inform, influence, and catalyze action. The *Conference on Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security* took place here on 15-17 May 2014 with more than 800 participants from 75 countries.

The conference discussed a wide range of topics toward helping people, communities, and countries cope with and recover from shocks like extreme weather events, natural disasters, financial crises, food price spikes, emerging diseases, and contaminated foods.

The global meeting had 12 plenary sessions including the inaugural session, 15 parallel sessions, 21 parallel side events, 17 rapid-fire presentations, and a knowledge fair that featured various types of publications, 33 videos, and e-posters by 66 contributors. It distributed 19 commissioned briefs covering the various topics of the conference, and produced nine papers and additional resources found in the conference website www.2020resilience.ifpri.info/.

IFPRI is the food policy research agency of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and is based in Washington, D.C. Its 2020 Vision is a world where every person has access to sufficient food to sustain a healthy and productive life, where malnutrition is absent, and where food originates from efficient, effective, and low-cost food systems that are compatible with sustainable use of natural resources. (MCHCadiz)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, at the *Conference on Building Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security*.

Australian Minister visits SEARCA

Mr. David Dutton, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Australia to the Philippines, visited SEARCA on 25 June 2014 to know more about SEARCA's programs and activities, especially those supported by the Government of Australia. He was accompanied by Ms. Cecilia O. Honrado, Philippine Manager of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

In a briefing led by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, and Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management, Mr. Dutton was given an overview of SEARCA's programs and activities and the Center's Tenth Five-year Plan which covers fiscal years 2014/2015-2019/2020. Also present at the briefing were Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, Program Head for Graduate Scholarship; Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Acting Program Head for Research and Development; Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay, Unit Head for Knowledge Resources; and Ms. Maria Monina Cecilia A. Villena, Coordinator for Special Projects.

Mr. Dutton was also apprised of SEARCA's past collaborations with various Australian institutions, including several research projects with ACIAR, the



Mr. David Dutton (center), Minister and Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Australia to the Philippines, said the Australian Government is interested in supporting initiatives in the areas of economic policy and infrastructure such as the ACIAR-funded project implemented by SEARCA that produced the book he is holding, which is titled *Strengthening Markets of High Value Fruits and Vegetables in Mindanao*. Looking on were Dr. Cardenas (left), Ms. Honrado (right) and other SEARCA officers (not in photo).

latest of which is the completed *Transport Policy Study: Promoting Efficiency and Productivity of Flow of Goods – A Focus on the Transportation Needs of Mindanao*. Currently, SEARCA is implementing an *Overseas Study Mission of Livestock R&D Institutions* which has Australia as one of the four countries to be visited in benchmarking the Philippine Carabao Center with similarly situated institutions in other countries (See related story on page 12).



For his part, Mr. Dutton explained that the Australian Government's new aid policy focuses more on supporting countries in the Asia-Pacific, with emphasis on economic growth to raise living standards and improve people's lives. He said Australia would develop new initiatives to support economic growth in the Philippines including in the areas of economic policy and infrastructure. Noting SEARCA's regional focus, Mr. Dutton said the Center may also be able to tie up with Australia's regional programs. He also shared that 2014 is the 40th anniversary of the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relationship, and as such is an important year for Australia to support initiatives in ASEAN.

There was a discussion of prospects on how SEARCA may tap from Australia's expertise and resources, including learning events and pilots toward tying in the link among practice, science, and policy in "Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD)," the overarching theme of SEARCA's Tenth Five-Year Plan.

Mr. Dutton was also briefed about the upcoming *2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia (ARD2014)* with an invitation for the Australian Government to support the knowledge event. The Australian Government, through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), was one of the co-sponsors of the first international conference on ARD convened by SEARCA in 2005. (LLDDomingo)

Improving corn insurance enhances resilience to climate change

Next to rice, corn is the most important crop in the Philippines. About 14 million Filipinos prefer white corn as their main staple, while yellow corn accounts for about 50 percent of livestock mixed feeds. Based on data from the Department of Agriculture (DA), some 600,000 farm households depend on corn as a major source of livelihood. Corn is also processed into high-value products such as cornstarch, corn syrup, corn oil, gluten, and snack foods.

According to the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation, from 1982 to 2012, pests, diseases, droughts, floods, and typhoons wreaked havoc on crops resulting in cumulative losses of about Php7.09 billion for corn farmers. Crop insurance, a risk management tool, is key to farmers' financial stability, enabling them to continue production despite severe weather and other challenges that impact their business.

In view of this, SEARCA implemented a study titled *Improving the Corn Insurance Program to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change*, which analyzed how good agricultural practices (GAP) adoption among corn farmers could be implemented to complement the agricultural insurance system in the Philippines. It was led by Dr. Jose M. Yorobe, Jr., Associate Professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Economics and Management.

The study identified existing and matured GAP technologies related to pest and disease resilience in corn production, determined the extent of farmers' awareness of these technologies, and analyzed uptake patterns. The psychological, socioeconomic, and demographic determinants of GAP adoption were identified. Also assessed were the corn farmers' perception and level of awareness of crop insurance system mechanisms. The study identified policy recommendations and intervention measures to improve adoption of GAP and effectiveness of the agricultural insurance program.

Selected as study sites were towns in the top corn-producing provinces in the country, namely: Pangasinan (Alcala and Bayambang), Isabela (Cauayan City and Ilagan), and Bukidnon (Malaybalay City and Don Carlos). A total of 426 corn farmers were interviewed, only half of whom were insured.

The study found that credit and farmers' organizations had positive and major effects on crop insurance adoption. The corn crop insurance market grew when services were directed to borrowing farmers and other members of farmers' organizations. Lower premiums and more reliable information on the insurance products also sped up insurance adoption.

However, the study found that with the promotion of GAP, the possibility of farmers availing of insurance decreases. GAP becomes a substitute for insurance as a risk management tool as most farmers acknowledged the use of recommended technologies as a scheme to cope with pest, disease damage, and natural calamities.

The presence of moral hazard was also evident, considering that corn insurance showed a negative influence on the extent of GAP adoption. The presence of information asymmetry—a condition in which certain relevant information is known to some but not to all parties involved—causes insurance premiums to increase. The study showed that “currently, farmers are not that affected due to the subsidy given by the government. The subsidy, however, is not sustainable due to the high variability of fund allocation for this purpose. The insurance market is supply driven and highly demand inelastic. To increase the demand for insurance, premium rates need to be greatly reduced.”

Policies designed to reduce the premium subsidy of the government and provide resiliency to climate change can strengthen the extent of GAP adoption. With this, farmers tend to be less risk-averse. The corn crop insurance provides a temporary mechanism for farmers to be resilient under erratic environmental conditions while GAP adoption is improved. (JMYorobe/PMLuis)

Snapshots



Ms. Hoonae Kim (second from left), Director, and Mr. Ganesh Thapa (third from left), Regional Economist, both of the Asia and the Pacific Division of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, Italy, listen to Dr. Percy E. Sajise (leftmost), Honorary Research Fellow, Bioversity International; Adjunct Professor, School of Environmental Science and Management, University of the Philippines Los Baños; and SEARCA Senior Fellow, who accompanied to IFAD on 20 May 2014 the visiting delegation from SEARCA led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (rightmost), Director; Ms. Adoracion T. Robles (second from right), Executive Coordinator and Officer in Charge, Management Services Unit; and Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (not in photo), Program Head for Knowledge Management.



Her Excellency Malayvieng Sakonhnhom (bottom right), Ambassador of Lao PDR to the Philippines, invited SEARCA, represented by Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (bottom left), Program Head for Graduate Scholarship, and Ms. Jesselle S. Laranas (upper left), Program Specialist for Graduate Specialist, to a luncheon meeting on 10 April 2014 at Dusit Thani Manila to extend her gratitude to SEARCA, and particularly to the Graduate Scholarship Department for the support given to Lao scholars in the Philippines. Four out of the six Lao students enrolled at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) who graduated in academic year 2013/2014 were SEARCA scholars. Also present at the meeting were three Lao scholars of SEARCA, namely: Mr. Phansamay Inphomma (upper right), and Mr. Bounxou Xayxana and Mr. Kolakanh Chanthavongsa (not in the photo).



Dr. Dindo Campilan (right), Director for Asia, International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), visited SEARCA on 27 June 2014 to explore possible areas of collaboration between CIAT and SEARCA. He was received by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (left), SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, and SEARCA program heads and program specialists (not in photo). As a first collaboration, they discussed the possibility of CIAT convening a session in the 2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia (ARD2014) set on 12-13 November 2014 which SEARCA is spearheading.



Ms. Elaine Tan (center), Executive Director of the ASEAN Foundation (AF), shared the Foundation's priority on projects that support the ASEAN integration and community building process with Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (right), SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development, and Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management, during their visit to the AF headquarters in Jakarta, Indonesia on 2 July 2014.

SEARCA Summer Outing 2014



Clockwise from top left:

- (1) SEARCAns at the entrance to Mövenpick Hotel on Mactan Island, Cebu, Philippines—the luxurious venue of the SEARCA Summer Outing held on 7-9 April 2014;
- (2) Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay lounge at the hotel lobby upon arrival;
- (3) SEARCAns at Sutukil Restaurant on Mactan Island where the Center treated its staff to dinner on the first night;
- (4) SEARCAns hang out on the hotel grounds;
- (5) SEARCAns gather for a souvenir photo at the hotel;
- (6) SEARCAns snorkel off their hired boat anchored a good distance from Mactan Island;
- (7) Adventurous SEARCAns “skywalk” at the Crown Regency Hotel and Towers in Cebu City.

Preliminary findings of GIZ-ASEAN project presented

BANGKOK, Thailand—The ASEAN Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Research Development (ATWGARD) discussed the project *ASEAN Network on Promotion of Climate Resilience in Rice and Other Crops* in its 2nd Special Workshop held on 17 June 2014 at Rama Gardens Hotel here.

The project is funded by GIZ through the ASEAN-German Programme on Response to Climate Change (GAP-CC). SEARCA was commissioned to carry out the project in seven ASEAN Member States (AMS). This is in support of the initiative proposed by Thailand and adopted by ATWGARD, which aims to advance the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) and the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC).

The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) GmbH and SEARCA presented the preliminary findings of the national case studies of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam on climate resilience of rice, corn, and cassava.

The workshop also aimed to share information, identify, and exchange climate change adaptation best practices among the AMS; identify regional areas of collaboration; and provide technical input and exchange among the AMS. It brought together the ATWGARD focal persons from the aforementioned countries and Brunei Darussalam. Thailand's Department of Agriculture, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), hosted the workshop in coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC).

Dr. Felino P. Lansigan, SEARCA Regional Agricultural Value Chain/Climate Resilience Expert; Ms. Myriam Fernando, Senior Advisor, GAP-CC; and Mr. Michael Sheinkman of the Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFA) served as resources persons.

In his presentation on the consolidated regional findings, Dr. Lansigan noted commonalities on climate change adaptation (CCA) good practices among the AMS, namely: use of adaptive planting calendar; planting improved and stress tolerant varieties and technologies/ techniques for water use efficiency (e.g. alternate wetting and drying or AWD); crop diversification, including changing crops/commodities; and climate risk management via insurance.

Dr. Lansigan recommended the following CCA areas for regional collaboration that the climate resilience network may consider working on upon completion of the project in 2015:

- Promotion of CCA information sharing and technology transfer within and among AMS
- CCA integration with other farm production activities
- Implementation of capacity building programs for heads and planners, trainers, and local stakeholders
- Conduct of action research and development (R&D) on CCA, including action planning and crop production inputs
- Establishment of CCA R&D collaboration partnership with dialogue partners and international organizations

Ms. Imelda L. Batangantang, Program Associate, and Ms. Kristine Joy S. Villagracia, Regional Knowledge Platform Coordinator, both of SEARCA's Project Development and Management Department, provided support during the event. (KJSVillagracia)



The delegates to the 2nd Special ATWGARD Workshop, held on 17 June 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand.

National consultative meetings held

Prior to the 2nd Special ATWGARD Workshop, ASEAN, GIZ, SEARCA, and the Centre for Climate Risk and Opportunity Management in Southeast Asia Pacific (CCROMSEAP-IPB) of the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) convened Indonesia's 1st National Consultative Meeting for the *ASEAN Network on Promoting Climate Resilience of Rice and Other Crops*, a project under GAP-CC on 3 April 2014 at IPB, Bogor, Indonesia. CCROMSEAP works closely with the Indonesian Center for Food Crops Research and Development

(ICFORD) in conducting national consultations and sectoral studies. ICFORD (now known as Directorate of Cereals) serves as the focal agency for the ATWGARD.

A key activity of the GAP-CC/GIZ-funded project to support the ATWGARD regional initiatives, the meeting gathered experts on value chain, agricultural technology and innovation, and climate impacts on food production system, some of whom are representatives from GIZ; CCROMSEAP-IPB; MOA; Ministry of Environment, Indonesia; Southeast Asia Food and Agriculture Science and Technology Center (SEAFST); DuPont Pioneer-Indonesia; Fakultas Matematika

dan Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam (FMIPA); and the Indonesia Institute of Sciences.

Dr. Perdinan of CCROMSEAP-IPB, who serves as the National Team Leader for Indonesia, facilitated the meeting and presented the value chain maps of rice and maize, including the potential impacts of climate change in the respective sectors. The participants also shared good practices, technologies, and innovation in rice and maize production. Dr. Rizaldi Boer, CCROMSEAP Executive Director, and Ms. Imelda Bacudo, GAP-CC Consultant, provided technical inputs.

National consultative/ to page 11

Eco-town project reports presented to stakeholders

MANILA, Philippines—The Steering Committee of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)-funded project *TA-8111 PHI: Climate Resilience and Green Growth in the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL): Demonstrating the Eco-town Framework* accepted the baseline information and vulnerability assessment reports presented to the Committee; stakeholders from concerned local government units (LGUs); and officials of national government agencies. Presented on 14 April 2014 in Malacañang, the reports included sectoral vulnerability assessments on health, agriculture, water, forestry, and roads and bridges.

Represented at the meeting were the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Science and Technology (DOST), Interior and Local Government (DILG), and Energy (DOE); National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA); Philippine Rural Development Foundation; and University of Rizal System (URS).

SEARCA, along with ERGONS Project Marketing Consultants, has been commissioned by ADB to conduct the project, while the Climate Change Commission (CCC) of the Philippines is the designated implementing agency.



Mr. Elmer Mercado, Project Leader, presents the summary of baseline information on UMRBPL

CCC Secretary Mary Ann Lucille L. Sering echoed the instructions of President Benigno S. Aquino III to scale up the initiatives between 2014 and 2016. She said the President wants any plan or program to be based, at the very least, on a vulnerability assessment.

Secretary Sering noted that the synergy in urban and rural settings in UMRBPL is interesting and encouraged the LGUs to seriously reflect on the results presented because “anything that has got to do with climate change should be at the LGU level.” She said it is up to the LGUs to integrate the recommendations of the study in their respective Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs).

Dr. Ancha Srinivasan, ADB Principal Climate Change Specialist, emphasized that it is important to build on what has been learned, overcome failures if there are any, and improve from there. He asked the LGUs and all other project stakeholders to provide feedback on whether expectations are being met and suggest improvements so that the consulting team can take action accordingly and incorporate them in the reports. He also said

there is another ADB project that will expand the scope to other watersheds.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr., SEARCA Director, thanked CCC and ADB for entrusting the eco-town project to the SEARCA-ERGONS team. He reiterated the significance of the project and remarked that the reports provide science-based information on the vulnerability of and risks faced by UMRBPL. He said SEARCA considers climate change as a very important focus over the years to come as it affects livelihood, food security, health, the overall well-being of people, and sustainable development of the country.

Mr. Elmer Mercado, Project Leader, said the reports are part of the integral components of the eco-town framework. He explained that there are prerequisite activities to help identify possible mitigation and adaptation measures, guide decision making and policy making, and rationalize development planning down to the local and grassroots levels in response to the projected effects and risks brought about by climate change. (JRYAla)

National consultative/ from page 10



The participants of the 1st Indonesia National Consultative Meeting held on 3 April 2014 at the IPB International Convention Center in Bogor, Indonesia.

The Indonesia meeting was followed by the *2nd Philippine National Consultative Meeting* held on 14 April 2014 at SEARCA and organized by GIZ, SEARCA, and the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR). Presented at the meeting were the initial findings and outputs of the case study on climate change-related threats and impacts and best practices on climate change adaptation focusing on rice and maize in the Philippines. Dr. Teodoro S. Solsoloy, DA-BAR Assistant Director

and ATWGARD focal person for the Philippines, briefed the participants on the ATWGARD regional initiatives.

The participants comprised agriculture and climate change experts from the DA units including the Regional Integrated Agricultural Research Centers (RIARCS), DA-Corn Program, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech); University of the

Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), GIZ Philippines; WorldFish; and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Philippines. They presented good practice case studies for climate adaptation of rice and maize that can be up-scaled into meaningful adaptation responses across Southeast Asia as outputs of a workshop facilitated by Dr. Lansigan and Dr. Romeo Labios, National Focal Person for the Philippines. (Reports from KJS Villagrancia)

Top, mid-level execs attend SEARCA forum on ASEAN agriculture and dev't

Twenty senior leaders and mid-level managers from higher education institutions, local government units, ministries of agriculture, and private and nongovernmental organizations in nine Southeast Asian countries participated in the SEARCA Executive Forum *Leaders in ASEAN Agriculture and Development: Levelling up Leaders in Public and Private Agriculture* held on 16-20 June 2014 at the Center's headquarters. They are from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, welcomed the participants and noted the relevance of the forum in light of dramatic changes in agriculture and rural development in the ASEAN region because of a complex mix of social, economic, and environmental concerns. He added that at the forefront of facing these challenges and spurring agricultural development are leaders like themselves. He expressed hope that the forum will open more avenues for high-level discussions among agricultural leaders.

Dr. Paul S. Teng, Dean of Graduate Studies and Professional Learning at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore and SEARCA Senior Fellow, led the forum as its Technical Coordinator. The forum featured lectures on leadership and learning syndicates, which focused on the new elements in the agriculture-development landscape, ASEAN landscape for agriculture vis-à-vis the global agriculture landscape, and new leadership modes. The forum also focused on the role of agriculture and aquaculture in relation to

government goals, which include sustaining rural development, conserving natural resources in the environment, achieving competitive agricultural imports, and ensuring food security for rural and urban populations.

The executive forum was designed to build a community of ASEAN leaders in agriculture who are empowered with knowledge on key contemporary issues in agriculture and food security to meet the challenges posed by a dynamic agri-food landscape. The forum also provided current knowledge on important topics that influence the global agriculture landscape with respect to sustainable development, trade, and livelihoods, as well as a comprehensive understanding of factors that shape the agriculture landscape in the ASEAN region. A change management paradigm of leadership beyond best practice based on complexity theory was also introduced to the participants.

Other resource persons at the forum were Dr. Ng Pak Tee of NTU, Philippine Agriculture Undersecretary Jose C. Reaño, Dr. David Robert Morpeth of Alltech-Philippines, Dr. Mark Rosegrant of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Dr. Rolando T. Dy of University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) in the Philippines, Dr. Randy Hautea of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), Dr. Andrew Powell of Singapore-based Asia Biobusiness, Mr. Roger F. Barroga of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Dr. Larry Wong of the Myanmar's Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD), Dr. Siang Hee Tan of CropLife Asia, Dr. David Johnson of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Dr. Larry N. Digal of the University of the Philippines Mindanao, Dr. Roehlano M. Briones of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), and Ms. Linda Leong Quek of LQ Consult in Singapore. (MVPAranas)



Dr. David Robert Morpeth, General Manager of Alltech Philippines, and Mr. Jose M. Reaño, DA Undersecretary for Livestock, as panellists in an Agricultural Leadership Seminar during the executive forum.

SEARCA coordinates PCC study mission

SEARCA coordinated a study mission of for the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) from 29 June to 10 July 2014 in various parts of Australia. The mission enabled PCC officials to closely study various ways of genetic improvement of livestock, enterprise development/venture partnerships for livestock, R&D programs on livestock, and policies/regulatory and management framework of livestock development.

The PCC is mandated to conserve, propagate, and promote the carabao or native buffalo as a source of milk and meat as well as draft animal power and hide to benefit the rural farmers.

The PCC team who undertook the study mission comprised Dr. Arnel N. del Barrio, new PCC Executive Director; Dr. Liza G. Battad, Chief, Planning and Special Projects; Dr. Annabelle S.

Sarabia, Chief of Operations; Dr. Eric Palacpac, Chief of Knowledge Resource Management and R&D Coordinator; Dr. Claro N. Mingala, Scientist and Lead Researcher for Animal Health; Dr. Ester B. Flores, Project Development Officer IV; and Dr. Libertado C. Cruz, Technical Adviser. Ms. Nova A. Ramos, SEARCA Program Specialist for Knowledge Management, served as study mission coordinator.

In Armidale, the group visited the Dairy Express Herd Recording Service and the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI). In Sydney, they went to the School of Environmental and Rural Science of University of New England and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA). Institutions visited in Canberra included the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Rural Industries Research and Development

Corporation (RIRDC), and the Department of Agriculture.

Participants gained a wider perspective of how the industry livestock system in Australia operates, particularly its R&D and extension components, and how public-private partnerships work for the economic development of smallholder farmers. Some best practices in livestock development and management may be adapted to the Philippine livestock smallholder setting (e.g., cooperative research center).

The study mission was the third in a series organized by SEARCA, which aimed to expose the participants to programs in advanced countries so they could learn from the best practices in livestock development and management. (NARamos)

4th SFRT Grantees Forum held

HANOI, Vietnam—The Vietnam National University of Agriculture (VNUA, formerly known as Hanoi University of Agriculture) hosted on 28 May 2014 the *4th Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT) Forum* organized by SEARCA.

Ms. Nguyen Thi Bich Thuy, VNUA Director for International Cooperation, welcomed the attendees, while Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director.

Four Vietnamese researchers presented the results of their SFRT-funded projects. The research titles and name of SFRT grantees are as follows:

- “Impacts of Climate Change on Aquaculture in Phu Vang District, Thua Thien Province, Vietnam” – Dr. Le Van An, Vice Rector, Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAUF), represented by Dr. Mac Nhu Binh of HUAUF Faculty of Fisheries
- “Rice Supply and Security in terms of Sea Level Rise, Conversion of Rice Land to Industrial Land and Population Growth in the Red River Delta, Vietnam” – Dr. Nguyen Van Song, Deputy Dean, and Ms. Do Thi Diep, Lecturer, both of VNUA Faculty of Economics and Rural Development
- “Management of Coastal Resources for Sustainable Livelihood of Small-scale Fisheries in Coastal Area – The case of Phuoc Hai Town, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province, Vietnam” – Dr. Tran Thi Ut, Director, Center for Sustainable Development
- “Evaluating Sustainability of Forest Governance in a Central Province of Vietnam” – Dr. Ngo Tri Dung, Manager, Department of Resources Conservation Management, Consultative and Research Center on Natural Resources Management (CORENAM), represented by Dr. Tran Nam Thang, Manager, CORENAM Department of Climate Change and Disaster Mitigation

In giving an overview about SFRT, Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel, SEARCA Program Specialist for Research and Development, said the forum enables the researchers to share their research results with the public. It also served as a venue to encourage more submissions of proposals for funding under SFRT so that more innovative projects can be supported by SEARCA up to a maximum of US\$15,000.

The SFRT provides limited start-up funds to enhance the chances of the selected research or training projects to secure long-term support from donor agencies. (LLDDomingo)

4 SEARCA staff go on exchange visits

Four SEARCA staff went to Brunei Darussalam and Singapore on a staff exchange visit to other centers of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), SEARCA’s mother organization. Their five-day travel, from 27 April to 1 May 2014, was under the SEAMEO staff exchange program.

Mr. Eugene Philip S. Boone, General Services Administrator, led the SEARCA delegation. With him were Mr. Gaspar L. de Chavez, Carpenter; and Mr. Dennis Nelson P. Dizon, Electrical and Equipment Assistant, all from the General Services Unit (GSU); and Mr. Lamberto N. Mariano, Facilities and Equipment Assistant, Facilities Management Unit (FMU).

They visited the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VOCTECH) in Brunei Darussalam on 27-28 April and the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore on 30 April. At VOCTECH, they were briefed about the center and their specific concerns related to facilities and equipment management, and grounds and building maintenance. They also interacted with staff who perform functions similar to their own. At both VOCTECH and RELC, the group were given a tour of the center facilities. (LLDDomingo)



The SEARCA delegation on exchange visit composed of (from left) Mr. Lamberto N. Mariano, Mr. Dennis Nelson P. Dizon, Mr. Gaspar L. de Chavez, and Mr. Eugene Philip S. Boone pose with (from right) Dr. Paryono, Deputy Director for Professional Affairs; Mr. Haji Ali Husaine, Deputy Director for Administration; and Mr. Haji Shariffuddin bin Haji Mohd Salleh, Director, all of VOCTECH.

VOCTECH staff visit SEARCA



Four staff members from SEAMEO Regional Center for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VOCTECH) also visited SEARCA as part of the SEAMEO Staff Exchange Program to learn about the Center’s operations particularly in image building and community visibility as well as in facilities and grounds management and maintenance. They are Ms. Leanne Abdullah Lee (second from left), VOCTECH International House (VIH) Manager; Ms. Noorhayati Cynthia Abdullah (second from right), Teacher Education Specialist; Mr. Hj Mohd Suhaili Hj Abas (rightmost), Receptionist; and Mr. Saronni Haji Rashid (leftmost), Maintenance. With them in the photo is Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, holding an institutional token presented to him by the VOCTECH delegation. (LLDDomingo)

26 SEARCA scholars earn graduate degrees

Twenty-six SEARCA scholars completed their graduate programs (16 master's, 10 PhD) in academic year 2013/2014. Of this number, 19 earned their degrees at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), one at Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) in Indonesia, one at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), one at Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) in Japan, and four at the Ateneo de Manila University School of Government (ASoG) in the Philippines.

Of the scholars who graduated, four were supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), four by the Philippine Department of Agriculture, and one by Tokyo NODAI. The rest were fully funded by SEARCA.

The new SEARCA graduate alumni, their study posts, degree programs, and thesis/dissertation titles are as follows:

Cambodia

- Ms. Hor Rathna (UPLB/MS, food science), "Assessment of the Microbial Safety of Dried Snakehead (*Chanma micropeltes* cuvier) Fish from Two Small-scale Processors in Phnom Penh, Cambodia"

Indonesia

- Ms. Suci Wulandari (IPB/PhD, agro-industry), "Design of Risk Management Strategy for Pepper Agroindustry Investment"

Lao PDR

- Mr. Bounxou Xayxana (UPLB/MS, community development), "Community Organizing for Flood Risk Reduction in Xieng Ngeun District, Luang Prabang Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic"
- Mr. Keosangkhom Phommaseng (UPLB/MS, environmental science), "Water Quality Evaluation of Nam Xong River in Vangvieng District, Lao PDR"
- Ms. Nouansisavad Sombounsack (UPLB/MS, animal science), "Phenotypic Characterization and Development of Breeding Objectives for Meat Type Native Goats (*Capra hircus* L.) in the Philippines"
- Ms. Outhavy Vongmany (UPLB/MS, environmental science), "Assessment of the Flood Vulnerability and Adaptation of Rice Production System in Champhone District, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR"

Myanmar

- Ms. Kyi Mon Mon Ko (UPLB/MS, agronomy), "Agronomic and Physiological Responses of Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) under Different Water Management Systems, Fertilizer Types and Seedling Age"



On the day before their graduation, SEARCA scholars who earned their master's and PhD at UPLB pose with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (front row, sixth from right), Director; Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (front row, sixth from left), Program Head for Graduate Scholarship; Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (front row, third from right), Program Head for Knowledge Management; Dr. Editha C. Cedicol (front row, fifth from left), Graduate Scholarship Consultant; and Ms. Natividad P. Salazar (back row, second from left), Treasury Services Assistant, all of SEARCA.

- Ms. Myint Myint Soe (UPLB/PhD, entomology), "Superparasitism and Multiparasitism on Three Mango Leafhopper Species by Strepsipterans, *Callipharixenos philippines* Kathirithamby & McMahon (Callipharixenidae) and *Halictophagus fulmeki* (Hofeneder) (Halictophagidae)"
- Mr. Myo Win Maung (UPLB/MS, environmental science), "Climate Change Awareness and Farm Level Adaptation of Rainfed Farmers (Central Dry Zone) in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region, Myanmar"
- Ms. Nan Wutyi San (UPM/MS, agricultural economics), "Determinants of Technical Efficiency of Paddy Farms in Kayin State, Myanmar"

Philippines

- Mr. Florante Victor M. Balatico (UPLB/PhD, agricultural economics), "Economic Analysis of Poverty-Forest Dependence Link cum Conservation Initiatives of Rural Households in Selected Municipalities in the Province of Cagayan, Region 2, Philippines"
- Mr. Joselito F. Bernabe (ASoG/Master in Public Management), "Public-private Partnership (PPP) Strategies in Enhancing the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) Information System for Swine in CALABARZON (Region IV-A): Focus on Cavite and Rizal"
- Mr. Ernie C. Camacho (ASoG/Master in Public Management), "Mainstreaming Sustainable Agriculture: Strengthening Research and Extension Linkage"
- Ms. Zarlina B. Cuello (ASoG/Master in Public Management), "Organizational Capability, Performance and Institutional Capacity of People's Organization in the Development and

Management of Organic Agriculture Projects in Iloilo Province"

- Ms. Queenie Ann L. Curayag (UPLB/PhD, food science and technology), "Physico-Chemical Properties and Utilization of Flour and Starch from Selected Philippine Sweet Potato (*Ipomea batatas* Lam) Varieties"
- Mr. Peter James C. Icalia (UPLB/MS, animal science), "Phenotypic Characterization, Molecular Analysis, and Production System and Marketing Practices of Two Genetic Groups of Philippine Native Cattle (*Bos indicus* L.)"
- Ms. Karen Grace P. Jullado (UPLB/MS, agronomy), "Growth, Yield and Protein of Soybean (*Glycine max* L. Merr) in Response to Different Soil Organic Amendments"
- Mr. Joseph C. Manicad (ASoG/Master in Public Management), "Public-private Partnership (PPP) Strategies in Enhancing the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) Information System for Swine in CALABARZON (Region IV-A)"
- Ms. Emelyn S. Peñaranda (UPLB/PhD, environmental science), "Determinants of Payment for Environmental Services (PES) in Maasin Watershed Forest Reserve, Iloilo, Philippines"

Thailand

- Ms. Areerat Lunpha (UPLB/PhD, animal science), "Nutrient Digestibility and Growth Performance of Ruminants Fed with Mulberry (*Morus alba* L.) at Different Cutting Intervals"
- Mr. Cherdpong Kheerajit (UPLB/PhD, development communication), "Participatory

26 SEARCA scholars/ to page 15

IDRC-SEARCA fellowship now also open to Myanmar SEARCA scholar bags best paper in int'l confab

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada has approved the granting of scholarships to Myanmar nationals under the second cohort of the *Southeast Asian Upland Agriculture Fellowships* implemented by SEARCA. Myanmar is the fourth country to be covered by the fellowships project after Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam.

The IDRC-funded fellowships project provides opportunities to nationals of the selected countries to pursue master's programs in fields related to agriculture and food security in the uplands.

Scholars under the project are enrolled at Chiang Mai University, Kasetsart University, and Khon Kaen University, all in Thailand, and UPLB. A total of 53 scholarships are offered by the project, which runs from March 2012 to February 2017.

On 22-23 May 2014, the advisory committee of the fellowships project convened at SEARCA to review the previous year's accomplishments and

major events lined up in the current year. They also discussed the *Second Scholars Conference cum Fellowship Meeting* slated in December 2014 and evaluated Myanmar and Laotian applicants for the additional cohort.

The advisory committee comprises Dr. Vo Tong-Xuan, Rector, Tan Tao University, Vietnam; Dr. Mom Seng, Vice Rector for International Affairs, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia; Dr. Oscar B. Zamora, Vice Chancellor for Instruction, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Philippines; Dr. Prasit Wangpakapattanawong, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Science, Chiang Mai University, Thailand; Dr. Silinthone Sacklokham, Vice Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, National University of Laos, Lao PDR; and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director. All the members were present at the meeting, except for Dr. Saguiguit who was represented by Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Scholarship and the fellowships project leader. (LLDDomingo/JSLaranas)



Members of the advisory committee who attended the meeting were Dr. Vo Tong-Xuan (leftmost), Dr. Oscar B. Zamora (second from left), Dr. Silinthone Sacklokham (third from right), Dr. Mom Seng (second from right), and Dr. Prasit Wangpakapattanawong (rightmost). Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (center) represented Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.

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- Development Communication for Sustainable Natural Resources Management in the Cultivated Areas in Ratchaburi Province"
- Ms. Pattaraporn Poommarin (UPLB/PhD, animal science), "The Effects of Partial Replacement of Corn (*Zea mays* L.) with Dried Cashew Nut (*Anacardium occidentale* L.) Testa on Energy Utilization, Nutrient Digestibility, Growth Performance and Carcass Characteristics of Finishing Pigs"
 - Mr. Stanan Phanapaipong (UPLB/MS, extension education), "Extension Support System in Asparagus Contract Farming, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand"

Vietnam

- Mr. Hoang Ha Anh (UPLB/MS, environmental science), "Vulnerability Assessment of Rice Farming Provinces to Climate Change in

Mekong River Delta and Red River Delta in Vietnam"

- Mr. Mac Nhu Binh (UPLB/PhD, environmental science), "Sustainability of Polyculture Model for Small Aquaculture Farmers in Phu Vang District, Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam"
- Mr. Tran Quang Trung (Tokyo NODAI/PhD, food and nutrition), "The Influence of Rural Investment Climate Factors on Business Operations of Agricultural Firms: Evidence from Vietnam"

Except for Ms. Peñaranda, a SEARCA PhD research scholar who received funding support only for her PhD dissertation, and Mr. Tran Quang Trung, who obtained his PhD under the Tokyo NODAI-SEARCA Scholarship for Dissertation Doctorate Program, all the scholars received support for their full graduate programs.

BANGKOK, Thailand—Ms. Trang Tran Hoai, a Vietnamese SEARCA scholar pursuing her master's in agricultural economics at Kasetsart University (KU), bested 50 others for the Best Paper award at the *International Conference on Trends in Multi-disciplinary Business and Economic Research* held on 27-28 March 2014 at Holiday Inn, Bangkok Silom.

Her winning paper is titled *Adoption of Aromatic Rice in Mekong Delta, Vietnam*, which is part of her master's thesis at KU.

A lecturer at Vietnam National University of Agriculture (formerly known as Hanoi Agricultural University), Ms. Hoai presented a paper that outlined the factors affecting the adoption of aromatic rice in Mekong Delta. Her study showed that adoption of aromatic rice in Vietnam is related to several factors, including extension contacts, demonstration participants, and support of private companies through seed supply and output contract. To improve aromatic rice adoption, Ms. Hoai recommended that demonstration participants and stable market price for aromatic rice be reinforced.

"I could not thank SEARCA enough for the support and encouragement," said Ms. Hoai who expects to complete her study program in July 2014. (JSLaranas)

In a simple send-off program for the graduating scholars at UPLB, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, reiterated that the Center is proud of them for completing their degree programs. He likewise reminded the new graduates that their bond with SEARCA does not end with the completion of their degree programs as they are now part of the SEARCA graduate alumni, who have formed country associations in almost all Southeast Asian countries.

Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Scholarship, said the new graduates are likewise considered SEARCA's ambassadors of goodwill. (LLDDomingo with report from JSLaranas)

DAAD-SEARCA scholars recognized in handover ceremony

MANILA, Philippines—Fifteen Southeast Asian graduate scholars from Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand studying at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) received their scholarship certificates from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for academic year 2013-2014 in a handover ceremony held on 20 May 2014 at the Embassy of Germany here.

His Excellency Thomas Ossowski, German Ambassador to the Philippines, officiated the handover ceremony. With him were Mr. Michael Fuchs, German Cultural Attaché and Ms. Janina Brill, DAAD Lecturer. Also present were SEARCA representatives, namely: Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, Deputy Director for Administration; Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, Program Head for Graduate Scholarship; and Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot, Program Specialist for Graduate Scholarship.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Ossowski, reminded the scholars of how important education is in the development of a nation, and how Germany, through the DAAD scholarship, has been able to contribute to the development of the Southeast Asian nations.

Ms. Brill shared that having been a DAAD scholar herself, she learned a lot from the experience, including an appreciation of another culture. She expressed her hope that the DAAD-SEARCA

scholars will gain much from the program the way she did.

SEARCA's partnership with DAAD, which started 37 years ago, is a resounding proof of how the Center values partnership in the pursuit of its mandates, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. SEARCA Director, said in his message read by Dr. Cardenas. He underscored the critical role that the DAAD-SEARCA scholars can take on to move Southeast Asia past the challenges of extreme poverty, continuously growing population, and dwindling natural resources.

"We need to continue building the region's human resources to face these challenges. We expect that the 15 scholars who will receive their SEARCA-DAAD scholarship grants today will keep this noble objective of making a difference in mind," Dr. Saguiguit said.

The 15 scholars, their home country, and degree programs are:

Cambodia

- Mr. Sambo Pheap, MS, soil science

Myanmar

- Ms. Myint Thu Thu Aung, MS, agricultural economics
- Mr. Myo Win Maung, MS, environmental science
- Ms. Myat Moe Hlaing, PhD, botany

- Mr. Kyaw Min Htut, PhD, entomology
- Ms. Than Htwe, MS, agronomy
- Ms. Myint Myint Soe, PhD, entomology

Philippines

- Ms. Maria Anabelle Gerona, PhD, development communication
- Ms. Maria Teresa Sawit, MS, community development
- Ms. Queenie Ann Curayag, PhD, food science and technology
- Mr. Ulderico Alviola, Straight PhD, development communication
- Ms. Edelweiss Sajise, PhD, plant breeding

Thailand

- Ms. Alisa Sahahirun, PhD, extension education

Vietnam

- Mr. Le Phuong Nam, MS, agricultural economics
- Mr. Hoang Ha Anh, MS, environmental science

The partnership of DAAD (*Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst*) and SEARCA dates back to 1975 when DAAD awarded its first 15 scholarship grants to nationals of Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. To date, the DAAD-SEARCA scholarships benefited 322 Southeast Asians working in agriculture and rural development in the region's 11 countries.



Eight of the 15 DAAD-SEARCA scholars who were given DAAD scholarship certificates pose with German Ambassador Thomas Ossowski (seventh from left); Mr. Michael Fuchs (fourth from right), German Cultural Attaché; and Ms. Janina Brill (fifth from left), DAAD Lecturer, after the handover ceremony. Also in the photo are (from left) Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot, Program Specialist; Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Consultant; Dr. Maria Cristeta Cuaresma, Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development; and Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, Deputy Director for Administration, all of SEARCA.