

# The SEARCA DIARY



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Photo by Kyaw Zaw Lay

## HOPE FLOATS

Rising tide lifts all boats. This truism bodes well that new opportunities for growth expected to emerge from the imminent ASEAN economic integration will lead to shared prosperity among all peoples in the region.

## President Aquino bats for a Southeast Asia 'where no one is left behind'

MANILA, Philippines—President Benigno S. Aquino III batted for a “Southeast Asia where no one is left behind” at the opening of the 2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia (ARD2014) organized by SEARCA.

Gathered at the global forum were more than 400 scientists, economists, academics, research administrators, representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector, farmer-leaders, government policymakers and professional staff, and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector from 20 countries.

“It is my hope that through this conference, we will forge our synergies even more, enhance our capacities to address the needs of our sectors and of our respective peoples, and thus ultimately strengthen the foundations of equitable prosperity, which will redound to the benefit of our societies and of the many generations to come. It is by working together that we build a Southeast Asia where no one is left behind,” President Aquino said.

[President Aquino bats/ to page 2](#)

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Sec. Virgilio R. de los Reyes



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.



Dr. Cielito F. Habito

The message was read by Philippine Agrarian Reform Secretary Virgilio R. de los Reyes on behalf of the President who was in Myanmar for the ASEAN Summit.

With “Strengthening Resilience, Equity, and Integration in ASEAN Food and Agriculture Systems” as its theme, ARD2014 was held on 12-13 November 2014 at Makati Shangri-La, Manila.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said “with the changing agricultural landscape, ARD remains a vital cog in the efforts of each individual country and the region as a whole to work together towards food security and poverty alleviation.”

The first plenary kicked off with an overview of the conference given by Dr. Cielito F. Habito, former Philippine Economic Planning Secretary and Director-General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) and now Professor of Economics at Ateneo de Manila University, SEARCA Senior Fellow, and Technical Coordinator of ARD2014.

“Promoting agricultural and rural development (ARD) and reducing rural poverty call for an approach that recognizes the complexity of the sector, whose full understanding requires perspectives from a wide range of disciplines and stakeholders. ARD2014 aims to provide a venue for sharing the wide and diverse knowledge pool on ARD within and beyond Southeast Asia,” Dr. Habito said.

The other speakers at the first plenary elaborated on the key issues embodied in the conference theme as they relate to ASEAN agriculture. “Sustainability and resilience in ASEAN agriculture” was tackled by Mr. Tin Htut Oo, Chairman, National

Economic and Social Advisory Council (NESAC), Myanmar, in his paper delivered by Mr. Tin Aung Moe, Program Director, Myanmar Peace Center. Dr. Hermanto Siregar, Vice Rector, Bogor Agricultural University, talked about “Achieving inclusiveness and equity in the farm economy” while Dr. Suthad Setboonsarng, Member, Board of Directors, Cambodia Development Research Institute and Board of Trustees, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), discussed “Integration of ASEAN food and agricultural system.”

The second plenary featured a panel discussion with recipients of the Dioscoro L. Umali Achievement Award in Agricultural Development on the subject “In Quest of a Food Secure ASEAN.” The recipients of the Umali Award have shown excellence in the exercise of their profession and exemplary character in their relationships with great and ordinary people alike. They are active social conscience which seeks to improve the lot of human beings, institutions, and societies they are able to reach; and the trust and respect of the ARD community as a whole. The panel comprised three of the four Umali Awardees, namely: Dr. Vo Tong Xuan of Vietnam, Dr. Ramon C. Barba of the Philippines, and Dr. Sjarifudin Baharsjah of Indonesia. The panel was chaired by Dr. Paul S. Teng, Adjunct Senior Fellow (Food Security), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University and Principal Officer, National Institute of Education, Singapore.

Aside from those who spoke in the plenary sessions, 72 leaders and experts from Southeast Asia and outside the region served as speakers in 24 parallel sessions convened by 26 international

development agencies, research centers, civil society organizations, and higher education institutions. They discussed topics under six sub-themes, namely: productivity improvement, inclusive value chains, sustainability and poverty reduction, food security and food safety, institutions and governance, and regional cooperation and integration.

At the end of the conference, the theme chairs presented syntheses of discussions under each sub-theme and Dr. Habito gave an overall synthesis that included the following take-home messages:

- Productivity improvement is everyone’s business (not of scientists alone).
- It’s all about fostering and forging more and new linkages (microfinance institutions, LEs and small producers, among small producers, more and better roads and alternative transport modes, logistics players).
- Modern market players (hyper/super markets) induce logistics improvement and expand farmers’ options.
- Microfinance is an effective vehicle for introducing other value added products and services needed by farmers.
- Sustainability entails proper enabling environment and mechanisms/processes, intergenerational stability (youth must be attracted back to agriculture), and ecosystem-based approaches that are more cost-effective.
- Link between research and policy and among research institutions remains inadequate.
- Food security is not just about rice (or sufficiency therein); regional approach is critical, even as initiatives for food security/food safety are needed at the community, local, and national levels.
- Non-tariff barriers and process barriers (e.g., customs procedures) remain formidable impediments to economic integration.

In light of these, Dr. Habito identified the implications for policy as follows:

- Assist farmers to link and participate better in the value chains (government, civil society organizations, private sector).

## THE SEARCA DIARY

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Dr. Paul S. Teng (leftmost) moderates the discussion among three of the four recipients of the Dioscoro L. Umali Achievement Award in Agricultural Development, namely: (from right) Dr. Vo Tong Xuan, Dr. Ramon C. Barba, and Dr. Sjarifudin Baharsjah, on the plenary theme “In Quest of a Food Secure ASEAN.”

# 2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia



Representatives of the convenors of the various sessions with conference speakers, theme chairs, and other important guests. Seated (from left) are Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas of SEARCA; Dr. Nipon Poapongsakorn of the Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation; Dr. Rolando T. Dy of UA&P; Dr. Glenn Gregorio of IRRI; Dr. Paul S. Teng; Dr. Cielito F. Habito; Secretary Virgilio R. de los Reyes representing President Benigno S. Aquino, Jr.; Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. of SEARCA; H.E. Ambassador Malayvieng Sakhoninom of Lao PDR; Dr. Percy E. Sajise of Bioersity International and UPLB; Dr. Suthad Setboonsarng of the Cambodia Development Research Institute and IRRI; Dr. Francisco P. Fellizar, Jr. of Ritsumeikan Aisa Pacific University; Dr. Patricio S. Faylon of PCAARRD; and Dr. Doris Capistrano of the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change. Standing are (from left) Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon of the RSFA; Dr. Isabelita M. Pabuayan of UPLB-ICOPED; Dr. Wai-Hong Loke of CABI; Dr. Ponciano S. Intal, Jr. of ERIA; Dr. Andrew Powell of ABB; Dr. Randy Hautea of ISAAA; Dr. Hossein Shahbaz of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific; Dr. Jaime Aristotle Alip of CARD-MRI; Dr. Calixto M. Protacio of UPLB; Dr. Bernd-Markus Liss of GIZ; Dr. Herminia A. Francisco of EEPSEA; Dr. Maripaz L. Perez of WorldFish; and Dr. Bessie M. Burgos of SEARCA.

- Overcome undue attention to rice and to self-sufficiency.
- Food security policy must incorporate nutrition security.
- Incentivize initiatives toward clustering of small farmers/producers.
- Improve and harmonize regional quality standards.
- Align disaster response approaches with local government, localized weather forecasts, and local communities.
- Upscale microfinance institutions in Southeast Asia.
- Prioritize improvements in logistics systems and pursue upscaling of the Roll-on, Roll-off (RORO) transport system.

“More advantaged players—whether countries, firms, private groups or development partner—need to take deliberate actions to reach out, link up to, and assist less advantaged ones if we are to achieve win-win outcomes,” Dr. Habito stressed.

At the closing program, Dr. Saguiguit presented the synthesis of the discussions to Dr. Vili A. Fuavao, Deputy Regional Representative, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), who said the recommendations that have been presented to him will be shared with the technical team at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and “will certainly be considered in the formulation of future programs and actions for technical assistance” to Southeast Asian countries.

The conference was co-sponsored by the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN); Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH; Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR); International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA); German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD); Food Security Center of the University of Hohenheim, Germany; Syngenta; Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD); Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC); Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR); Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR); Land Bank of the Philippines; Philippine Carabao Center (PCC); National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) of the Philippines; and SEARCA. (LLDDomingo)



Dr. Vili A. Fuavao (left), FAO Deputy Regional Representative, accepts the synthesis of the discussions at the ARD2014 presented by Dr. Saguiguit.

## ARD2014 CONVENORS

Asia BioBusiness (ABB) / Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) / Center for Agriculture and Rural Development-Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD-MRI) / Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) / Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) / Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI) / Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH / Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) / Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA) / Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)-Philippines / International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) / International Life Science Institute-Southeast Asian Region (ILSI-SEA) / International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) / International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) / Nanyang Technological University-Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies / National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST), Philippines / Nestle Philippines, Inc. / Philippine Cooperative Center (PCC) / Regional SEARCA Fellows Association (RSFA) / SEARCA / University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P)-Center for Food and Agri Business / University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) / University of the Philippines School of Economics-Philippine Center for Economic Development (UPSE-PCED) / UPLB-Institute of Cooperatives and Bio-Enterprise Development (ICOPED) / World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) / WorldFish

## SEARCA strategic plan for 2014-2019 launched

MANILA, Philippines—SEARCA has formally launched its Tenth Five-Year Plan (FYP) at a gathering of officials from the Department of Education (DepEd) of the Philippines led by Undersecretary Alberto T. Muyot, speakers and participants of the *2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia (ARD2014)*, SEARCA staff, and members of the media. The Plan was unveiled at a cocktail reception on 13 November 2014 at Makati Shangri-La, Manila, Philippines.

Since its establishment, Philippine government-hosted SEARCA has been operating on the basis of five-year development plans, which set out its vision, mission, and goals; and outline its major strategies.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said the Tenth FYP is focused on inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) as an effort to promote trickle-down flow, meaning, overall growth should be felt at the lower levels, especially resource-poor farmers.

An audio-visual presentation shown at the launch laid emphasis on social inclusion and sustainability as the defining elements of ISARD.

It outlined SEARCA's strategic thrust on social inclusion, which encompasses linking small-scale farmers—including women, indigenous peoples, and the youth—with the commercial food systems; strengthening the value chains and agribusiness commodity systems; food and nutrition security; modern technologies and innovations; and rural entrepreneurship. Also highlighted was the Center's continuing focus on climate change adaptation and resiliency, risk mitigation, and management; climate-smart agriculture; and natural resource management. Rounding out the Plan are SEARCA's cross-cutting strategic thrusts on subregional cooperation in trade and investments; regional economic integration such as the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) and ASEAN Economic Community 2015; and government policies, institutions, and governance mechanisms and reforms.

Dr. Saguiguit said that in the pursuit of ISARD projects, teams will design intervention models toward ISARD, pilot-test them in selected agricultural communities, learn from the experience, and upscale or disseminate the ISARD model to other communities in Southeast Asia. In addition, SEARCA's new strategic plan



Dr. Saguiguit (left) presents a copy of SEARCA's Tenth Five-Year Plan to DepEd Undersecretary Alberto T. Muyot.

puts particular focus on science-based studies to guide policymaking and decision-making.

In his remarks following the unveiling of the Tenth FYP, DepEd Undersecretary Muyot congratulated SEARCA on its well-crafted five-year Plan. He noted that SEARCA is one of the oldest and strongest among the 21 regional centers of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), its mother organization, and said the impressive Plan will surely keep SEARCA a frontrunner among its sister centers in terms of scope and magnitude of services to the SEAMEO region. (LLDDomingo)

## 62nd SEARCA Governing Board Meeting convened

MANILA, Philippines—The SEARCA Governing Board (GB) met anew for its 62nd meeting. As the highest policymaking body of SEARCA, the GB discussed the Center's strategies and directions in boosting the region's agriculture and rural development sectors through SEARCA's core programs of graduate education and institutional development, research and development, and knowledge management.

The SEARCA GB is composed of representatives of the 11 member countries of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and its meetings are held in rotation in the member countries.

Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohd Fauzi Hj Ramlan, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Putra Malaysia, was elected as the new Chair of the SEARCA GB. He succeeds Professor Prakash Kumar of the National University of Singapore Department of Biological Sciences. Prof. Dato' Dr. Mohd Fauzi was represented at the meeting by Prof. Dr. -Ing. Ir. Renuganth Varatharajoo, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Industry and Community Relations).



The 62nd SEARCA Governing Board Meeting was attended by (from left) Prof. Dr. -Ing. Ir. Renuganth Varatharajoo of Malaysia, Dr. Bounheuang Ninchaleune of Lao PDR, Mr. Saiful Rizal bin Haji Marali of Brunei Darussalam, Dr. Ngo Bunthan of Cambodia, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. of SEARCA, Dr. Witaya Jeradechakul of the SEAMEO Secretariat, Prof. Prakash Kumar of Singapore, Dr. Acacio Cardoso Amaral of Timor-Leste, Dr. Kanyanat Sirithunya of Thailand, and Dr. Tran Van Dien of Vietnam.

Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., Chancellor, University of the Philippines Los Baños, Philippines, was also elected as the new Vice Chair of the SEARCA GB.

Aside from Prof. Kumar and Dr. Sanchez, the other GB members who attended the meeting held on 17-18 November 2014 at the Holiday Inn and Suites Makati were Mr. Saiful Rizal bin Haji Marali, Acting Principal, Wasan Vocational School,

Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam; Dr. Ngo Bunthan, Rector, Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia; Dr. Bounheuang Ninchaleune, Dean of Agriculture, Savannakhet University, Lao PDR; Dr. Acacio Cardoso Amaral, Dean, Agriculture Faculty, National University of Timor Lorosaé; and Dr. Tran Van Dien, Rector, College of Agriculture and Forestry, Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam.

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## 13 Southeast Asians get German-funded scholarships

MANILA, Philippines—The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), one of SEARCA's strongest partners in its scholarship program, awarded graduate scholarships for academic year 2014-2015 to 13 Southeast Asians who are graduate students at the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Of the 13 scholars, six are from Myanmar, three from the Philippines, one from Thailand, and three from Vietnam. Three of them are pursuing master's programs and the rest are PhD students.

The scholarship grants were presented at the *DAAD Handover Ceremony* presided by His Excellency Thomas Ossowski, Ambassador of Germany to the Philippines, on 28 November 2014 at the German Club in Makati City.

Also present at the event were Michael Fuchs, First Secretary and Cultural Attaché of Germany to the Philippines; Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas,



The DAAD-SEARCA scholars with Mr. Michael Fuchs (front row, fifth from right), First Secretary and Cultural Attaché of Germany to the Philippines, who is flanked by Ms. Janina Brill of DAAD on his left and SEARCA Deputy Director Virginia R. Cardenas on his right. Also in the photo are Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (front row, third from right) and Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot (leftmost), Program Head and Program Specialist, respectively, of the SEARCA Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department.

SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration; Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development (GEID); and Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot, Program Specialist for GEID; and Ms. Janina Brill, DAAD Lektorin and Visiting Lecturer at the University of the Philippines Diliman.

The partnership of DAAD or Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst and SEARCA dates back to 1975.

To date, the DAAD-SEARCA scholarship grants have benefited 355 Southeast Asians. (JSLaranas)

## 1st SEARCA summer school held

SEARCA had conducted its first *Summer School on Food and Nutrition Security for Sustainable Development in Southeast Asia* in collaboration with the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and with support of the SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC).

The four-week postgraduate course was completed by one participant each from Indonesia, Germany, Lao PDR, Malaysia, and Myanmar, as well as three Filipinos and two Thais.

The resource persons of the six-module course, which started on 6 October 2014, were from UPLB; Kasetsart University (KU), Thailand; the Philippines-based International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR); and the Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippines. They are Dr. Julian F. Gonsalves, Senior Adviser at IIRR; Dr. Krissana Treesilvattanakul of KU's Faculty of Agro-Industry; and Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, UPLB



The graduates of the first SEARCA Summer School together with the resource persons and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (front row, fourth from right), SEARCA Director.

Professor and Chancellor, along with other UPLB faculty members, namely: Dr. Percy E. Sajise, Dr. Maria Victoria O. Espaldon, Dr. Salvador P. Catelo, Dr. Roberto F. Rañola, Dr. Edna A. Aguilar, Dr. Oscar B. Zamora, Dr. Inocencio O. Buot, Jr., Dr. Jesusita O. Colladilla, and Dr. Wilma A. Hurtada. DA Assistant Secretary Romeo S. Recide delivered a lecture on the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security, 2015-2020.

The lectures were complemented with group discussions, case studies, and field visits to

IIRR in Silang, Cavite; Department of Science and Technology-Food and Nutrition Research Institute in Taguig City; Costales Nature Farms in Majayjay, Laguna; and Charoen Pokphand Foods Philippines Corporation, one of Asia's leading agro-industrial and food conglomerates.

The summer course is expected to be among the staple offerings of SEARCA in collaboration with UC members. To attract and enable more graduate students to take the course, the UC is working toward making the summer school an accredited graduate course among the UC members. (JSLaranas)

## 62nd SEARCA Governing/ from page 4

Also present was Dr. Kanyanat Sirithunya representing Dr. Numyoot Songthaniapitak, Chairman of Rajamangala University of Technology Network, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna and the representative of Thailand to the SEARCA GB. Dr. Gil C.

Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Dr. Witaya Jeradechakul, SEAMEO Secretariat Director, both ex officio members of the SEARCA GB, were also in attendance.

On 19 November 2014, the GB members from Brunei, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Singapore, and

Timor-Leste and the representative of the Thai GB member visited SEARCA's headquarters and other facilities in Los Baños, Laguna. A luncheon with SEARCA staff and scholars was held in their honor. (LLDDomingo)

## SEARCA and UC to push joint projects on food, nutrition security

Recognizing the importance of attaining food and nutrition security in Southeast Asia, the six universities belonging to the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) and SEARCA have agreed to implement a number of collaborative projects to address this emerging concern in the region.

The UC was initiated in 1989 by SEARCA and five premier agricultural universities in the region to share academic expertise and resources. SEARCA currently serves as the UC secretariat, coordinating the programs of said network of strong universities in Southeast Asia, Canada, Germany, and Japan.

Activities under said collaborative projects, which are intended to further strengthen the partnership between and among UC members, were presented and approved during the *27th UC Executive Board Meeting* held on 14 November 2014 at the New World Hotel, Makati City, Philippines.

Collaborative activities include the conduct of an annual Postgraduate Course, an annual Graduate Forum, a dual degree undertaking, and research projects on food reserve management and



Participants of the 27th UC Executive Board Meeting.

policies, knowledge management on food and nutrition security, human resource development, halal food processing, fruits and vegetable postharvest improvement, and indigenous crops production.

Each research project will be spearheaded by a UC member located in Southeast Asia (i.e., Kasetsart University in Thailand, Institut Pertanian Bogor and Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, University of the Philippines Los Baños) and SEARCA with funding support from the UC, the host university, and other local and international partners.

For its part, Tokyo University of Agriculture has expressed interest in funding as well as providing expertise (faculty and graduate students) to the projects in areas aligned with the research interests of the Japanese university.

In implementing the collaborative activities, the Executive Board likewise foresees a more effective utilization of the UC student and faculty grants. The UC offers thesis grants and student travel grants for research or for credit. Faculty members of UC members can apply for travel grants to conduct research or to attend conferences; or for a visiting professor grant for teaching purposes. (JSLaranas)

## UPLB commits to launch UC Summer School in 2015

The University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), under the leadership of its new Chancellor, Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., has committed to launch the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) Summer School on Food and Nutrition Security for Southeast Asia in July 2015. This was firming up during the *27th UC Executive Board Meeting* held on 14 November 2014 at the New World Hotel in Makati City, Philippines.

The UC Summer School takes off from the pilot project on Food and Nutrition Security for Sustainable Development implemented by SEARCA in partnership with UPLB on 6-30 October 2014. (See related story on page 4) The UPLB-hosted 2015 UC Summer School is intended as a credit-earning Special Topics course under the UPLB Graduate School. This means that students from abroad who enroll in the summer course can get credit in an equivalent subject in their home university. Moreover, while foreign students will have to register at UPLB as non-degree students, the state university will endeavor to enable them to avail of the same rates of tuition and other fees paid by resident students.

A workshop on Summer School course development will be conducted by UPLB during the early planning phase to refine the SEARCA-developed course modules.



Dr. Jose V. Camacho, Jr., UPLB Graduate School Dean and UC Coordinator speaks before the participants of the Summer School maiden offering in October 2014.

The Summer School is a postgraduate enhancement course that focuses the various concepts related to food and nutrition security in the context of sustainable development in Southeast Asia. It will be offered through a combination of class lectures, educational field trips, group work, and case study analysis. (JSLaranas)

## SEARCA participates in 2015 ASEAN-Swiss planning mission

JAKARTA, Indonesia— SEARCA participated in the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) Phase II Planning Mission, which aimed to develop synergy among the partner-organizations and the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Secretariat in their capacity building, research, and knowledge sharing and communication activities.

The ASFCC is a program funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to support the ASFN in addressing three interrelated issues confronting the region—food insecurity, poverty, and climate change.

Now in its second phase, the ASFCC consists of five implementing partners: Center for Forestry Research (CIFOR), World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), Non-timber Forest Products-Exchange Program (NTFP-EP), the Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), and SEARCA. SEARCA is ASFCC's supporting partner for its flexible funding mechanism called ASFN Strategic Response Fund (ASRF).

Present at the event held on 7-12 November 2014 in Jakarta were Dr. Doris Capistrano, ASFCC Regional Advisor; Dr. Jürgen Blaser, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)-ASFCC Programme Advisor; Mr. Sreeram Koottala, Financial Coordinator; and representatives of the five ASFCC implementing partners. SEARCA was represented in the planning mission by Ms. Amy M. Lecciones, ASRF Regional Program Coordinator, and Ms. Mary Ann A. Batas, Project Associate.

Dr. Blaser shared upcoming international events and other globally significant policies on forestry that are relevant to the ASFCC and ASFN. These include the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), World Forestry Forum (WFF), and the World Forestry Congress in Durban in September 2015.

Dr. Doris Capistrano emphasized that the ASFCC-II partners need to highlight the connection of their respective key achievements in the program's first phase and their planned activities for 2015 with the ASEAN roadmaps and policy framework, and the ASFN adopted strategies.

The partners presented their respective accomplishments based on the ASFCC log frame and their organizational plans for 2015. Two were highlighted as flagship activities of the network. These are the 6th ASFN Conference and 9th ASFN Annual Meeting to be held in June 2015 in Myanmar, and Knowledge Exchange in preparation for the World Forestry Congress in September 2015.

Dr. Dian Sukmajaya, Senior Officer at the ASEAN Agriculture Industries and Natural Resources Division (AINRD), informed the ASFCC partners that the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) is preparing a position paper for the UN Forestry Forum. He emphasized that the exchange of knowledge and information across the ASEAN Member States will be very crucial, and that the role of ASFN in policy development will be equally important.

A debriefing session was conducted with the ASEAN Economic Community Department of ASEC. The group was received by Dr. Tan Dong Phuong, Director of the Finance, Industry and Infrastructure Directorate. The ASFCC implementing partners gave brief presentations about their respective work plans. A discussion ensued on relevant issues and concerns. Among these were the challenges in the forestry sector of Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Vietnam; the impact of economic integration to communities and other sectors; and the role of the ASFCC/ASFN in the economic integration process.

The team also paid a courtesy call on Her Excellency Yvonne Baumann, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Indonesia, at the Embassy of Switzerland in Jakarta. Ambassador Bauman expressed her support to the ASFCC/ASFN and asked to be apprised of the Program's progress, particularly on the ASFN Conference slated in June 2015. (MAABatas)



Representatives of the ASFCC Key Partner Institutions with (seated, from left) Dian Sukmajaya, Senior Officer, ASEC Agriculture Industries and Natural Resources Division; Dr. Doris Capistrano, ASFCC Regional Advisor; Dr. Tran Dong Phuong, Director, Finance, Industry and Infrastructure Directorate of the ASEAN Economic Community Department of ASEC; Dr. Juergen Blaser, SDC Global Forest Advisor; Ms. Anna Mae Tuazon, Senior Officer, Initiative for ASEAN Integration and Narrowing the Development GAP, ASEAN Economic Community Department of ASEC; and Ms. Sagita Arhidani, Head of ASFN Secretariat. (Photo courtesy of the ASEAN Secretariat)

## ASRF joins mission to Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, Myanmar—The ASRF joined the ASFN and the ASFCC in a meeting with officials of the Government of the Union of Myanmar here in the country's administrative capital.

Conducted on 29 September 2014, the mission was aimed at strengthening coordination with the Myanmar government, particularly the Forest Department and other relevant departments under the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) in the context of supporting the activities of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF), Senior Officials Meeting of AMAF (SOM-AMAF), ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry (ASOF), ASFN and other related ASEAN subsidiaries.

The ASFCC delegates included Dr. Doris Capistrano, ASFCC Advisor; Ms. Sagita Arhidani, ASFN Secretariat Head; and ASFCC Supporting Partners, namely: CIFOR, ICRAF, NTFP-EP, RECOFTC, and SEARCA.

The delegation was received by MOECAF officials led by Dr. Nyi Nyi Kyaw, Director General of Forest Department, and Dr. Tin Tun, Director General of Planning and Statistics Department. Dr. Tin Tun described the government's efforts to gather from the local people their experience and knowledge in adapting to climate change as well as learn from the long history of social forestry in the country.

Dr. Nyi Nyi Kaw expressed gratitude for the support in social forestry development that the ASFN has extended to Myanmar. He also emphasized that Myanmar is proud to host the ASFN Conference and Meeting and will do its best to support similar events.

Aside from matters related to the upcoming ASFN event, the formation of an ASFN Working Group of Myanmar with its own organizing committees was also discussed.

Ms. Amy M. Lecciones, ASRF Regional Program Coordinator represented SEARCA in the meeting and presented updates on the ASRF when the Supporting Partners were given a chance to talk about their role in the partnership and their linkages with Myanmar. (AMLecciones)

## Final workshop of ASEAN climate resilience network held

MANILA, Philippines—The ASEAN Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Research Development (ATWGARD) formalized the ASEAN Climate Resilience Network (CRN) which tackled the *Promotion of Resilience in Rice, Corn and Other Crops* in its third and final special workshop.

Held on 10 November 2014 at the Best Western Plus Antel Hotel in Makati City, the workshop was jointly organized by SEARCA in coordination with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH/German-ASEAN Programme on Response to Climate Change (GAP-CC) and Thailand's Department of Agriculture (DOA) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC). It was chaired by Dr. Suwit Chaikiattiyos, Thailand DOA Deputy Director-General.

Presented and discussed at the workshop were the good practices of climate change adaptation measures identified and being promoted by each of the participating ASEAN Member States (AMS). Also tackled were the specific technical requirements and implementation issues and challenges in the possible upscaling of these practices in other areas.

The participants also discussed the implementation plans for the field demonstration and documentation of good practices as climate adaptation measures properly modified to suit specific locations. The working paper that forms the Guidelines for Implementation of Regional Cooperation for information to ATWGARD and endorsement of SOM-AMAF was also discussed. They also drew up the plan for continued collaboration and networking of the CRN in rice and other crops.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, highlighted in his opening speech that “coping strategies and policies at the national and regional levels must be well-coordinated and directed

towards effectively addressing the effects of climate change in the sector in which the majority of the population reside and eke out a living.” He also thanked ASEAN and GIZ for entrusting the implementation of the project to SEARCA in addressing important development issues affecting the ASEAN region, which is consistent with the Center's mandates.

Likewise, Mr. Thomas Heindrichs, GIZ Principal Advisor, said the German government, through GIZ, is eager to support the CRN in addressing regional issues on climate change, particularly in the agriculture sector, focusing on the good practices along the value chains for food security. He said GIZ would like to continue supporting the regional up-scaling and out-scaling of these good practices as climate change adaptation (CCA) measures for adoption of the AMS. He stressed that regional-level support can only be successful if there is strong national leadership and contribution.

The ATWGARD focal persons and the SEARCA project team leaders from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam attended the event. Also present were resource persons and representatives from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), MicroEnsure-Philippines, CGIAR Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS) Southeast Asia, ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC), Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change (ARCC) Project-United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and USAID-Philippines. Dr. Felino P. Lansigan, SEARCA regional agricultural value chain/climate resilience expert, served as the overall resource person and workshop facilitator.

Recommendations on CCA areas for regional collaboration in the next phase of project



Dr. Suwit Chaikiattiyos

Dr. Felino P. Lansigan



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (right), SEARCA Director, gives his message during the opening program. Looking on is Mr. Thomas Heindrichs, GIZ Principal Advisor.

implementation in 2015 were put forward for the CRN's consideration. These were presented by Dr. Lansigan, as follows:

- Regional collaboration through knowledge sharing and technology transfer
- Partnership with development institutions to facilitate capacity building and enhance climate resilience of local communities and crop production systems
- Climate-proofing of crop production systems
- Research and development on CCA
- Establishment of a Regional Center for regional and country-level climate forecast, monitoring and evaluation, and mainstreaming of CCA policies in the respective AMS.

Complemented by national consultation meetings and member state analyses, the workshop is the culminating activity of the GAP-CC-funded project titled *ASEAN Network on Promoting Climate Resilience of Rice and Other Crops*. Proposed by Thailand and adopted by ATWGARD, the project aimed to advance the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) and the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC). (KJSVillagracia)



ATWGARD representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Vietnam, and the national project team leaders with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (eighth from left), SEARCA Director, who welcomed them to SEARCA and briefed them on the Center's programs and activities. Also in the photo are Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (rightmost), Program Head for Graduate Scholarship; Dr. Lope B. Santos III (fourth from left), Program Specialist and Officer in Charge of Project Development and Technical Services; and Ms. Kristine Joy S. Villagracia (leftmost), Regional Knowledge Platform Coordinator, ASEAN Network on Promoting Climate Resilience of Rice and Other Crops.



# Snapshots



Dr. Jesus C. Fernandez (second from right), Deputy Director for Programme and Marketing, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP), joined the SEARCANs who attended the 37th SEAMEO High Officials Meeting held on 25-27 November 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand. Led by Dr. Saguiguit (center), the SEARCA delegation also included Ms. Adoracion T. Robles (second from left), Unit Head for Management Services and concurrent Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director; Ms. Eidelmine Elizabeth F. Genosa (left), Human Resource Specialist and Officer in Charge of Human Resource Management Unit; and Mr. Christian F. Agnes (right), Financial Specialist, Accounting Unit



Mr. Mike Petersen, Special Agriculture Trade Envoy (SATE), New Zealand, says "the overarching challenge for New Zealand is to protect its reputation as a trusted, quality, and sustainable producer" during his seminar titled The New Zealand Agricultural Story: Successes, Challenges, and Opportunities from a Hungry World delivered on 28 November 2014 at the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series, which the Center organized in cooperation with the New Zealand Embassy in Manila.



The SEARCA contingent, including staff and scholars, at the 96th University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) Loyalty Day Parade held on 10 October 2014.



Another SEARCA family portrait after the Center's annual yuletide celebration which had Elven Christmas for its theme this year.

## Phl senator visits SEARCA

Philippine Senator Cynthia A. Villar, Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Senate Committee on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises, visited SEARCA to learn more about SEARCA's programs and activities.

In a briefing led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, on 5 December 2014, Senator Villar was apprised about SEARCA's focus for the next five years, which is inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) as embodied in the Center's Tenth Five-Year Plan.

Senator Villar requested SEARCA to regularly send the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food information on the studies it has conducted for their reference in crafting bills for legislation.

Moreover, Senator Villar is looking to SEARCA to provide her and the Committee she chairs guidance and support studies to push her



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (center), SEARCA Director, briefs Senator Cynthia A. Villar (left) on the priority thrusts of SEARCA in the next five years. Also with him during the briefing are Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (right), SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, and SEARCA program heads.

advocacy on poverty alleviation in the rural sector through family farms, participation in the value chain, and entrepreneurship. Dr. Saguiguit said this aligns nicely with SEARCA's focus on ISARD.

The meeting was held before the seminar that Senator Villar delivered at the special dialogue hosted by SEARCA under its Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS).

## Villar underscores need for agro-ecology

The timeliness of shifting to agro-ecology as an alternative to conventional farming was highlighted by Philippine Senator Cynthia A. Villar, "taking into consideration that the country now experiences extreme weather disturbances such as stronger typhoons, droughts, El Niño/La Niña and other environmental risks,"

This the Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food and the Senate Committee on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises emphasized during her talk on Agro-ecology for Sustainable Agriculture and Environment towards Food Security" at SEARCA's Agriculture and Development Seminar Series (ADSS) on 5 December 2014.

Senator Villar cited a recent report by Germanwatch at the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change in Peru that the Philippines was at the top of the list of countries most affected by climate changed in 2013. This, she said, is more reason to focus on agro-ecology since it provides environment-related benefits and aims for environmental sustainability.

Agro-ecology, according to Laura Silici of the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), uses ecological concepts and principles to design and manage sustainable agro-ecosystems, offering benefits



Senator Cynthia A. Villar (at rostrum) talks about agro-ecology as another way of attaining food security at the SEARCA ADSS held on 5 December 2014 to an audience of students, academics, and administrators, including Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (right), SEARCA Director.

for productivity, food security, environmental sustainability, and important ecosystem services such as climate change mitigation.

Senator Villar said a paradigm shift in agriculture is needed, echoing the statement of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

The main challenge facing world farming, Dr. Da Silva said, is to lower the use of agricultural inputs, especially water and chemicals, as well as to make food production viable in the long-term. He pointed out that agro-ecology is really farming in a more sustainable way, and that sustainability is the key.

Senator Villar shared that Dr. Da Silva's points were reiterated by Professor Hilal Elver, United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, who noted that recent scientific researches increasingly prove how agro-ecology offers

environmentally sustainable methods that meet the rapidly growing demand for food.

"Ensuring food security is another factor that is of foremost consideration," Senator Villar said.

She added that according to FAO, only small farmers and agro-ecology can feed the world as 70% of food consumed globally are produced by small farmers. "Based on official statistics," she said, "1.5 billion of people globally are estimated to be involved in family farming in over 500 million small farms worldwide."

Senator Villar said many experts believe that agro-ecology is best suited for small-scale and family farmers, hence the need "to provide adequate incentives and technical assistance to support small-scale farmers as well as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the creation of local 'agro-ecological business

Villar underscores/ to page 11

## CLSU explores capacity dev't initiative with SEARCA

Dr. Ruben C. Sevilleja, President of Central Luzon State University (CLSU) in Nueva Ecija, Philippines, shared with SEARCA a concept proposal on Promoting University Research for Scientific Excellence (PURSE) program developed by CLSU.

He discussed the proposal with Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, and Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development during his visit to the Center on 17 October 2014.

The meeting was an offshoot of the visit of Commissioner Ruperto S. Sangalang of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of the Philippines to SEARCA to discuss the possible collaboration of SEARCA and CHED on capacity development of agricultural state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the country.



Dr. Ruben C. Sevilleja (center), CLSU President, discusses CLSU's PURSE program with Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (left), SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, and Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development on his visit to SEARCA on 17 October 2014.

CLSU is known for its veterinary medicine, aquaculture, and crop sciences programs. It is also the lead agency of the science community in Central Luzon.

Being the world's window to Southeast Asia, SEARCA can link the Philippine SUCs to a consortium of international universities and related organizations.

Dr. Sevilleja was also briefed on SEARCA's current capacity building activities, which are geared toward developing human resources

and institutions working in agriculture and rural development. Among these activities is the Institutional Development Assistance program, which aims to help young and strategic higher education institutions improve their competencies in instruction, research, and extension.

Dr. Cuaresma also discussed SEARCA capacity building projects tailored for specific institutions to benefit from both degree and non-degree training, study tours, and similar activities. (JSLaranas)

## Possible collaboration between SEARCA and SEAFDEC eyed

MANILA, Philippines—The Secretary-General of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) has expressed an interest to partner with SEARCA toward food and nutrition security and rural poverty alleviation in the region.

Dr. Chumnarn Pongsri, SEAFDEC Secretary-General and concurrently Chief of its Training Department, expressed this interest during the 15th Meeting of his center's Information Staff on 28-30 October 2014 at the Best Western Plus Antel Hotel in Makati City.

He noted SEARCA and SEAFDEC's aligned mandates during a presentation made by Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program

Head for Knowledge Management (KM), about SEARCA's KM Program on 29 October 2014.

In her presentation, Dr. Cadiz gave an overview of SEARCA and the three arms of its KM strategy that promotes a culture of adaptive and social learning, knowledge sharing and use, and knowledge creation toward inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD).

Dr. Pongsri elaborated that his center could provide the fisheries component in the overall ISARD thrust of SEARCA in its Tenth Five-Year Plan. Dr. Cadiz acknowledged the importance of the fisheries sector in ISARD as they are among the poorest sectors of the rural population. (MCHCadiz)



Dr. Chumnarn Pongsri (leftmost), SEAFDEC Secretary-General, presents a token to Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management.

### Villar underscores/ from page 10

models' that can make appropriate inputs and technologies available to communities."

She also talked about her organic fertilizer-making enterprise in her home city of Las Piñas in Metro Manila. "We build composting centers in all of our city's barangays to convert kitchen and garden wastes into organic fertilizer that we distribute for free to farmers and vegetable gardeners," she said, and pointed out that composting is in line with the National Organic Agriculture Program.

She stressed the need to train small farmers on entrepreneurship to enable them to appreciate farming more and not leave the rural areas in search of the proverbial "greener pasture."

To sum up, Senator Villar quoted an agro-ecology report: "The vision of agro-ecology combines the sciences of ecology and agronomy with the political economy of food production and consumption. This approach goes beyond improving the availability of food to also ensuring access and the achievement of the right to food.

Indeed, it should be the standard by which national agricultural strategies, food security plans and foreign assistance programs are evaluated by their respective publics."

The ADSS was attended by university students, professors, and researchers, as well as officials and staff of SEARCA, and government agencies and other development organizations in Los Baños. (LLDDomingo)

## SDC rep, SEARCA officials meet on project financial review

Mr. Sreeram Kottala, Coordinator International Accounting of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, and representative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), met with SEARCA officers and staff to clarify the terms of reference of the financial review of the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) being implemented by SEARCA.

The ASRF is a flexible funding mechanism aimed at providing small grants to ASEAN Member States (AMS) in aid of policy development and decision-making on social forestry as it relates to climate change, food security, and poverty alleviation.

Held at SEARCA on 6 November 2014, the meeting also included a briefing led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit,



Mr. Sreeram Kottala (in blue), SDC representative, in a meeting with SEARCA unit heads, the ASRF project team, and SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development.

Jr., SEARCA Director, and Ms. Amy Lecciones, ASRF Regional Program Coordinator, to apprise Mr. Sreeram about SEARCA's operations and the ASRF project. Detailed presentations on the Center's accounting and financial management procedures, internal control systems, and other administrative procedures were also given by the unit heads concerned.

Mr. Sreeram commended SEARCA for its finance and administrative system and procedures, which he found consistent with internationally-accepted standards. He then reviewed and replied to the questions earlier raised by the potential external audit service providers in relation to the financial review of the ASRF project. (MERSilot)

## SEARCA scholars stand out in UPLB English Program

Two new SEARCA scholars studying at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) garnered awards for their excellent English communication skills shown at the UPLB Intensive English Course for International Graduate Students.

The course is regularly offered and administered by the Language Instruction Towards Excellence (LITE) Program of the UPLB College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

At the closing program of the course on 1 December 2014, Mr. Zaw Zaw Htet and Ms. Su Latt Phyu, both from Myanmar, were awarded "Best in Grammar and Academic Writing" and "Best in Reading and Overall Topnotcher," respectively.

The awards were presented by Dr. Marish S. Madlangbayan, Vice Chancellor for Planning and Development representing Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., UPLB Chancellor; Dr. Felino P. Lansigan, Dean, UPLB College of Arts and Sciences; and Dr. Willie P. Abasolo, Secretary, UPLB Graduate School.

Ms. Su Latt Phyu is a demonstrator at the Yezin Agricultural University, while Mr. Zaw Zaw Htet is a staff officer at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Both are based in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.



Ms. Su Latt Phyu (second from right) receives her citation for Best in Reading and Overall Topnotcher and certificate of completion presented by Dr. Felino P. Lansigan. Looking on are Dr. Willie P. Abasolo (leftmost) and Dr. Marish S. Madlangbayan (rightmost).

"I am very thankful to SEARCA for giving me a chance to study in UPLB and support my enrollment in the LITE Program," said Phyu who is pursuing her PhD in Plant Breeding.

"In my country, I am also a teacher and I know that a teacher can only be as effective as his or her students. So I make sure to participate in class and complete my exercises, assignments and tasks. I also share this with my classmates,

because we learn from each other, we are like family," Phyu added.

Of the 25 graduate students enrolled at said English course, 17 were SEARCA scholars. Six of them are from Lao PDR, five from Myanmar, two from Thailand, and four from Timor-Leste. They are among the 45 new SEARCA scholars who enrolled in the first semester of academic year 2014-2015. (JSLaranas)

## ANU academics eye SEARCA as gateway to Southeast Asia

A group from the Fenner School of Environment and Society of the College of Medicine, Biology and Environment of the Australian National University (ANU) met with SEARCA officials to explore how they can team up with SEARCA in conducting research in Southeast Asian countries.

Dr. Robert Dyball, Lecturer at the Human Ecology Program and President of the Society for Human Ecology, led the delegation to the meeting at SEARCA on 2 December 2014. With him were Mr. Federico Davila, Ms. Jennifer Marie Sunga-Amparo, and Ms. Deborah Cleland, all PhD candidates. They were accompanied by representatives of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Human Ecology (UPLB-CHE) and received by Center officials, led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director.

After ANU and SEARCA had introduced their respective organizations and program areas, SEARCA's Umbrella Program on Food and Nutrition Security for Southeast Asia was presented by Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development. The program was developed by SEARCA in collaboration with the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC). Initiated by SEARCA in 1989 and for which it serves as secretariat, the UC is a network of eight strong universities in Southeast Asia, Canada, Germany, and Japan that are committed to share academic expertise and resources.



ANU PhD students (from left) Ms. Jennifer Marie Sunga-Amparo, Ms. Deborah Cleland, and Mr. Federico Davila with Dr. Robert Dyball (rightmost), ANU lecturer, at SEARCA on 2 December 2014.

The Umbrella Program on Food and Nutrition Security aims to serve as platform for collaborative research, capacity building, and knowledge management on food security among UC members and partner universities and other institutions from other Southeast Asian countries.

Possible collaborative projects based on the umbrella program were discussed, including avenues and modalities through which the PhD candidates can conduct their research studies in the Philippines or elsewhere in Southeast Asia with SEARCA as their base of operations and gateway to other institutions in the region. (BMBurgos)

## Validation workshop pushed sustainability of IBAMO

OROQUIETA CITY, Philippines – SEARCA, in partnership with WorldFish, conducted a monitoring and evaluation validation workshop and harvesting of stories as part of the European Union (EU)-funded project titled *Implementing an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) in Small-scale Tropical Marine Fisheries*.

Representatives of the Iligan Bay Alliance of Misamis Occidental (IBAMO) participated in the workshop held on 30 September 2014 at Rhovics Hotel and Conference Facilities. They shared the challenges and success stories experienced in the formation and mobilization of IBAMO in the past three years.

IBAMO is composed of local government units (LGUs) of eight municipalities in the province of Misamis Occidental, namely: Aloran, Jimenez, Lopez Jaena, Panaon, Plaridel, Sinacaban, Tudela, and Oroquieta City.

Representatives from the Provincial Government of Misamis Occidental and the chief executives of LGUs have consistently supported the vision and mission of the alliance towards sustainability through scaling-up and scaling-out activities. Institutional partners of the alliance also reaffirmed their support to IBAMO.

Dr. Visa Tan-Dimerin, Director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Region 10,

called the activity a time for IBAMO to celebrate the effective implementation of the project in the province and the coastal management of Iligan Bay.

The workshop participants identified the challenges encountered by the alliance as follows: “policy-program implementation, engaging stakeholders (all actors), sustaining institutional commitments, and keeping IBAMO apolitical.”

On the other hand, the success factors identified were consensus building, formalizing the IBAMO as an organization and institutionalization of fisheries management, and sustaining and strengthening of activities.

Results of the workshop highlight the need for participating LGUs and partner institutions to sustain IBAMO's vision and mission. The harvested stories of IBAMO were presented in the first *Coastal Alliance Summit* held in October 2014 in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. (AGTallada)



Hon. Estela Obut-Estano (bottom right), Tudela Mayor and IBAMO Executive Secretary, brainstorm with members of the IBAMO Technical Working Group from other member LGUs.



Dr. Visa Tan-Dimerin, Director of BFAR Region 10, reaffirms the BFAR's support to enable IBAMO to succeed and realize its bay-wide vision.

# Celebrating 50 Years of Education Cooperation in Regional Sustainable Development

## SEAMEO Congress brings various sectors to rethink education in Southeast Asia

BANGKOK, Thailand—With six ministers and vice ministers leading, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) organized the SEAMEO Congress—a landmark gathering of about 500 participants from 20 countries—that aimed to draw out practical education and human resource development (HRD) policies and practices to bridge skills gap and promote sustained growth in Southeast Asia.

With the theme *Southeast Asia in Transition: Re-thinking Education, Science and Culture for Regional Integration*, the SEAMEO Congress generated rich discussions on innovative policies and strategies toward making education in the region more relevant. Underscored were the need to innovate and accelerate HRD in Southeast Asia to make it more responsive and gainful for an integrated community among nations in the region. The theme also echoed the “Golden SEAMEO” vision that is characterized, among others, by program responsiveness and thriving application of modern technologies.

Held on 21-22 October 2014 at Amari Watgate Hotel, the SEAMEO Congress attracted participants from different sectors such as policymakers, education and development practitioners, academics, scholars, international organizations, business and industry, and students.

Presentations and discussions focused on the realities and implications of regionalization in theory and in practice not only in education, but also in science and culture. Speakers from government and the private sector from Southeast Asia and outside the region shared policies and reforms, innovations, and success stories on three interrelated sub-themes: reshaping education to bridge skills gap, enhancing science and technology education, and promoting cultural diversity and development. Participants shared expertise and interfaced across ministerial, plenary, parallel, poster, and synthesis sessions.

During the ministerial session, H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia, put emphasis on the needed training and education for jobs of the future which would result from the integration process

in the region. He suggested a two-track approach to address the issue, that is, by continuously providing access to education and by ensuring that education and training are linked to industry and focus on skills needed by future employers.

H.E. Pehin Abu Bakar Apong, Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam, emphasized the need for true reforms in education. He said unsuccessful reform spends 90 percent effort on policy and 10 percent on implementation, thus resulting in poor return of investment. He pointed out that the balance between policy development and policy implementation should be given greater attention.

H.E. Br. Armin A. Lusitro, Secretary of Education of the Philippines, also emphasized the importance of rethinking education to align it with the aim of the ASEAN community. He cautioned, however, against the temptation and convenience of uniformity in the name of regional integration. He reaffirmed instead the importance of recognizing diversity, and called for special attention to the disadvantaged communities in the region which he referred to as “the lost, the last, and the least” in the integration efforts in Southeast Asia.

Sixty speakers, presenters, and moderators took part in the SEAMEO Congress. Among them are ministers and high-level education officials; representatives of international and intergovernmental organizations, universities, and SEAMEO centers; and many eminent persons in Southeast Asia.

Three plenary sessions addressed the fundamentals of innovation, development, and cooperation as they relate to regional integration in Southeast Asia and the world. A second layer of discussions comprised parallel sessions that provided dedicated dialogues on the aspects of education, science, and culture. There was also a session on technical and vocational education led by SEAMEO VOTTECH and another session on equity, inclusion, and learning led the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

At the exhibits and poster presentations viewed during breaks between sessions, participants took advantage of the opportunity to establish networks and cooperative work with like-minded individuals and institutions.



Key recommendations from the Congress include the following:

- Improving governance and provision of more supportive enabling environment
- Strengthening effective links between and among formal, non-formal and informal education systems to better address educational needs
- Contextualizing education in existing social-cultural systems
- Matching school curricula with labor market demands, and for global citizenship
- Supporting school leadership development
- Accelerating strategic multi-stakeholder collaboration
- Maximizing the use of ICT
- Promoting STEM education and innovation for entrepreneurship in all education levels
- Promoting continuous capacity building

The SEAMEO Congress is one of the 12 strategies identified in the SEAMEO Strategic Plan 2011-2020. It is envisioned as a forum for seeking recommendations on educational, scientific and cultural themes and emerging issues of international and regional concern. The SEAMEO Congress aims to contribute to enhancing regional understanding and cooperation among educators and SEAMEO stakeholders in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Key organizers of the SEAMEO Congress include the SEAMEO Secretariat, the British Council, and the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST) of Thailand. Other supporters include banks, private multinational companies, education and development-focused foundations, United Nations agencies, other inter-governmental agencies, and others. (Report from SEAMEO Secretariat)

## 20 Phil agri, fisheries staff learn climate proofing method

Various stakeholders in the Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector were represented by participants of a training-workshop on *Integrating Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) into Policies, Plans and Investments* organized by SEARCA. The third in a series, the training-workshop was held on 7-10 October 2014 at SEARCA.

The training-workshop was customized for the Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector to enhance the capacity of decision-makers and planners at various levels to mainstream CCA into their policies, plans, programs, and investments. It also aimed to increase the participants' understanding of the application of climate proofing methodology within their organizational environment to ensure that climate change concerns are integrated into their programs and initiatives.

Specifically, the workshop aimed to enable the participants to:

- Understand climate change impacts and the need to mainstream climate change adaptation into policies, action plans, and project interventions in the agriculture sector.
- Identify appropriate approaches for integrating climate change adaptation into development policies and investment plans at the national, sectoral, and project levels.
- Apply these systematic planning steps to selected cases in agriculture and fisheries toward developing flagship applications of climate proofing.

In his welcome remarks, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, noted how climate change threatens our food security as it negatively affects the region's agriculture and fisheries sector. He said "our best option against this challenge is to adapt and heighten the resiliency of the sector to the effects of this natural phenomenon."

Dr. Saguiguit emphasized that it is in this context and along with its mandate of building capacities toward inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) that SEARCA conducted the training-workshop aiming to equip the participants with knowledge and skills in integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation actions into their development plans and investments.

The 20 participants included 10 representatives of the Philippine agriculture and fisheries councils from the government, industry, civil society, and farmer sectors; three local government representatives from a project

supported by USAID; four from the Department of Agriculture; two from the academe; and one from a farmer's regional network.

A highlight of the training-workshop was the application of the systematic adaptation assessment or climate proofing methodology on selected real cases that were submitted by the participants prior to the workshop.

The participants "climate-proofed" the following development plans and projects:

- The Community-based Coastal Resource Management Implementation in the Municipality of Naic, Cavite: A Case Study
- Lake Buhi Water Allocation for Irrigation and Aquaculture
- Larapan Riverbank Stabilization Project, Linamon, Lanao del Norte, Philippines
- Value Chain Analysis for Wet Rice Production in the Municipality of La Paz, Agusan del Sur

The workshop outputs were then presented in an "information marketplace." This method is based on the idea of a real market where there is buying and selling and the venue is used for stimulating the exchange of information among many people simultaneously within a limited time.

Dr. Daylinda B. Cabanilla, Associate Professor, University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Forestry and Natural Resources (UPLB-CFNR), and Ms. Rosario B. Bantayan, SEARCA Program Specialist, served as the training-workshop's technical coordinator and co-coordinator, respectively.

On the other hand, Dr. Felino P. Lansigan, newly appointed Dean and Professor of the UPLB College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Canesio D. Predo, Assistant Professor at UPLB-CFNR, served as resource persons. Dr. Lansigan gave an introduction to climate change and climate change adaptation concepts, while Dr. Predo discussed the use of economic tools in assessing adaptation options.

The training workshop and the reference materials used were based on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Policy Guidance "Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Co-operation." Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the publication was developed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in coordination with OECD, together with a host of reviewers from development agencies, NGOs, and research institutions from around the world. (RBBantayan)



Participants, resource persons, and organizers of the training-workshop.

## SEARCA, Nagoya University renew accord

SEARCA and Nagoya University (NU), Japan have committed anew to collaborate on a number of activities to pursue common education and research objectives. This was formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding on Academic Cooperation in Education and Research, which renews and updates the Memorandum of Agreement signed by SEARCA and NU in 1983.

The signing ceremony was held at SEARCA on 18 December 2014 and witnessed by key officials and staff members of SEARCA and NU. The signatories are Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Dr. Michinari Hamaguchi, President of Nagoya University.

Nagoya University is a leading Japanese university whose mission is “to foster the harmonious development of human nature and science, and to conduct highly advanced research and education that oversees the broad sweep of humanities and social and natural sciences.”

Under the MOU, SEARCA and NU will collaborate in promoting academic cooperation through the exchange of academic and research staff, scholars, and students between the two institutions through the SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC); joint projects in graduate scholarship, research, and capacity building; joint conferences, workshops, and study tours;



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (second from right), SEARCA Director, and Dr. Michinari Hamaguchi, NU President, shake hands after signing the MOU. Flanking them are Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (left), SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration, and Dr. Akira Yamauchi (right), Director of NU's International Cooperation Center for Agricultural Education.

and exchange of scientific publications and other knowledge resources.

The MOU will be in force until December 2019 and automatically extended for another three years thereafter unless either party gives written notice to end the accord.

Other members of the NU delegation are Dr. Katsuki Ito, Professor Emeritus and Executive Advisor; Dr. Tetsuo Saito, Professor Emeritus, and Dr. Toshiharu Tanaka, both of the Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences; Dr. Akira Yamauchi, Director, International Cooperation Center for Agricultural Education and Professor, Graduate School Bioagricultural Sciences; Dr. Yoshito

Ito, Chief Manager of Nagoya University Alumni Association Department of Civil Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering; Associate Professor Tomio Nakano, Manager of Nagoya University Alumni Association, Graduate School of Law; Designated Assistant Professor Joshua A. Reyer, Graduate School of Medicine; Dr. Eiko Yamamoto, Designated Associate Professor, Nagoya University Asian Satellite Campuses Institute; Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Designated Professor, Nagoya University Satellite Campuses Institute, Cambodia; Mr. Hirohito Saigusa, Director, International Affairs Department; and Ms. Yumiko Oya, Senior Staff, and Mr. Senta Kobayashi, Administrative Staff, both of the International Planning Division. (LLDDomingo)

## Integrate social accountability in agri programs, Phl gov't execs urged

Nineteen officers and executives of the Philippine Department of Agriculture participated in a course on *Social Accountability in the Agricultural Sector* organized by SEARCA the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG).

Held on 28-30 October 2014, the course was the last of the activities under the five-year Umbrella Capacity Development Program for the Department of Agriculture (DA) executives and professional staff implemented by SEARCA with ASoG, University of Asia and the Pacific School of Management (UA&P SMN), and UPecon Foundation, Inc.

The course aimed to contribute to the development of a cadre of leaders in the agriculture sector who have a command of the political and ethical elements of governance toward the achievement of excellence in public service.

In particular, the course aimed to strengthen the managerial and leadership practices in the DA to better deal with issues of corruption

and social accountability. It introduced the participants to the complexity and dynamism of social accountability as an approach to good governance, particularly to the agriculture sector which has been riddled with many challenges of transparency and accountability. The course invited the participants to examine contextual factors that appear to be critical in shaping social accountability interactions, and offered a flexible but analytical framework to guide them in strengthening social accountability measures and practice in the DA.

The ASoG team of resource persons, led by Ms. Aurma M. Manlangit, Director of the JVO Executive Education Program, tackled the following topics: introduction to good governance; social accountability stakeholders; social accountability concepts and practices; social accountability and public finance management; participatory planning; participatory budgeting; local budgeting and expenditure tracking; participatory expenditure tracking; social accountability practice: issues, challenges, and innovations;

and designing social accountability interventions for the DA.

Participants were also taught the process for designing a social accountability program and integrating social accountability in existing programs in the DA.

These sessions were delivered through lectures and discussions, case studies, and workshops. Learning interactions allowed the participants to explore social accountability practices and concepts to deepen the values they want to uphold as citizens in general and as public servants in particular.

During the closing program on 30 October, Atty. Jennilyn M. Dawayan, Assistant Regional Director for Research and Regulatory of the DA Regional Office III in Pampanga, noted that the course helped raise the awareness of and challenged the participants to act in ways that promote a more just and accountable governance. Atty. Dawayan was one of two participants who shared their insights about the course. (NARamos)